

Colin J. Sallee, MS 3

1. General Advice about Step 1:

1. Work hard during second year. No better way to prepare than learning the information now and reviewing when Step 1 comes along.
2. Buy the Uworld Question Bank. Begin these questions when you progress through Organ Systems. I started doing questions in January after the holiday break. Some start earlier, some start much later. I feel the single most important thing I did for Step 1 was working through the USMLEWorld question bank about 2x. I did close to one run-through during second year and did every question during my study period. More on the question bank below.
3. First Aid DOES NOT have all the answers. First Aid will help you memorize facts, but it will not help you understand concepts. Understanding important concepts related to physiology, pharmacology, pathology not only happen during second year, but happen by doing these questions.
4. Don't forget to take care of yourself! Eat right, exercise, take breaks, watch tv, etc. This is extremely important.

2. How did you approach this exam?

1. Like anything, you must approach it w/ confidence. If, like I said, you put the work in now, you will feel less overwhelmed when the time comes to study for the exam. The real studying for this exam happens (and is happening) in your first two years. If at any point you have struggled in medical school, had a difficult subject, etc. you must find the time to seek help so that you can approach this exam w/ more confidence.
2. Know you. This very much relates to your goals, your own perception of your abilities, and your overall performance throughout medical school. Everyone's 'approach' is different. But everyone's ultimate goal is to do the best they can. Figure out what study techniques have worked for you during medical school and stick to them.
3. Avoid negative people. Yes, that is probably sad, but true. Now, at times, you will be negative about this Step 1 experience, and that is normal. The idea is to be comfortable, to surround yourself w/ supportive people, and not to compare yourself to other classmates. Juxtaposed to negative people, some people may seem 'overconfident.' Don't let that phase you either. This exam is about you and you only. So again, just relax and make sure you are comfortable w/ your own progress as you are studying.

3. Did you use a subject review or a system-based approach , and how well did that prepare you?

N/A

4. Did you form study groups, how did you go about forming them, and how effective were they?

N/A

5. What books were essential for preparing for this exam?

1. First Aid for Step 1 (the gold standard)
2. BRS Physiology

3. BRS Pathology (or Goljan)

-These books were essential to me. Others will not agree. I read BRS physiology/BRS Path during the year. If you get these DO NOT save to read them while studying for Step 1. You will not have the time and it is unrealistic. I thought BRS Physiology is a great book and really discusses material very pertinent to the exam.

6. What other books did you use?

N/A

7. What review courses did you use? Did you use notes from 1st and 2nd year?

-Doctors in Training. Doctors in Training was beneficial to me because it provided a very effective and set schedule. It uses a study guide that follows along w/ First Aid and offers some additional information that sometimes is pertinent. Is it essential? No. But like I said, I liked it because it helped me stay focused in the beginning part of studying and uses video based lectures that made studying suck less. Additionally, you know exactly how many lectures you need to complete in order to finish the program in the time you set for yourself.

-Never used notes from 1st or 2nd year.

8. Do you have any recommendations or general comments about Question Banks? How useful were they in your studies? Which ones did you use?

-USMLEWorld. As I mentioned above, I think this was the most important thing I did. More important than completing the questions, was READING THE ANSWERS. Reading the answers to every question, particularly the ones you get wrong, is ESSENTIAL. I honestly think I learned an additional 40% of information just by STUDYING these questions and taking notes on things I wanted to remember or thought was important.

-I had a notebook of written notes on these questions that I not only had throughout second year, but also accumulated during my study period in the spring. I do really believe that these questions and LEARNING THE INFORMATION FROM THE ANSWER EXPLANATION helped me succeed more so than anything.

9. How early did you begin studying? How early did you REALLY begin to study? Would you go back and change that if you could?

-Again, I studied pretty hard during Organ Systems and tried to work through the Uworld Questions. I really started studying 1 week after the end of second year. Many people started right away so they could have more weeks off for summer, but I thought the time off before the 'real studying' was effective for me.

