

Introduction

Congratulations on getting into medical school. With many applicants taking time off to résumé-build and the average accepted MCAT (Medical College Admission Test) score rising yearly, the applicant pool for entrance is increasingly competitive. Many say the hardest part of medical school is getting in. Reflecting back on my own medical school career, I can say with confidence that getting in was the hard part. So again, congratulations on being one of the select few. Now let out a sigh of relief. All those years of hard work and extracurricular activities have paid off.

Starting medical school is nerve-racking. Rumor is, medical students study from sunup to sundown, with no time to enjoy themselves. Mentally preparing for this type of life is a thankless hardship. The fact is, these rumors are false. As with most meaningful endeavors, the intensity of medical school occurs in cycles. Sometimes as a medical student you'll have to study most of the day, but now and then you'll have free time! You won't have to give up all your hobbies if you work intelligently and efficiently. The point of this book is to help you learn how to best manage your time in medical school. I almost always had time to do what I desired, and most weekends I was able to enjoy myself. I never had to pull an all-nighter, and seldom did I even have to study past 10:00 p.m. My goal was always to do well in school while enduring as little stress as possible.

Sadly, this was not the case for a lot of my classmates, who all too often worked inefficiently and as a result became stressed, trading free time for anxiety. I learned how to avoid this trap through trial and error but often wished someone had told me what medical school was *really* going to be like. This guidebook is designed to help the student who is

now in the position I once found myself in—without a guide. It is meant to help the novice medical student generate a game plan to be efficient, do well in school, and incur minimal stress.

The chapters concerning the first and second years of medical school are meant to be read the summer before you start school, while the remaining chapters can be read at your leisure, sometime before the start of the third year. Each chapter starts with a vignette taken from my life—from in-class studying to enduring the daily grind of a hard rotation. Here you will glimpse the sights, sounds, and feelings of a medical student, and each vignette is followed by instruction about how, with efficiency, intelligence, and minimal stress, to tackle medical school. Remember this: medical school isn't as bad as everyone says it is as long as you avoid making the mistakes most students make. This book will ensure you do just that.