

What general advice do you have about Step 1?

Do as many practice questions as possible, organize your schedule so that you sufficiently eat/sleep/exercise, start early (e.g. November-December), Realize your weak areas early and focus on them, and use many resources for learning.

Put in the time to learn, and UNDERSTAND (not memorize), during second year. If you learn things right the first time around, it will be much easier to study. Your step one study time should be dedicated to refreshing your memory, not learning things that you did not bother to learn the first time.

There are going to be questions on there you have never seen or even remotely heard of, there is no way to prepare for those so don't try. I know for a fact I got one question right about some infectious amoeba because I watched House during the month of "hell". I had never heard of that organism from any lecture or book I read in my entire life. So study hard but don't expect to know it all, you will only stress yourself out that way.

- Be organized and have a plan of attack....it's a lot of material so you need to break it down into units that you can study at a time so you don't get overwhelmed; make a schedule so that your study plan is organized and help keeps you accountable so that you don't fall behind in your studies.
- Do as many practice questions as possible; I used the uworld qbank and kaplan qbank and did 4 of the most recent NBME exams
- Schedule time for relaxation; you don't want to get burnt out too early

If you put the time in, your effort will pay off.

In general, don't use too many resources. The more things you try and use, the more anxious you will get about trying to fit them all in. Pick a good resource for every major topic (especially the ones you struggle with) and stick to it. Don't let others plans affect you too much...it's okay to change plans based on good advice you get but remember ultimately your schedule has to work for you and you alone. Finally, set attainable goals throughout your study plan. Reaching these goals will make you feel like you're accomplishing something.

1. Try not to get overly anxious about it too early, and don't let your classmates overly influence your study plan. I decided to only do UWorld questions before I started really studying for Step 1. I got the 6 month subscription and started them in January and maybe got through 25% before May. If you do this, try to take notes on the major educational objective that was covered in the question. Some other people wanted to try to get through all of them before studying for Step 1, but that wasn't a part of my plan. I wanted to enjoy my free time and focus on Organ Systems before I dedicated all my time for 5 weeks for Step 1 studying.

Study mainly pathology, pharmacology and physiology. Biochem, immunology, infection, anatomy and ethics all fall into place if you study the others. Find a general text or resource that works well for all three of those subjects and stick to them in addition to First Aid and U World.

For pharmacology – I used pharmacology recall. It was really good at teaching things that weren't in First Aid and I also used charts I had made from organ systems.

For Pathology – Pathoma is the best way to go. The guy is amazing. And if you can get used to listening to him at 1.7 times speed, then you can get through it several times.

For Physiology – BRS physiology was the best for me.

Everything else is really covered in U World or First Aid pretty well I would say.

a. It's helpful to flip through First Aid throughout Organ Systems just to become acquainted ahead of time with the book and how it is setup (maybe writing in mnemonics too to consolidate your information)

b. Do not use too many resources, it's easy to see what everyone else is doing to try out their resources too but there is not enough time to read or listen to everything. Trust in your resources and only add on if you think learning your resources will not take up all of your time

- Once you come up with a plan for yourself, don't think or talk about what or how other people are doing. It's irrelevant and will only stress you out. Believe in yourself and your plan.

- On test day – do not freak out! I felt like my test was nothing like the NBMEs or UWorld because it was way more difficult, and I was running out of time (which I was not used to). I was so upset and worried, but I ended up happy with my score. So, don't waste time worrying on test day,

a. Be open to other's advice, but remember, you know what works best for you. Start early and stick to a schedule. If you break down what you want to accomplish into a daily schedule, studying is very manageable. Also build in time to go to the gym or do something low key but fun in the evenings. It's easy to burn yourself out, but your studying will be so much more effective if you take little breaks now and then and if you set a specific time to finish studying each day so you aren't tempted to study until you fall asleep. Also, definitely schedule a meeting with Dr. Gohara. She sits down with you and gives you a day-by-day schedule, helpful advice about how to use the question banks, how to read the questions, and how to split up First Aid. She also will estimate your score for you and help you set a reasonable goal for step 1 score. I followed her schedule exactly and was very happy with it. I met with her in January, I think, and she also went over how many questions to be doing per day before and after spring break and how well you should be doing on those.