10. How long did you prepare for?

-6 weeks. Can do it in 5. I enjoyed having the last week to review.

11. What was your everyday schedule like once you began to study? How did you prevent burnout?

-I started studying around 8 am everyday. I am a morning person and liked studying earlier so I wouldn't have to study as much at night. I took several hours off in the afternoon to relax, exercise etc. I wouldn't study any later than 10 pm. Nonetheless, a pretty full day. This is very individualized and I think people should do whatever they are comfortable with.

12. How did you plan your schedule?

-I planned my overall schedule based upon talking to people that I trusted and did well on the exam. The truth is no one plan is the same and people who do well on this exam do not have a single plan. It is all about learning and applying the information. Your daily schedule is very much your own, and when you get to that point, just as I said before, do what works for you.

13. How many times did you dedicate to each subject? What was the breakdown?

-Logically, I dedicated more time to things I didn't remember very well or didn't understand as well as I needed to. YOU CAN'T KNOW EVERYTHING, so focus on high yield information. Information related to pathology, physiology, pharmacology, and generally information from Organ Systems will be the most tested information.

14. What did you do a week before the exam? Few days before? Night before?

-I reviewed. I went back through some First Aid information, reviewed pharmacology (it is very easy to forget drug names), and READ MY NOTES from Uworld. The day before, I did pretty much nothing. I worked out and saw a movie. It was great taking that break and I felt pretty ready to go the next morning.

15. How did you deal with difficult questions? Thoughts on changing your answer?

-Move on. Hard to do sometimes, but you don't get any extra points for getting the super hard ones right. The goal is to focus on those questions you know you can achieve the right answer and fight for those other questions that are not as clear.

-Uworld will give you statistics on how many questions you get right by changing your answer. They will show incorrect to incorrect, correct to incorrect, and incorrect to correct. For me, I trusted myself when changing my answer because most questions I changed, I changed to the correct answer.

16. How did you avoid fatigue? When did you take your breaks during the exam?

-The exam consists of 7 questions blocks of 46 questions each. I took a break every two blocks and before my last block. I don't think this really matters honestly. Do whatever you feel like.

17. What was your strategy at reading and answering the question in the allotted time/dissecting a question stem?

- For long questions, I tended to browse the answers firsts. You are able to highlight information and I did that as well.
- For shorter questions, I would read highlight and pick my answer.
- I always crossed out answer choices that I thought were blatantly wrong.

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

I probably would not do anything differently. In retrospect, you realize that Step 1 is not the most important thing you will do in your life, and after it is all said and done, you will be refreshed to realize that clinical medicine is why you all went to medical school in the first place. So keep working hard because you only have to do this once!

19. Closing remarks?

Ok, so the above is tons of information. If you feel skeptical at all about what I said, that's totally ok! A lot is being thrown at you, and I do not have all the answers. All I can do is provide you w/ my plan. I established this plan by talking to other people who I trusted. Thus, I WOULD BE MORE THAN HAPPY to e-mail or talk to anyone who has more questions or wants to get more detail about how to approach this exam. Contact AEC for contact details.

20. Please fill out the following 2012-2013-month schedule based on your study recommendations and test date:

I did not have a 'set' schedule. However, I did have a plan. My plan was to complete Doctors in Training in 3 weeks (and thus read First Aid 1x). Following the end of DIT, I took the next 2 weeks to read through First Aid again. In the last week, I reviewed DIT, First Aid, and the notes I took from USMLEWorld. In summary, I completed DIT, read First Aid 2x, and reviewed my notes from USMLEWorld.

I wish everyone the best of luck and I hope this helps!

Colin

Bethany Rohr, MS3

1. General Advice about Step 1:

Be realistic about your goal score—too high and you'll be disappointed, too low and you won't fulfill your potential. Don't buy too many resources to study pick 1 good Question bank and 1-2 review sources and study them well. Keep a notebook of things you tend to forget or think are particularly high yield to re-read the day before your exam.

