

BACK TO SCHOOL TIPS FOR ATTENDING PINNACLE SCHOOL OF NURSING

Congratulations on your decision to attend a medical program. Now that you've made this awesome decision comes the hard part: ***preparing to go back to school.***

There are big differences between a general schooling program and a medical training program, but the learning structures of both forms of education still share similar supporting values. Many of the tips below may seem like common sense, but out-of-practice students may need some help acclimating themselves into a rigorous learning environment. By following the simple guidelines below, you can set yourself up for success.



- Schedule your studying and working hours. It's quite common to see students plan their first two weeks of school with tenacity, only to see this self-imposed discipline dwindle after a few classes. Even if you feel like you "don't have time" to sit down and create a weekly agenda for yourself, keep in mind that taking ten minutes to do so will increase your daily focus as well as your sense of accomplishment at the end of every day. Creating a daily, weekly, or even monthly schedule for yourself is the best way to ensure that you make time to achieve your goals.

- Plan to study at a time when you are **alert** not tired. Making a schedule for yourself is only the first step. If “studying for an exam,” is only done the night before, you may already be in trouble. While it’s a good idea to review your material the night before an exam, you can get the most out of your studying hours by scheduling study time days or weeks beforehand.

Studying a little each day, it helps.

- Make flashcards. The bulk of medical training is memorization, and flash cards have been proven as a handy tool for remembering and understanding medical information into the brains of students. Reviewing these flash cards daily gives you a better chance of retaining the information.
- Create a dedicated study space that’s quiet and free of distractions.
- Schedule breaks into your studying routine. While it may seem like a worthwhile effort to study for eight hours straight, or even pull a dreaded “all-nighter,” experts have discovered that the human brain can more easily absorb information when that information is divided into chunks. Because of this, students should get into the habit of splitting their study time into **50-minute increments**, with 20-minute breaks to hydrate and refresh.
- Take detailed notes. While this tip may seem especially general, keep in mind that medical training programs often need to handle multiple complex subjects in a short period of time, so paying close attention to how you take your notes is especially crucial to success. Some students find that color-coding different sections of their notes helps them focus better, and some students prefer an organizational method that uses various folders and binders for different courses.
- Know your learning style and use visual aids or videos to help you learn.
- Set realistic goals for yourself and celebrate your wins big and small.
- Use your time wisely. Time management skills are a must.
- Practice self-care habits to prevent burnout. **Eating a healthy diet and getting adequate sleep helps your brain function at its best.**
- Take advantage of all the learning resources your textbooks have to offer.

- Review your notes and other important information after class. This helps you retain the material and clarify information you may not have understood prior to class. Ask questions if you are unsure.
- Do not let a bad grade discourage you from your goal of success. Seek help so you are aware of what it is you need to improve upon.
- Give yourself some grace. Going back to school as a working adult is not easy. You may have to let some things slide or just have to say “NO”.
- Make a friend in class who may help you study and be your accountability partner. They can also help if you miss class.
- **DO NOT PROCRASTINATE.** It is very easy to get overwhelmed if you wait until the last minute to complete assignments. Make sure you set alerts and reminders to what will be due and when.
- Take some time for yourself. Decompressing is essential in rejuvenating your mind. Allowing some **ME time is an important time.**
- Focus on your goals and remember why you are attending your program. **Believing in yourself is half the battle.**