You will hear this from everyone but this is a marathon not a sprint - plan your schedule

accordingly. For me this meant getting enough sleep, eating healthfully and exercising. There

is no right or wrong way to study. You have been in med school for two years now so you know what works for you and what doesn't - this is not the time to switch it up or change your tactics because someone told you "the best way" to study. I knew that I was not an auditory learner and did not feel that I would get enough out of DIT to justify the time that it requires.

Instead, I used that time to walk myself through a first pass of First Aid. That being said, some people I know liked it and felt that without it they would not have been able to make their own schedule or stick to a schedule without DIT. Everyone is different. I think it is really important to reflect and evaluate along the way to identify what is working and what isn't. You may find that a week in, this or that resource just isn't worth your time - don't be afraid to adjust your schedule. I made my schedule around spring break and included resources that I thought would be the highest yield.

How did you approach the exam during Organs Systems?

I paid attention during organ systems and tried to understand the material. When not studying for organ systems, I would be reading first aid, reviewing pharm cards, and doing practice questions.

For the most part, I did not. Organ Systems is your time to learn about organ systems. I think it is a mistake to neglect studying the course work in favor of studying for step one. Just work really hard in OS, and you will lay the foundation for a great board score. It is helpful to go over Pathoma during a particular section as review and if you have extra time, but do not make that your top priority. Once January rolls around, you will want to start doing questions relevant to the sections you are studying. Start with 10-15 per day, and build up to doing a full set (46).

I basically didn't study "hardcore" for Step 1 until after school finished. My "prep" started over Christmas break and consisted of doing UWorld questions related to the organ system we were in/just finished with a goal of finishing all of the questions before May. So spread 2200 questions over 5 months it's like 15/day, not a ridiculous amount.

- After Christmas break, I would make time to do 10 questions per day (tutor mode, random questions, and write down something about every question I got wrong); each month bump up that amount of questions you do per day so that you are finished with the uworld qbank 1x through by the end of April
- Example: January 10 questions per day (~300 questions completed); February 20 q's per day (~900 total questions completed); March 30 q's per day (~1800 total questions completed); April 40 q's per day...at this point you will have finished the qbank 1 x through

Studying for organ systems helps you study for Step 1. I did not really focus exclusively on Step 1 until basically the last organ systems block. Just be aware that you will have to re-study the material you learned during organ systems in a way that's more geared towards Step 1.

Starting after winter break, I would do the questions from a QBank that were applicable to the unit that we were covering as well as listening to Pathoma regarding the unit. When the last unit began, I stopped going to class and began studying for Step 1 since I knew I wanted to take it earlier (June 5th). The last 3 days before the last organ systems test, I quickly reviewed those notes to prepare for the exam.

1. Make Organ Systems your priority! Learning the core material once will really help once you start focusing on Step 1 specific material. Yes, sometimes our lectures don't cover every single thing in First Aid, but I think it was more helpful for me to focusing mostly on Organ Systems during the school year, then move on to focusing mostly on Step 1 after. Some people liked going through First Aid as we learned the material in class, but I didn't think that First Aid was detailed enough to do well in Organ System. One thing I wish I would have started earlier was Pathoma. Do each section as you learn the pathology in OS. It really helps to solidify the major concepts and each video/section isn't that long.