2. How did you approach this exam?

Whatever score I got was going to set the tone for my third and fourth year goals, so I really couldn't study hard enough. I just tried to study every day and review everything at least 2-3 times.

3. Did you use a subject review or a system-based approach, and how well did that prepare you?

I used organ systems approach and subjects because that is how first-aid and DIT are organized. I think it did a great job of preparing me because you need to learn the organ system first then apply that to the subjects (eg musculoskeletal and heart, then microbiology or biochemistry related diseases that affect both)

4. Did you form study groups, how did you go about forming them, and how effective were they?

I worked on DIT with one other person, which helped me keep on task. I just asked someone who I knew was responsible and smart, but who I knew I wasn't so close with that I'd easily get off topic.

5. What books were essential for preparing for this exam?

First Aid for USMLE Step 1

6. What other books did you use?

BRS Physiology, DIT manual

7. What review courses did you use? Did you use notes from 1st and 2nd year?

DIT; I don't think I used notes from 1st or 2nd year—usually it is easier to just google any questions you have rather than flip through thousands of pages of notes

8. Do you have any recommendations or general comments about Question Banks? How useful were they in your studies? Which ones did you use?

I used First Aid Q bank during Organ systems, which was great. During step 1 study time I predominantly used UWorld Q bank. Both are great question banks.

9. How early did you begin studying? How early did you REALLY begin to study? Would you go back and change that if you could?

I gave myself 5 weeks to study, but I probably used about 4 -4.5 weeks of that time due to family events that I had to attend during that time. I wouldn't spend more than 5 weeks studying because you start to forget more than you remember—you start focusing too much on the details that are a waste of time.

10. How long did you prepare for?

I didn't use a first aid book during the school year or anything—I really only prepared for the 4-5 weeks that I studied. I did do questions from the first aid question bank to help study for organ systems during the year and I went to the reviews held by the AEC whenever I had time.

11. What was your everyday schedule like once you began to study? How did you prevent burnout?

Week 1 I tried to read through First Aid and organize a study schedule. I alternated the entire day between reading and practice questions with time for lunch and dinner breaks. Weeks 2-4, I began DIT at 8AM and usually went till 3-5PM. Then I'd take a dinner break, and begin reviewing the lectures from the day until 9-10PM. The last week I tried to review my weak areas and relax a bit more so I wouldn't be burnt out on test day. On weekends I usually did a practice test first thing Saturday morning and spent the rest of the weekend going over the answers or trying to catch up on material from DIT.

12. How did you plan your schedule?

I went with what DIT suggested during the 2.5 weeks I did DIT lectures. The 2-2.5 weeks I studied on my own I tried to use the cram fighter iPhone app...didn't love it, but it did help me be more realistic about my study goals each day.

13. How many times did you dedicate to each subject? What was the breakdown?

Depends on your strong points. Most of my time was probably on Biochem and micro—high yield and dense material.

14. What did you do a week before the exam? Few days before? Night before?

Review my weak points. Make sure I'd seen everything at least 2-3 times. Lots and lots of practice questions (NBME sample questions, DIT questions, Uworld questions—did questions from anywhere I could find).

Day/night before I went over my notebook while laying in the sun at swan creek.

15. How did you deal with difficult questions? Thoughts on changing your answer?

Just accept that you will not know everything on the test. Some questions are experimental and will not count towards your score anyway. I typically went with my gut feeling on 50/50 questions unless I suddenly remembered something specific to change my mind.

16. How did you avoid fatigue? When did you take your breaks during the exam?

I took a break between every section except for the last two. I made sure I was hydrated and caffeinated.

17. What was your strategy at reading and answering the question in the allotted time/dissecting a question stem?

Read the question first so I knew what information to focus on while reading the vignette. I would then formulate an answer before looking at the possible answers and then pick the one that was closest to what I had come up with.

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

I tried to split my time between Uworld and First aid question banks during the first few weeks. I wish I would have just focused on finishing one because attempting two means that I didn't fully finish either.

