

## OMSII Success Strategies from the Class of 2024

My recommendations for success for the OMSII year is to keep up with lectures (watch same day) and to go through all the material every single day up until the exam. I personally will wake up early, go through everything after the previous exam up until that day's lecture. Next, I watch that day's lecture on MediaSite, then will review that lecture again. My strategy is to get exposure to the material over and over- I feel that repeat exposure helps me to retain information for the long run rather than just memorize information for the exam.

I also use practice questions provided by teachers and tutors to help aid my studying.

I did not change the way I studied from first year, since it worked for me last year. I also spent the summer reviewing everything from first year, which I believe has helped me thus far.

While I didn't really study over the summer, I was a TA for Anatomy Bootcamp. The high yield review and ability to teach incoming students was a fantastic review of anatomy, and I know that it gave me a significant advantage regarding MSK since the material was fresh in my mind.

In all three courses (Neuro, MSK, and Heme), there are topics that were covered last year. Having been introduced to the content previously, I know what resources work for me and what resources *don't* work for me. Pulling old material helps me learn (or re-learn) much faster than starting from scratch; it's a more familiar approach that easily jogs old memories, and it closely connects first year to second year.

Anytime I am learning something new, I try to stay away from pure memorization. I do my best to understand the "why" and "how" underlying the topic. This "big picture" approach helps my reasoning skills and it's easier for material to stick with me long-term.

Regarding studying, I stay flexible. If a specific studying technique isn't working, I switch it up. This isn't just for different classes, but it can be for different professors or even different subjects within the same professor. Drawing things out may work for a certain topic but talking things aloud or using analogies may be most productive in another situation. Likewise, practice questions may be used to solidify material, but only if you understand the material first. I do my best to prioritize what needs to be learned, and then I try to figure out how to be the most productive with my time. When other students ask me for studying advice, I only tell them how I study after I tell them to do what works best for them (since not everyone learns the same way).

I have fun. Quality of studying is immensely more important than quantity of studying. To maintain a healthy mental status, do what you love to do. For me, I play soccer every week. I feel so much more refreshed afterwards, so when I do study that night or the next morning, I am much more productive.

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I find it helpful to make it through every PowerPoint slide at least 3 times, ideally 5 times if possible. I like to use practice questions from tutors and the professors as well. I think it is important to watch the lectures with the PowerPoint available to star a slide that the professors spend extra time or emphasize. I also think it is important to get at least 45 minutes of exercise a day as well as 8 hours of sleep. I believe sticking to a schedule consistently is extremely beneficial.

I do things a little bit old school when I am learning new material. The only thing I changed from first year was adding in watching Pathoma videos to supplement the material we are learning and re-watching old Sketchy Micro and Pixorize videos.

As far as studying goes, I go to lecture and really listen to the professor and annotate/highlight important info on my iPad. I then write on paper the important material from that lecture later that day and review these over and over again.

I did this in OMSI year and I feel like it really helped me retain material for the long term. I also do any practice questions the professors/tutors provide and watch tutoring on the weekends from that previous week.

For Heme, MSK, and neuro I have been doing this same method and really focusing on the practice questions the professors provide. I think doing their questions gives students a good idea of how that professor might ask questions for the exam. Finally, I really think it comes down to being disciplined and being consistent with going back and reviewing the material from that day and from earlier in the week.

I share making study guides with a friend and we review them the day of the lecture.

Each weekend, we study our study guides we made for the classes during the past week to make sure we understand the content.

We do lots of PQs once we have a pretty good grip on the material (especially professor PQs, other PQs come from AMBOSS, tutor made PQs and textbooks if we can find them-textbook PQs were more available first year).

We quiz each other off of our study guides multiple times

We take about a 10 minute break every 1/1.5hrs

This has been my study strategy since first year and it has worked well this semester too! I also try to get 7-8hrs of sleep each night. I did not study over summer prior to OMSII year.