I did mostly U World questions during organ systems. It's probably best to get through U World once before the end of organ systems, and to do the questions that correspond to the subjects you are learning in class. I also did pathoma several times through during organ systems for the systems we were going over in class. The pathoma guy is amazing at explaining things. He makes things easier to remember for later on too. You can watch and listen to his videos while working out, which is great. I also would read the BRS physiology book for supplementation of the physiology notes. The physiology notes for organ systems are subpar, and the BRS physiology book makes it more systematic and clear. It's useful for the organ systems test, the overall general understanding of physiology for life and for Step 1.

a. I did UWorld questions about the subjects we were covering while in organ systems. It helped reinforce the big picture for me.

b. I watched the pathoma videos while in organ systems to learn the material more intimately rather than just studying the notes. In fact, I paid more attention to pathoma and the key points in First Aid during organ systems than actually learning the class notes.

c. I started listening to the Goljan audio throughout the year (starting around mid-December) on my drives to and from school (since I have a 20 minute commute)

- At the beginning of each organ system (cardio, nephro, etc.) I would watch the relevant Pathoma videos and annotate the book and read the relevant chapter from BRS Physiology before listening to lecture/going over class notes. For some of the systems, I also did the relevant UWorld questions. I would recommend doing the UW questions for all the systems because I did better on those exams, even if I had spent a lot less time looking at class notes.

- In particular, I felt like our school was weak on teaching about heart murmurs. So when you're learning this in organ systems make sure to also go over what's in First Aid and maybe UWorld, and look at the UCLA Heart Sounds website.
 - a. I bought First Aid at the beginning of the year and did whatever chapter corresponded to the organ system we were studying. I also listened to corresponding Goljan lectures if I were driving long distances.

I used the USMLE Rx question bank, which I would highly recommend. The questions are a little easier than Uworld so it is a great tool for testing your recall and comprehension and for preparing for the organ systems tests. I would occasionally flip through First Aid prior to the tests, but I wouldn't really recommend this because First Aid does not have nearly the level of detail that you need in order to do well in organ systems. I also really liked BRS physiology during organ systems because it outlines main points and explains topics a lot more clearly. I really agree with the saying that you start studying your first day of class. This is a test of 2

years of material and you simply don't have time to go back and really learn during your study

period. The study period should be more of a refresher of material (though I admit to cramming biochem since it is full of little details I hadn't seen in about two years). I would say

that I started doing board-oriented activities after I & I ended (Pathoma, Goljan during all of

OS, questions starting after winter break). I started the intensive study after the PASS

program. It was important to me to have a weekend "off" before I dove in head first. I don't think that there is anything that I would change about my prep except that I may have tried harder to keep up with drugs more during the year. As I said, I'm not a memorizer but I think that investing more time on them (esp autonomic drugs) would have really helped me

because my particular exam was very pharm heavy.

What books/products were essential for preparing for this exam?

USMLEWorld Qbank, Goljian lectures, Pathoma, Kaplan videos for weak areas, and paying attention at UT

First Aid was what I used and was very happy with it. However, that is said with the understanding that it is a *review book* and NOT a comprehensive guide to everything you will need to know. I also used Doctors in Training and was very happy that I did. Pathoma was great to use throughout the year and good to quick review particular problem areas. I did around 30 Lange Pharmacy flash cards every day, I think this was extremely helpful and felt that I was very prepared for all of the pharm questions on step one. And lastly, USMLE-World Questions are a MUST! I chose to annotate all of the answers into my First Aid book. This was extremely tedious and took a very long time, but the combination of First Aid with my U-World annotations was the most helpful thing for me.

Whatever you like best, whatever fits your study needs, there isn't one formula for this exam. It is more about what you feel will make you comfortable mentally once you have gone through it. I used PASS program videos I found online, Pathoma videos, read through 90% of FirstAid (yea I know it's the holy grail and all and I'm saying I didn't finish it and I'm in my 3rd year, and UWorld)

- I used DIT and got through it as fast as possible (I finished in less than 2 weeks by doing almost 20 videos a day....this gets you through all the info once so that you can take a practice exam right afterward so that you can see where your weaknesses are and adjust the remainder of your study time accordingly)

Goljan audio...these are nice to listen to when you want to multitask; like when you are driving or working out or cooking

- First aid...this is essential, ya'll already know that

First Aid - necessary, but not sufficient. There are areas which do not have enough detail. You need to mark it with your own notes as you study/do questions. UWorld qbank. I would also recommend audio lectures, i.e. either Pathoma or Goljan. Finally, NBME exams. On top of the year end one provided by the school, I did 3 more. Since they are only 200 questions, they test large, important concepts that you need to know. By the time you're done studying in general, you should be flying through the questions ahead of the timer just because you studied those concepts several times. However, since the NBME's are limited in number of questions, they do not test smaller details that WILL show up on Step 1. I found that the score on your NBME is reflective, but the questions that you see may not be.