19. Closing remarks?

20. Please fill out the following 2012-2013-month schedule based on your study recommendations and test date:

See my answer to question # 11

Brian Wood, MS4

1. General Advice about Step 1:

Put the work in now. The second year courses prepare you very well, especially Organ Systems. Study hard for this class and you won't have to stress as much come dedicated study time. Don't focus on the test during class. If you study for Organ Systems, you are studying for the test.

2. How did you approach this exam?

As stated above, I studied for Organ Systems during the year, then I took about 5 weeks of dedicated time to study.

3. Did you use a subject review or a system-based approach, and how well did that prepare you?

System-based approach and I thought it worked great

4. Did you form study groups, how did you go about forming them, and how effective were they?

I always study best by myself. Study groups are distracting in my opinion. But for the test I did do DIT with a friend and it helped me keep my sanity during that time.

5. What books were essential for preparing for this exam?

First aid

6. What other books did you use?

Goljan's rapid review pathology, BRS Physio, BRS Behavioral, High Yield Neuroanatomy

7. What review courses did you use? Did you use notes from 1st and 2nd year?

DIT. Absolutely no notes from class.

8. Do you have any recommendations or general comments about Question Banks? How useful were they in your studies? Which ones did you use?

USMLE World is the best and is essential. I also used Kaplan during Organ Systems to help study for those tests and begin to get a feel for the question format.

9. How early did you begin studying? How early did you REALLY begin to study? Would you go back and change that if you could?

Once again, studying for Organ Systems is studying for the test.

10. How long did you prepare for?

5 weeks of dedicated time

11. What was your everyday schedule like once you began to study? How did you prevent burnout?

First two weeks (1st pass): did one set of questions in the am, studied a chapter or two (depending on length) plus similar chapter in supplemental books, then did one question set in pm.

Second two weeks: DIT and one question set in the pm

Remaining time: questions and practice tests

12. How did you plan your schedule?

I read a bunch of stuff online about the “best” way to structure the study schedule, but ended up creating my own by counting chapter length in First Aid and using those numbers to create manageable days.

13. How many times did you dedicate to each subject? What was the breakdown?

See my schedule listed below.

14. What did you do a week before the exam? Few days before? Night before?

Week before: questions

Days before: paced around my apartment

Night before: nothing

15. How did you deal with difficult questions? Thoughts on changing your answer?

Told myself that any question that I didn’t know was a research question and tried not to dwell

Changing an answer depends on how confident you are.

16. How did you avoid fatigue? When did you take your breaks during the exam?

Red bull. Take breaks when you need them.

17. What was your strategy at reading and answering the question in the allotted time/dissecting a question stem?

Read last line of question first, then read whole question

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

I would do it the same. My schedule worked well for me

19. Closing remarks?

Goljan audio lectures are awesome. Use them during Organ Systems.

