

Tips for effective study groups

1. Your study group should be no more than 4 people. Having more than 4 people in a group often means everyone is not able to get their needs addressed and can often be too distracting and overwhelming due to side conversations, etc.
2. Limit study group sessions to no more than two hours. If you find you are not finished with everything in those two hours, take a break for a while and then come back to the group. Spending too much time together at once can lead to frustration.
3. Friends, roommates, or others with whom you have a relationship with outside of the group may not be the best people to have a group with. There might be too much of a temptation to discuss outside issues. If it's a roommate, "did you clean up that mess you made?" or if it is a friend "did you watch that game/tv show last night?"
4. Stick to one course/subject/system per session. While you may want to talk about MFM, Histology, and MGA, discuss those in separate sessions so you can focus on the subject/course at hand. You will find it is easier to focus, concentrate, and accomplish more when you focus on one course at a time/per session.
5. Have a set agenda for each session. One idea is for each person to add an agenda item for a concept or topic in the course which is challenging for him/her. This should help alleviate concerns and feelings that "everyone else" is farther ahead on the material. This allows each person the opportunity to both be vulnerable with an area of weakness, but also help another student through an area of strength.
6. Someone should be designated as the facilitator for each session, this should rotate each time so that the same person does not monopolize the sessions. The facilitator will be responsible for keeping everyone on task and making sure the group sticks to the agenda at hand.
7. Practice questions are excellent for study groups. There is a process of breaking down practice questions that is very helpful. First, you block out the answer choices. Second, you divide the details in the stem into two categories, that which are important and those details that might seemingly be important but are not in answering the question. This is good with a partner or group because there are details others might notice you will not and vice versa. This also leads to a good discussion. Third, you want to clarify what the question is asking. Since many questions are missed because the question was misread or lack of understanding of what the question might be asking, clarifying what

question is being asked and coming to a consensus with your group members can be valuable. Next, make a guess at the answer before looking at the answer choices.

Once you look at the answer choices, going through this process will give you much more insight. If the answer is “B” also see what detail or details in the stem you may need to change in order to make the correct answer “C” and so on.

8. Each person should come as prepared as possible for the study group. Make use of your individual study time to be as knowledgeable as possible about the topics at hand.
9. Record each session. Having a recording of each session might be helpful and beneficial regarding what was discussed previously. You may never revert back to your recordings, but it certainly can't hurt anything.