DIT Step 1 Review Course, First Aid for Step 1, BRS Physiology, Pathoma Pathology, UWorld Qbank, Practice NBME CBSSA Exams, BRS Biochemistry, High-Yield Embryology, Lange Pharmacology Flash Cards

1. First Aid is a must. I used UWorld as my only source of questions. I started Pathoma in April, and would highly recommend it! I also did DIT for the first 2 weeks.

First Aid and U World are essential.

First Aid (must have), Goljan Audio (excellent Review), Pathoma, Lange Pharmacology Flashcards, DIT supplemental

- First Aid, Uworld, Pathoma, BRS Physiology

- a. Pathoma, First Aid, Uworld, BRS physiology, Goljan lectures (listened to while I was exercising or driving), practice NBME tests (3 of them).

USMLE World and First Aid are essential. - I also thought the Pathoma videos were extremely helpful and so were the Lange Pharmacology flashcards; I would recommend using both of those during organ systems and re-watching the videos during step 1 studying

- a. During the year I used Micro Made Simple (during I & I)

- b. BRS Physiology - this is pretty cumbersome to cover during the dedicated study period so I

would suggest just keeping up on it over the course of OS

- c. Pathoma - this was a fantastic resource that covers the how and why of pathological processes

that were not taught in class, I listened to these twice - once during the year, once during

the study period (during the study period I annotated everything into FA which took a lot of

time, but again, this helped me be an active learner and I think helped me remember things in the long run)

- d. Goljan Lectures - great for the car and working out, I listened in coordination with class and then again during the study period, helpful for integration and quizzing yourself

e. Pharmacology Flash Cards - there are various brands, Lange are the most popular and I found them helpful because I am more of a concept than memorization kind of student so naturally memorizing a million drugs was not my strength or favorite activity

USMLE World - absolutely a MUST. Just doing questions will cause a huge score jump

i. UWorld Self Assessments - I did the two I bought with the QBank. Many people say that they inflate your score anywhere from 10-20 pts but I found that they fit perfectly in progression with my NBME tests so take that what you hear with a grain of salt. If nothing else you get an extra 200 questions with explanations that are closer in stem length and difficulty to the real thing (NBME question stems tend to be shorter.) I also kept a notebook in which I wrote things I got wrong or thought were important. Unfortunately I did run out of time and didn't have a chance to review my notes but I don't regret doing a notebook because I think it prevented me from being a passive learner and forced me to slow down and really think about the material.

g. Practice NBMEs - I did several to help gauge my score progress (I saw a little over a 40 increase from my first to my last if that helps you to gauge what a realistic jump is. I found these to be much easier than UWorld Self Assessments and much much easier than my real test but the scores are supposed to be right on in predicting your test day score.)

h. USMLE-Rx Question bank - I liked these questions because they referenced the page in FA so that I could quickly annotate things into FA. I used this only during OS and I would say that the question difficulty was between NBME and UWorld. Good supplement but I would not recommend it as a stand-alone question bank.

Did you use a review course, if so please describe your approach and satisfaction with the product.

I did not.

I bought Doctors in Training. I was in a unique situation that my grade was more or less decided in Organ Systems before the last exam (I needed a very low grade on my last exam to keep a grade that I was happy with). With that in mind, I completed DIT during the last few weeks of Organ Systems, and had it done before the first NBME Exam. Then my entire month of designated step study time I could devote to First Aid. I thought that DIT was extremely valuable for me, and it made my studying more organized. I also liked having the information taught to me, and it made everything seem more digestible and manageable. I felt less overwhelmed and more reassured that I was studying the right things.

