



DOUGLAS COLLEGE

Learning Centre



Tips for Success in Pathophysiology

Studying pathophysiology can be daunting because it requires understanding and critical thinking at a level different from the memorizing skills you used for anatomy and physiology. This handout provides techniques to aid moving from memorizing to deeper understanding and critical thinking. In the end, though, find study strategies that you find work best for you.

- 1. Know your basic anatomy and physiology.** Understanding how the human body works will help you in all aspects of pathophysiology. For example, knowing the overall structure and function of the heart will help you understand how heart failure affects the rest of the body.
- 2. Take good notes.** When doing the course readings for homework, as well as in class during lectures, always actively take notes. Taking good notes will help you study for exams because creating the notes itself helps you learn the material. These become study material that you can use to prepare for the exam instead of having to re-open the textbook to study. Plus, active note-taking while studying helps you prepare for class, where you will be able to take even better notes during the lecture because you come to class prepared.
- 3. Make flash cards.** Once made, flash cards can go anywhere with you as a convenient and mobile way to study wherever. You can create definition flash cards or question and answer flash cards with the answers on the back:
 - i.e.: “What are the clinical manifestations of COPD?”
 - Create questions that facilitate critical thinking instead of just definition answers.
i.e.: “How will the body compensate during hypovolemic shock?”
- 4. Make study sheets:** These are a great way to compile onto one set of sheets all the information you’ve been learning from different resources. Plus, making study sheets is an active way to study and take in the information in a deeper way. You should combine lecture notes and textbook resources so that you have one resource to study when you prepare for exams. Drawing pictures and color coding can especially help visual learners.

5. **Find unique ways to remember the information.** You can do this through relating topic to concepts that are meaningful to you:
 - **Mnemonics:** make your own or find pre-existing ones on Google (always make sure it is a reputable source!)
 - **Connect the info.** Use onomatopoeia, similar sounding words etc. THROMBUS is TIED DOWN and an EMBOLUS ESCAPES
 - However, ensure you understand; don't just memorize.

6. **Study with a group.** Actively talking about what you're studying is a great way to consolidate your learning. A small group of friends are perfect to study with--you can bounce ideas off of each other and learn from one another in a fun, less boring way. However, try to stick to smaller groups because the learning benefit is in actively talking out your learning. Larger groups can make it easy to stay silent and to get distracted.

7. **Case Studies.** Start by first reading the situation to understand the problem. Then, identify the key issue and the body system affected, possible complications, and the etiology behind the disease. Next, highlight all pertinent information, look up words you may not understand, use your notes and textbook to attempt to find the answers. Uncover possible solutions and compare them with the data provided. Make it fun by adopting the attitude that you're a detective trying to solve the mystery of what is occurring in the body!

8. **Use your resources:**
 - Textbook: Use the textbook regularly and strategically as the place to look up specific details and to clarify or read up on a concept you're not familiar with. The textbook is a great research tool for looking up gaps in your knowledge about a specific drug or group of drugs.
 - Tutoring center: Take advantage of the DC learning center on campus. The tutors are there to help you succeed!
 - YouTube: Crash Course, Khan Academy, Armando Hasudangan, and so many more exist!

9. **Ask if you do not understand!** 😊

Reference:

Student Nurse Jennifer (2017, June). 8 Study Tips for Pathophysiology.
 Retrieved From
<https://studentnursejennifer.wordpress.com/2017/06/30/8-study-tips-for-pathophysiology/>