20. Please fill out the following 2012-2013-month schedule based on your study recommendations and test date:

See Below

AEC USMLE Step 1 Student Panel Study Strategies | 2012

2012

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
	30-Apr						1-May
8am to 9:30am							46q - random
9:30 to 12:30pm							CV (33)
12:30pm to 5pm							
6:30pm to 8pm							46q - random
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
8am to 9:30am	46q - random	46q - random	46q - random	46q - random	46q - random	Golf	46q - random
9:30 to 12:30pm	ATC Open House (12)	Renal (18)	Heme/Onc (27)	GI (32)	Neuro (41)	Practice Qs Review	Repro/Embryo (39)
12:30pm to 5pm	Respiratory (15)	Path (11)					
6:30pm to 8pm	46q - random	46q - random	46q - random	46q - random	46q - random	Week Review (FA)	46q - random
	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
8am to 9:30am	46q - random	46q - random	46q - random	46q - random	46q - random	46q - random	46q - random
9:30 to 12:30pm	(finish R/E)	MSK/Skin (24)	Psych/Behav (33)	Endocrine (18)	Biochem (50)	Micro (~30)	Micro (~30)
12:30pm to 5pm	Immuno (18)			(start biochem ~12)			
6:30pm to 8pm	46q - random	46q - random	46q - random	46q - random	46q - random	46q - random	46q - random
	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
8am to 9:30am	Practice Test						
9:30 to 12:30pm	DIT						
12:30pm to 5pm	DIT						
	Week Review (FA)						
6:30pm to 8pm	46q - random	46q - random	46q - random	46q - random	46q - random	46q - random	46q - random
	Daily review/RR						
	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
8am to 9:30am	Practice Test						
9:30 to 12:30pm	DIT						
12:30pm to 5pm	DIT						
	46q - random						
6:30pm to 8pm	Daily review/RR						
	30	31	1-Jun	2	3	4	5
8am to 9:30am	Practice Test						
9:30 to 12:30pm	DIT						
12:30pm to 5pm	DIT						
	46q - random		Finish UW?	FA review (150p) weak subjects	FA review (150p) weak subjects	FA review (150p) weak subjects	FA images/extras
6:30pm to 8pm	Daily review/RR		Daily review/RR				HY NA
	6	7	8				
8am to 9:30am	UW Incorrect						
9:30 to 12:30pm	FA pharm RR margins						
12:30pm to 5pm	HY NA						
6:30pm to 8pm	D-Day						
	CHILL!!!!!!						

Betsy Davis, Student Pathology Fellow

1. General Advice about Step 1:

Have a plan and try to stick to it, but remember that life happens and your plan is there to help you stay on track. There will be days when you get a lot done, and days that are more frustrating than others. Develop YOUR plan, and then try not to worry about what other people are doing (this can be difficult).

2. How did you approach this exam?

I set up a schedule and tried to stick to it. My schedule worked back from my test date, and included days for practice tests.

3. Did you use a subject review or a system-based approach, and how well did that prepare you?

I did some of both. I had books that were subject review books, and First Aid and USMLE World have both system-based and subject sections.

4. Did you form study groups, how did you go about forming them, and how effective were they?

I did not study in a group.

5. What books were essential for preparing for this exam?

First Aid, Goljan Rapid Review Path, Rapid Review Biochem, BRS Behavioral Science, and Linda Costanzo's Physiology text (especially for the cardiovascular system).

6. What other books did you use?

I don't have access to the titles, as I have loaned them to other students who are still studying. They are from the recommendations in First Aid. I will be able to talk about them later in the year, or if I can look at a First Aid before Friday (my First Aid is loaned out, too).

7. What review courses did you use?

Did you use notes from 1st and 2nd year? I did not use my notes from first or second year, except to review the brachial plexus. I used Doctors in Training and I wish I had known about Pathoma—I would have started that all the way through Organ Systems.

8. **Do you have any recommendations or general comments about Question Banks?**

How useful were they in your studies? Which ones did you use? I used USMLE World and did all of the questions. I found it to be invaluable. I also used USMLE Easy—it was very helpful, especially for Pharmacology review right before the test.

9. **How early did you begin studying? How early did you REALLY begin to study? Would you go back and change that if you could?**

I didn't start studying until Organ Systems was over. Really understanding the material from second year is critical, so you are studying for Step One when you are studying I and I and Organ Systems. It's easy to say "I would do this and this and this" now, but overall, I don't think starting to study before Organ Systems was over would have done any good.

10. **How long did you prepare for?**

6 weeks.

11. **What was your everyday schedule like once you began to study? How did you prevent burnout?**

I started early in the morning because I wake up. I had my topic/subject for the day, and would move between USMLE World questions, First Aid, and other books during the day. I would take breaks during the day to walk my dogs, do laundry, or just take little breaks. I found that studying different things helped to keep me focused.

12. **How did you plan your schedule?**

Dr. Gohara helped me plan my schedule.