I did not use a review course and did not feel it was necessary.

DIT Step 1 Course. I started by 5.5 weeks of studying by doing DIT all day everyday. I enjoyed DIT because it gave me a structured goal for every day for the first 2.5 weeks. Also, it does a great job of pulling out the highest yield facts that you must know and drilling them into your head with their pre-video quizzes, mnemonics, and work book. Some people really like DIT and others don't, but it depends on if you can sit and watch videos all day.

1. I liked DIT because it gave me a starting point in my studying. I listened to class lectures at home throughout the first 2 years, so I liked going through the videos at my own pace and taking notes along the way in First Aid. I'm not sure if all of the information covered in the DIT videos is useful. I feel like some of it is more geared toward Step 2 or the shelves. It was useful to explain some of the "one-liners" in First Aid more clearly. Try not to get too hung up on all the mnemonics though.

I did DIT, and I might do it as a primer, but don't go into it thinking you are going to know everything afterwards. It's lengthy and may waste some time if you are ready to get the stuff down early on. If you are slower at learning and more systematic in how you have to do things, it might not work well.

a. DIT – it took up too much of my study time but it did help reinforce some material which is covered lightly in First Aid that might be helpful to your studies ... One man's opinion - it is overpriced for the benefit you get from it but it is still a decent review.

- I did not use a review course.

I did not use a review course. Some people really liked it for the structure it provided but if you can make your own schedule and stick to it, I don't think a review course is really necessary.

I did not use a course (see comments above). I pulled notes from 1st and 2nd yr but didn't end

up using them much simply because of time constraints. I reviewed partnerships the day

before my exam

Do you have any recommendations or general comments about Question Banks? How useful were they in your studies? Which one

They are extremely useful. I used USMLEWorld, USMLEasy (free through the university), and Examcrackers (free through the university). USMLEWorld is most like step 1. Also, be sure to do practice USMLE tests.

USMLE-World is an absolute must buy; no questions asked! I also got a deal on Kaplan's Q-bank through the school. I started to use it once I had already gotten through U-World once and started recognizing questions. I thought it was helpful, but not quite as good. I did a few USMLE-Easy questions. It was fantastic that it was free (through UT's libraries page), but the questions were less consistent and not quite representative of the USMLE's real questions.

I highly recommend UWorld, didn't use any other Qbanks. And it was extremely helpful

Uworld qbank is definitely a must, try to get through it twice before test day

Kaplan qbank has questions that are definitely lower quality (some are very poorly written) and lower yield than the Uworld questions, but it will help you rack up points on those lower yield questions and it will help building your test taking strategy

Only used UWorld which was very useful. Buy the 6 month license so you can reset your question bank - 3 month license will not let you reset officially (although you can mark every question and redo your marked questions, etc.). Do NOT buy the self-assessment tests which are too easy and probably overestimate your actual score.

I used the Kaplan QBank and the UWorld Qbank. The biggest way to learn things from the questions is to completely review the explanation of EVERY question, not just the ones you miss. It is a great review.

1. UWorld seems to be the favorite. I recommend a 6 month subscription and taking notes as you go along. They are useful to see how a certain disease is described. Try to read the whole explanation, even though this takes much longer than just doing the questions. After I got through all the questions, I went back and quickly did the ones I got wrong and just read the educational objective at the bottom. I could never get through more than 2 sets of 46 a day if I was planning on studying other material, so keep that in mind as you start to make your study calendar.

U World was the best question bank. It's pretty much essential.

I also used USMLE Rx, which is a question bank by the people who made First Aid. This question bank had a lot of repeat questions, but it really drove home the facts. It also provides a page number and a copy of the page from First Aid that corresponds to each question. The questions are generally easier, but they are still good for review. I would do this if I was too tired to read anything else or do anything more after I got home each day from studying.

a. UWORLD!!! Just get it, you won't be disappointed.