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I study very similarly for each course. I think what helps me feel the most prepared in my studies is having a study partner that I can quiz and bounce ideas off of. I also try to make a one-page summary study guide for each of the lectures with the most pertinent information. I like to go to lectures in person and then make the study guides and then quiz/teach my study partner based on those study guides. It is a method that I developed first year that continues to work for me. Also, do LOTS of practice questions. The more experience I have with exam type questions the more prepared I feel for the actual exam.

First, I would like to disclose that first year I tried multiple different study techniques and continued to refine them to be the most time effective for me while making sure I'm still getting all the information. With that being said, this is what I currently do:

I print every lecture (3 to a page to save paper) and then go to class and hand write my notes on the slides, I find handwriting super helpful in remembering things. Then I go home and do a "hard pass" for every lecture that day. My hard pass takes about an hour and 30 minutes per lecture. During the hard pass, I take the time to understand all the information and google words I don't know or use supplemental resources (YouTube or Google) for things I'm not understanding from the slides. The week before the exam I do a "soft pass" where I read through every lecture on the exam again to pull everything I'd previously learned to the front of my mind. The weekend before I do practice questions and do a mini test for myself.

A couple other things too:

If there is a pathway to learn, get a marker and paper and draw it a couple times to help it stick.

Use Pathoma for Heme for an additional resource.

For Heme, do Dr. Wang's practice questions on his blog.

Make sure you're not just memorizing the slides (it's not helpful), **you have to understand what the words mean** and why it makes sense.

Do as many practice questions as you can and if you get it wrong know why.

The last thing I'll say is something I do before every exam that I honestly feel is the most helpful for me mentally (even though it may sound silly). 10 minutes before the exam starts, I look at myself in the mirror and have a pep talk, I tell myself the exam will be challenging but that I CAN do it if I focus and think through it. I cannot start an exam without doing this, it is essential for me.

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I would say the best study tip I have that I think works for me is to get as many active passes through the information as I can before exam time. Which means reviewing each lecture's content hopefully at least three or four times before test day. I used to read PowerPoints and make study sheets which were passive studying but I found that second semester of first year and this semester, Anki has been better because of the active recall component. I know not everyone is an Anki person but anything that allows active recall of certain topics is great (I used to do Quizlet as well but that is a lot more time consuming). I also supplement confusing or particularly difficult components in lecture with the First Aid book and Dirty Medicine or Pathoma videos. Those resources are able to make some very difficult topics a lot more understandable, from a different perspective as well.

The summer before 2nd year I would recommend using that time to relax. In my opinion there is no way you can really cover enough material to prepare you for the amount of information in the MSK/Heme/Clin Neuro courses. Also, there is so much information from first year covering all of that is a daunting task as well. I feel like it just would add too much stress during a time that is supposed to be stress free. However, IF someone felt like they just had to review something over the summer I would recommend reviewing Pharm, neuronal pathways in Neuro Anatomy, and the major muscle groups of the different body regions. Just light review so that when you see the terms again it isn't so shocking.

During the school year I try to review every lecture 3 times in a 24-hour period. I don't always succeed but I think it is a good goal to shoot for. I will listen to the lecture live, then in the afternoon I will make my own study guide based off that lecture, then the following morning I will try to complete an Anki deck for that lecture. WARNING, this is very time consuming, and I don't always get to the 3rd pass in 24 hours but again, I try my best to do so.

Try not to get behind on lectures. I know some people like to use the weekends to "catch up" on lectures they missed from the week. I'm sure that works for some people but, I like to be completely caught up on lectures by Friday afternoon so that when Saturday and Sunday come around, I can review the week's material and fill in any gaps I may have.

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I would have to say time is the biggest component for me. I need time to become familiar with the material. In order to do this my social interactions are often studying and reviewing with friends and talking through what they thought was most "High Yield" from each lecture. One of my good friends and I spend the week leading up to the exam creating a power point with general "High Yield" from each lecture and any disease process within the lecture. This has been very helpful in narrowing down the material and at the same time imagining what the test questions could be targeting.

I also watched nearly every tutor for the first two blocks. I found the repeated exposure to the material was helpful along with hearing the material explained in a different way. I have been attending most lectures in person as well. I find that when a lecture is given in person I absorb the material more than a streamed/recorded lecture.