13. **How many times did you dedicate to each subject? What was the breakdown?**

4 days cardio, 3 days renal, 3 days respiratory, 3 days GI, 3 days neurology, one day for a practice test, 2 days for hem-onc, 2 days for endocrinology, 1 day for reproductive, 1 day for musculo-skeletal/derm, 2 days for immunology, 2 days for biochem, another practice test, 3 days for behavioral/biostats, and ethics, 3 days for microbiology, another practice test (3 NBME practice tests in all), and 1-2 days to review everything. Everyone says to rest and not study the day before the test. I studied the day before the test.

14. What did you do a week before the exam? Few days before? Night before?

I changed my test date, so I took a few days off about 10 days before my test, and then studied right up until Test Day.

15. How did you deal with difficult questions? Thoughts on changing your answer?

N/A

16. How did you avoid fatigue? When did you take your breaks during the exam?

N/A

17. What was your strategy at reading and answering the question in the allotted time/dissecting a question stem?

N/A

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

N/A

19. Closing remarks?

N/A

20. Please fill out the following 2012-2013-month schedule based on your study recommendations and test date:

N/A

Carly Safier, MS3

1. General Advice about Step 1:

Find a schedule and study plan that works for you. Everyone studies and learns best different ways so while taking others advice is often helpful, don't try to force yourself to use somebody else's study plans.

2. How did you approach this exam?

I made a schedule of what I wanted to go over each day and used Sunday as a "catch-up" day to finish whatever I wasn't able to throughout the rest of the week. I think scheduling your time and sticking to it is the most important thing to make sure you get through everything without feeling totally overwhelmed.

3. Did you use a subject review or a system-based approach , and how well did that prepare you?

I used mostly a system-based approach because that's how its taught throughout the year so that's how I felt most comfortable approaching the material.

4. Did you form study groups, how did you go about forming them, and how effective were they?

I studied alone the entire time. I always study alone; for me, groups are distracting and I like to go at my own pace and take breaks when I feel like I need them. Again though, find what works best for you. If you're one of those people that studies in groups and that's helpful to you, I would recommend doing it again for boards. I'd definitely recommend using groups if its been helpful to you in the past; sometimes quizzing each other and talking out loud helps to really make a fact stick in your mind.

5. What books were essential for preparing for this exam?

First Aid, BRS Physiology, Robbins Question Book, USMLE Cases

6. What other books did you use?

None.

7. What review courses did you use? Did you use notes from 1st and 2nd year?

I used DIT and USMLE World Qbank. I would recommend DIT for people who have a hard time staying focused because it kind of forces you to study and stick to a schedule, but if you're someone who is motivated and highly focused, I think it'd be best to set your own schedule using books and qbanks. I used notes very sparingly, and it was mostly to clarify things from my review books or to help myself remember things in a way I had organized them earlier in the year. I never actually sat down and read through my notes though.

8. Do you have any recommendations or general comments about Question Banks? How useful were they in your studies? Which ones did you use?

Qbanks are a must! I used USMLE World and did it twice. A lot of studying for boards is learning how to take information that you already know and apply it to patient cases, and the best way to do that is by answering practice questions.

9. How early did you begin studying? How early did you REALLY begin to study? Would you go back and change that if you could?

I started doing practice questions about 3 months before my test (in March) and I would review things here and there starting in January, but I didn't start full on studying until after 2nd year classes had ended in April. All of second year is preparing you for Step 1-I think its important to focus on school work because if you learn it as well as you can, especially the last few units of organ systems, you'll hardly have to use any time reviewing it once it comes time to focus on just step 1 studying. I don't think I'd change this or start any earlier. I found that the 8 weeks from end of 2nd year until I took my test were more than enough to study.

10. How long did you prepare for?

I studied for step 1 only for about 8 weeks (after 2nd year ended until my test mid June)

11. What was your everyday schedule like once you began to study? How did you prevent burnout?

I studied about 12 hours every day except for Saturday, when I usually stopped around 6 and took the nights off just to relax and ease my mind. I also tried to fit in a workout twice a week. I think if all you do is study for 8 weeks without any sort of relaxation or anything to take your mind off of the test, you'll burn out by week 3 or 4 and the rest of your studying will not be as worthwhile. Inevitably you're going to hit some level of burnout at some point in your studying, but I think that if you manage some relaxation time throughout the week the burnout stage will be a lot later and a lot less intense.