- UWorld is the best one and all you need. Make sure you also buy the two practice exams and allot enough time to go over the answers to those questions.

a. Uworld. Do it.

USMLE world is essential and very helpful. I bought 2 of the U-world review tests as well and didn't think those were very helpful or useful. They are too difficult and grossly overestimate your step score so are unrealistic and not helpful. I would definitely recommend buying a few NBME tests (I did 3 during my month of studying plus the one the school requires). These were VERY close to the actual test and predicted my score within a couple points. I also really liked USMLE Rx question bank. I did this during the school year and it was great practice getting used to board-style questions. It was also much easier than U-world so I liked starting with that. That way I could use those questions to learn so I didn't waste the uworld questions before I had really studied a topic.

What was your everyday schedule like once you began to study in May?

I began seriously studying in February. I would wake up before 7 and go to sleep around 10:30. I would take 4 hours out of each day to do whatever I wanted. I didn't go to class, I just listened to the posted lectures and read the lecture notes. I was energized by the challenge, so I didn't burnout (also, I scheduled the test 5 weeks after class ended so I didn't have too much time to study). I require a lot of repetition, so I drew the biochemical pathways over and over again, I reviewed pharm cards, I read First Aid 3 times, I watched the Pathoma lectures 2-3 times, and I listened to goljian 1-2 times (usually when I was walking my dog).

I had a very intense schedule, and I would not necessarily recommend it for everyone. I would study seven days per week. I would wake up at 5am and usually study until 10:30 pm every day. I would take 15 minutes for breakfast, 30 minutes for lunch and about 1 hour for dinner, which left about 15 hours of study time per day. I would spend the first 1-2 hours of the day working only on areas that I had problems with (writing out bacterial taxonomy, biochem pathways, etc). The rest of the time I would break into three sections. For each section I would do one set of questions, 30 Lange Pharmacy flash cards, and one third of a section in First Aid (Cardiology, Pulm, Renal, etc.) By the end of the day I would have gotten 1-2 hours of work on problem areas, 3 question sets, 90 flash cards, and a full section of first aid. This was very effective, but also very grueling. I prevented burnout mainly by keeping in mind that this is only a temporary situation. It is only a month or two of studying that will dictate much of the rest of your life. By keeping that perspective I was able to remain focused.

Woke up every day and tried to start being productive by 8 or 9 am. I studied for about 3 or 4 hrs then took a 3-4 hr break where I ate lunch, worked out, watched TV, after that was done I studied for another 4 hrs then ate dinner, watched TV and relaxed for the evening. If I felt like doing more I did, if not I went to sleep around midnight and started it up again the next day. It may seem crazy but if you get up at 8am treat studying like an 8hr job you have plenty of time to do other things in your day. Step 1 studying was actually the best part of 2nd yr for me because I could really set my own schedule and get a lot done. Didn't have burn out until 4 weeks of that schedule and by then I was pretty much ready to take the exam, you never need as long as you think you do, I gave myself 6 weeks, really only needed 4.5.

- Definitely make it a goal to do at least 2 practice question sets a day (sets of 46 that you take timed and not in tutor mode....treat it like it's the real deal), afterwards review all the question explanations. You don't have to do all 2 sets in a row, but it's not a bad idea to start building up stamina by doing 2 or 3 sets consecutively
- To prevent burnout, I would usually take 2 half days (rather than a full day off)...On Saturday I would usually take an NBME practice test and then take the rest of the day off. Sunday I would review the questions I missed and take the rest of the day off.

I woke up ~7 am, did a set of questions starting at 8 am, studied the questions that I missed or felt there was an important learning point. After finishing a set, I studied the subject I had on my schedule for the day, listened to the Goljan lectures for that subject at the same time, then finished up with one or two more sets of 46 questions. Towards the end, I ended up just doing a practice exam in the morning, reading over what I missed, and re-reading the big subjects as needed. I was usually done around 6-7pm at night, so I just had dinner and relaxed for the rest of the night. I think the best way to prevent burnout is to give yourself one release each day - exercise, watch tv, etc. etc. which I just did after I finished dinner.