I've added a few Board prep resources to my study schedule such as Pathoma and USMLErx. I've found these resources help me pick out the topics that are highly tested on boards and I make sure I am very familiar with these topics as most professor's target test questions to these topics.

On test days I wake up a couple hours early (after getting a good nights sleep), eat breakfast, and review the "High Yield" powerpoint my friend and I created. This warms my brain up and reminds me of test topics I could possibly see. Finally, 15 minutes before the test I clear my space and do some deep breaths and remind myself "I can do this". Test anxiety has been a struggle for me, and this seem to help keep the jitters at bay.

While the majority of my time is spent studying, I do try to find time for myself. When I put school work away I put it out of my head and really enjoy my breaks. I trust myself that everything will come together by test day to keep the stress as low as possible.

Over the summer I watched all the Sketchy pathology, Pathoma, and Boards & Beyond videos for the musculoskeletal, hematology, immunology, neurology, cardiology, renal, and respiratory systems. During this time I also began doing the Anki cards associated with each of these resources. I've found that familiarizing myself with the pathologies prior to starting OMS-II has helped me establish a foundation in which I've been able to build upon based on the lecture content this semester.

In terms of exam preparation, I always make my own study guides in each course. In doing so, it helps me focus my studies on the learning objectives so that I can synthesize the information presented during each lecture.

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Live lectures don't work well for me, and I get overwhelmed/zone out watching 4 lectures in a row, so I watch Mediasite primarily. I watch one lecture at a time, then I take notes for that one lecture on my iPad (hopefully not more than 2-3 pages per lecture). While I take my notes, I try to understand the material (not necessarily memorize the tiny details) and organize it in a way that will facilitate memorization (color coding, etc). Then I move onto the next lecture, make my notes, and so on until I get through all the lectures for the day.

While I make my notes, I also reference the relevant material in Pathoma and First Aid. I'm not board studying right now, but I do like to see how Board-relevant certain lectures are, and sometimes these resources help to get a big-picture view of the material that was presented, provide useful mnemonics, or point out something I missed in lecture.

As I do practice questions throughout the week and watch tutoring, I will add to / edit my notes and during exam weekends, I primarily study just my notes.


Since way more of our test questions this year are 3rd order and more board style than last year, I have found that I need a much more solid understanding of this material than was necessary last year, which means I put A LOT of study time in. Last year, there were times I could cram a bunch of info on an exam weekend, and there is no way I can do that this year, so I try to stay caught up as best as possible.

Personally, I did not do any summer prep. However, I highly recommend that students explore supplemental resources over summer break and figure out which ones will be most beneficial for them. I wish I did this earlier because I did struggle to figure out which resources to use.

I highly recommend Pathoma, especially for Heme. It's very helpful in lectures that were dense and it helped me grasp the bigger picture instead. I also write out key concepts that help me differentiate between pathologies, which is probably one of the biggest things in all the classes. I have been doing Anki and practice questions on Amboss plus questions that previous students have written. Tutoring has been helpful in figuring out which concepts are high yield.

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Preview lectures the night before.

Attend live lecture. During lecture, type out recall questions based on the lecture content. An example would be: “What are the lab findings associated with disease X?” Or “What is the mechanism of action for drug X?” I like to use OneNote for this, because it allows you to hide the text under each question by double clicking the  next to the number of each questions

In the evening, I use active recall to answer the questions I typed out during class. I try to say the answer out loud in my own words. If I get it wrong, I look at my notes and try again. I do this until I can answer the question correctly from memory. Once I can, I type out the answer. These questions then become my study guide.

Review the questions about 2 days later, and (at least) a third time before the test. I highlight all of the questions that I don't know well as I'm reviewing.

I do practice questions over the weekend. Even if you fall behind and don't feel ready, start them early because they will help guide your studying.

The days leading up to the test, I do more practice questions and review the highlighted items on my study guides.

Sometimes I use Anki for subjects that are very memorization heavy (pharm, micro etc.). I've found that for me personally, Anki can fool me into thinking I know content better than I do.