12. How did you plan your schedule?

I went through first aid and brs physiology for 2 weeks before I started DIT for a month. After dit, I had two weeks where I did mostly practice questions. I scheduled extra time to go over things I found the hardest and less time for things I felt comfortable with. I saved biochemistry for the last week before the test because it's a lot of blunt memorization so I wanted to save it for last so it was fresh in my mind.

13. How many times did you dedicate to each subject? What was the breakdown?

It totally depended on the subject. I spent about a day on each subject, then my extra time on the weekends going over subjects I felt were more difficult. DIT has a very set schedule for subjects, so that mainly dictated how much time I spent on each subject during the week.

14. What did you do a week before the exam? Few days before? Night before?

A week before the exam was mainly practice questions and reviewing blunt memorization factoids. A few days before I studied mostly only until dinner and took nights off to get my sleeping back on schedule. The entire day before I relaxed all day, worked out, went out to dinner and just hung out so I could fall asleep easily that night.

15. How did you deal with difficult questions? Thoughts on changing your answer?

No matter how much you study there are going to be questions you have absolutely no idea the answer to. The most important thing is to not panic! You can get several questions wrong and still do quite well on the test. If I didn't know the answer right away I usually marked it and came back to the end; I'd rather spend time looking at questions I think I know the answer to than waste time trying to figure out an answer I knew I didn't know. When it comes to changing your answer, don't do it unless you're positive the new answer is the right one. Throughout doing practice questions I often found that your first instinct really is usually correct.

16. How did you avoid fatigue? When did you take your breaks during the exam?

I avoided fatigue as best I could by getting a full night's sleep every night. Don't overdo the caffeine-it'll keep you up at night and basically just lead to a vicious cycle of not getting any sleep. Same thing during the test- don't overdo caffeine cause you'll crash as it wears off towards the end. During the exam I took a break between almost every section. I think I only skipped a break between sessions once. I think they breaks are necessary to clear your mind for a few minutes, get something to eat and drink and refresh yourself before heading in for another block.

17. What was your strategy at reading and answering the question in the allotted time/dissecting a question stem?

My best advice is to read carefully and slowly. The natural instinct is to read fast since you feel pressed for time, but then you end up skipping over things in the question stem and having to read it again. A lot of questions are incredibly long. If the stem seems really long, I usually read the last sentence first cause often times you won't even need the rest of the stem to answer the question. If the stem has a graph or chart or something, look at that first too.

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

I would actually take my test earlier. By the last week I was so anxious to take it and felt my studying wasn't as worthwhile. Other than that, I'm happy with how it turned out.

19. Closing remarks?

My best advice is to find what works best for you and DON'T PANIC!! Panicking only makes things worse; your mind just won't work as well if you're totally stressing out. If you put in the time and focus, you'll be just fine!

20. Please fill out the following 2012-2013-month schedule based on your study recommendations and test date: (plus some qbank questions everyday)

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
	Review First Aid	Review First Aid	Review First Aid	Review First Aid	Review First Aid	Review First Aid
Review First Aid	BRS phys, usmle cases	BRS phys, usmle cases	BRS phys, usmle cases	BRS phys, usmle cases	BRS phys, usmle cases	BRS phys, usmle cases
BRS phys, usmle cases	DIT	DIT	DIT	DIT	DIT	Review dit material
Review dit material	DIT	DIT	DIT	DIT	DIT	Review dit material
Review dit material	DIT	DIT	DIT	DIT	DIT	Review dit material
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
Review dit material	DIT	DIT	DIT	DIT	DIT	Review dit material
Qbank/revie w	Qbank/revie w	Qbank/revie w	Qbank/revie w	Qbank/revie w	Qbank/revie w	Qbank/revie w
Qbank/revie w	Qbank/revie w	Qbank/revie w	Qbank/revie w	Relax!!	June 15-test day	