7:30PM – 9PMish everyday; work-out was one of my breaks, and I watched TV or a movie a lot of nights. I did not take meal breaks...but ate while studying.

1. I am not a morning person, so I started studying around 10 AM every day. I used the stopwatch on my iPhone to keep track of the hours that I studied and tried to shoot for around 10-12. Some days were more and some were less. I did DIT the first 2 weeks, and those were much longer days. I took a NBME practice test the week after I finished DIT. Then I went back through and re-read each First Aid section twice along with the corresponding Pathoma section. Then I took another NBME practice test the week before the exam. Then I quickly reviewed First Aid and Pathoma the last few days. UWorld questions were thrown in there, usually I did them at night. I took every Friday night off and did whatever I wanted. That gave me something to look forward to and it motivated me to study hard during the week. I made it a point to walk my dog every night or at least get some fresh air for a part of the day. I also got a massage once or twice during the study period.

I would wake up, go to the library, and start working. I would do three question sets a day, one in the morning, one after lunch and then one in the evening. Between those question sets, I would study as much of the organ systems as possible. I would break down each organ system into pharmacology, pathology and physiology and study them in that way. Some organ systems took me two days to finish, some took me half a day, and others may have taken me four days, but I didn't rush anything. I made sure I really understood each of the organ systems and the pathology, physiology and pharmacology of each.

I would run or lift weights to prevent burnout. I made time for my own personal health. It was a nice way to have a little break from everything.

- a. Preventing burnout – I took breaks appropriately, at least half an hour for lunch, an hour for dinner. I took at least 3-4, 15-20 minute breaks throughout the day when I felt I was becoming counterproductive. I also spent time taking walks with my wife in order to get away from my study space in the apartment and enjoy the real world for a little while.

- I would set a timer for one hour and focus only on my task for that hour. I would take a break, then repeat. Once I did eight of these in a day I allowed myself to stop working. I got a lot more done working this way than when I did not use a timer. I would recommend you try this at least
- I did not create a schedule. During dedicated studying I would go over FA and Pathoma for each system and then do the Uworld questions for that system. I just moved on to the next system once I was done with one without a set study schedule.

I divided the topics into blocks. For example 1 week for cardio, 1 week for neuro, 3 days for pulm, 2 days for GI, 1 day for psych etc. I did not repeat any topics, but I did allow myself 2 days of “review” before the test.

I prevented burn out by allowing myself to sleep in on the weekends. The first week I woke up around 7, went to bed after midnight, and didn’t sleep in on the weekends. I immediately burnt out, and had to adapt my schedule to waking up at 8 and sleeping in on the weeknds. Listen to your body. You won’t study effectively if you’re exhausted. Some people function well with little sleep. I don’t.

- a. 46 uworld Qs, review Qs
- b. Read a BRS, First Aid chapter, pathoma chapter
- c. Eat lunch
- d. Keep reading whatever was relevant to the topic I was studying (first aid, uworld, pathoma)
- e. Work out
- f. Eat dinner
- g. 20-46Qs, review
- h. Go to bed

I would typically start studying around 7-8am, take an hour lunch break (and watch tv or read or something during lunch), study until 3 or 4, go to the gym, and then finish studying around 8-9pm. To prevent burnout, I would stop studying by around 8 or 9 every night and do something non-school related before going to bed. I also built in two days off into my schedule. Also, on the mornings when I took the NBME practice test, I would

I studied at the library probably 90% of the time because that's where I've proven to be most productive and focused throughout med school. I did about 14-15 hours per day without any true break days. I think that having a schedule and sticking to it was very helpful - the closer I was to being on target the better and more confident I felt. That being said, I'm not perfect and I did occasionally have to cut a question set to finish that day's FA assignment or extend the FA assignment to the next day. I think that exercising really helped me to also prevent burnout. During my 4th week I started to get a bit restless (so much sitting!) but I just adjusted by schedule so that I would do Pathoma when I felt like I was losing focus or move up my workout to earlier in the day.

