

Strategies for Studying for In-Service Exams and/or Boards during Residency

- Assess your **board study style** at <http://knowledgeplus.nejm.org/study-tips/what-is-your-study-style/>. Depending upon your approach to studying, this site will provide you with a helpful guide for studying for board exams. (Note: You will have to input your name and email to receive the PDF guide.) While the guide offers a brief overview of strategies, the recommendations are supported by relevant research.
- [How to Study During Your Residency](#). This blog, by Mary Brandt, MD, recommends setting up a “training” program for your reading and review by taking the steps below. (Visit the website for specific details for each step.)
 1. Buy the textbook in the field.
 2. Map out the year into 46 week “blocks” and divide the textbook into sections and assign these sections to your study blocks.
 3. Make the textbook portable to enable review when you find 5 – 10 minutes available.
 4. Read ahead and/or adjust your schedule, especially if you can align the content with a specific patient case.
 5. Implement the Survey, Question, Read, Review, Recite reading strategy.
 6. Create notes or study aids as you read so that you don’t have to return back to the book (e.g., flash cards or utilize technology with Word, Evernote, OneNote, Mindmeister, or Xmind.)
 7. Organize your system for review, spacing out review and randomizing review to increase long-term recall.
- [Internal Medicine Certification Exam: Your Residency as a Study Tool](#). This blog, by the JEJM Knowledge team, recommends the following tips:
 1. After every patient encounter, ask yourself, “What is the main clinical point of what I just observed?” Then, mentally, put the patient scenario in context with the disease state you are addressing.
 2. At the end of each day, to increase retention of essential information, read relevant content nightly (e.g., articles, clinical studies, guidelines, case reports).
 3. Combine reading with working board review question banks, while topics are still fresh in your mind.
 4. Review the ABIM Certification Blueprint to make sure that you are knowledgeable about the test specifications. Visit the ABIM 2015 Blueprint here: http://www.abim.org/pdf/blueprint/im_cert.pdf.
 5. To prepare for the ABIM Certification Exam, take a practice test to assess areas of strength and weakness.
 6. Develop your study plan and schedule based on your self-assessment and revisit/refine as needed.

Additional Resources

- [Developing Self-Regulated Learning Habits Can Help Residents be Better Learners](#). This online article published by the American College of Surgeons, defines self-regulation, self-regulated learning (SRL), discusses characteristics of self-regulated learners, and offers strategies for facilitating learning.
- [Finding the Learning Sweet Spot: Insights on Residency Training](#). This blog, by Sarah Bergman Lewis, MD, offers advice for developing good learning habits in residency, including looking up answers to questions that you’re curious about, breaking up learning into “nuggets,” and more.