If you had to do it over again, what would you do differently, and what would you keep the same?

I would have used different resources such as Goljian's lectures and first aid while I was learning pertinent subjects in class, starting from first year. I would keep pretty much everything else the same.

The only thing that I would do differently would be to start annotating USMLE-World questions into my First Aid sooner. I did not start doing that until May so I had a lot to catch up on, it became very tedious to catch up with. I also would have used Pathoma more throughout the year for review.

Wouldn't have done anything differently, I guess I would have just not put so much trust in NBME practice exam scores. I was averaging high 230's and my best score was a 249, I got a 230 on the real thing so that kinda bummed me out but study wise, nothing I would have done would have changed that. It really is a lot of luck on what questions you get on that specific day and how clear your head is working.

- I would have probably taken the test a week early; I made my study schedule for 6 weeks, but I think I could have taken the exam after studying for only 5 weeks...I kind of ran out of things to study that last week before my test
- I definitely think going through uworld twice and Kaplan qbank once was the best strategy to prepare me for step 1...it was definitely a challenge to get through all those questions plus do 4 NBME's, but it definitely paid off for me.

I would have given myself 5 weeks and not 6. I think that 4 weeks would have made me feel unprepared, but 6 weeks was too much where you feel that you peaked earlier and each day afterwards is "treading water". Otherwise, I was happy with my schedule.

I really would keep most things the same. I was happy with my score and I attribute it to the organized plan I went into the studying with. **STICK TO WHATEVER PLAN YOU COME UP WITH!**

1. I would do DIT for the first 2 weeks to get yourself in a routine. I would have kept my notes from UWorld questions separately from First Aid (I tried to annotate the answers in First Aid, but it just got too messy since you add a lot of notes doing DIT). I didn't study before the practice NBME that they gave us right after classes were done and I liked that because it gave me an idea of where my starting point was. I think 2 practice tests split up during your study period is enough. I took 5 weeks to study, with my test on a Tuesday, but I wish I would have taken it 4-5 days earlier because I really started to get burnt out and sick of studying.

I would have not done DIT. I would have been more confident in myself early on. I would have kept my work ethic the same. I took a couple half days off (after I had taken practice tests), but other than that, I kept with the plan.

a. I think I spent 1 too many weeks studying. I took my test on June 12 and I really should have pushed it forward a week to get more of a break between 2nd and 3rd year.

- I would definitely practice timing! I usually had at like 20 minutes extra left on each section during NBMEs and the practice Uworld exams. On any previous exams (MCAT, SATs, whatever) timing had never been an issue for me. On exam day, however, I ended up with not single section with extra time. I wish I had practiced with more of a time constraint to get used to the pressure of
 - ii. Make more of an effort to learn biostats. I know I missed several questions on the actual test.

iii. Complete all the uworld questions. I ended up not completing 100 uworld questions because I ran out of time. I would plan a little better to ensure this didn't happen again.

i. My resources.

ii. My calm/Studying at home. I studied mainly at home to avoid being around people who are high strung/high stress. Don't get caught up in other peoples stress and anxiety. It will do you no good. Toward the end of my studying, I was getting lonely and having elaborate conversations with myself. That's when I started going to the library. I don't regret that because I needed some human

iii. Exercising daily. Even if it was just going for a walk for an hour while listening to a goljan lecture.

iv. Taking breaks when I knew I needed it. There were several weekends where I went to a friends house for an hour or two at night just to see people or relax. It rejuvenated me.

- I wouldn't change anything. I was a little tempted to move my test back about halfway through May, but I am so glad I didn't. By that last week of studying, you will be so ready to take the test and so happy you didn't move it back another week.

I think that I would have done exactly the same thing if I had to do it all over again. I had a total of 5.5wks to study and for me that was perfect. I know a ton of people who pushed back their test dates but I think had I done that I probably would have burned out/passed my peak. Having a firm test date (with vacation planned after) helped me stick to my schedule and keep my eye on the prize.