

Dear M1,

Make sure this is something you really want to do. If you got this far, it probably is. There's truly no rush in deciding on a specialty - keep your options open. Everyone will tell you XYZ matters or doesn't matter. Honestly, just do your own thing b/c it's all convoluted anyway. I was pretty lazy during preclinicals, so I would've studied harder. But, most of your real learning will be during clinicals anyway. Preclinicals ~~is~~^{are} basically just for your resume. Put in enough effort but don't make your life miserable. Also just be a generally friendly and open person in clinicals and you'll be fine. My first patient interaction was terrifying but it becomes second nature so quickly. Don't forget your end goal so you don't burn out. You can do it!

PS - don't use reddit for med school advice. And read your emails unlike me. Also don't report residents for letting you leave early. PLEASE don't be that person.

Hello M1,

Med School is not that bad. You should try your best, study hard & take it seriously. However, leave plenty of time for friends, family and social activities.

It is not that serious & you will be fine if you have a rotation or exam doesn't go well. Never neglect relationships with family, friends or significant others. It is important to remember that while school & academics are important, there are always more important things in life. Also, get a dog, dogs are the best thing to ever exist and will make your life so much better.

Dear MI,

You are about to embark on a crazy journey. It will be filled with many different highs and lows. There will be times when things feel difficult and overwhelming. But you will find ways to get through it. You always have and that's why you are here. Lean on your family and friends for support. Do the things outside of medicine that make you happy. I promise at the end of the day, your patients care that you are a good and kind doctor who will take care of them, in possibly the scariest time of their life. Learn as much as you can while you are here, but don't forget to also live your life. You are so much more than the future doctor who honored/ didn't honor every single class or rotation. You've got this. The days are long, but the years are short. Good luck! I look forward to working alongside you one day. 😊 (sorry, that smiley face is creepy)

Dear M1,

It's not that serious. It's going to be fine.
You don't need to honor everything.
Just do well.

Please don't become trapped in a
bubble of privilege. There's wars &
genocides happening. People are being
kidnapped off the street. Healthcare is still
so inequitable. Don't just focus on school
all day. Go out and help people. Speak out
against injustice. No matter your background,
it's a sign of privilege to be at a US MD/DO
school. Use it well.

Also if you have a bad partner, dump them 😊

- MA

Dear M1,

As you start your medical school journey, you're probably scared. Good - you should be. The truth is, everybody who enters is scared, whether they are willing to admit it or not. The good news is, you are also prepared for everything in front of you. I know that it sounds crazy, but there is nothing you will encounter that you cannot handle, and you may be surprised all that entails. That being said it's a lot of work. But think of this as an investment in yourself. When you have those late nights and early mornings, you are laying the foundation for a lifetime of expertise down the road. Lastly, make sure that you enjoy yourself while you train in medical school. It's not that deep star you to be miserable for 4 years. Get out there and meet/enjoy your peers, as this is another investment in yourself and your happiness, and is just as important for your ultimate success in medical school.

Good Luck!

- Austin

Dear M1,

You are so much more than your test scores, your ability to memorize specific physical exam checklist items, or your academic achievement. You need to take tender care of yourself. Sleep, sing, cry, go outside. Take the time to reflect on what you're trying to put out in the world. Call those you love. Go to therapy. Learn what you can now, but know there will always be more ahead. You should take the night off to watch a movie. Take the weekend to catch up with friends. The books will always be there when you're ready and able. You are priceless. You will figure everything out in time. You're exactly where you worked so hard to be, so do your best to be proud. You're already enough.

With love,
An M3

Dear M1,

M4 here. Post-ranklist submission. It's true that days are long but weeks, months, years are short. As an M1, I began losing sight of why I even came here. My thoughts became unfamiliar to me. However, one of my previous teachers wrote to me as I was starting undergrad. She told me, "you will find yourself in strange places, distant neighborhoods. But don't stay there long. Your gifts are the real thing." This kept me grounded in med school. Yes, the academic, physical, and emotional loads are high. But looking back at it now, it's curved and redefined what I want out of myself as someone going into the greatest profession there is. So as you find yourself in distant neighborhoods wondering if you'll make it to the next exam, nonetheless, the next Friday, don't stay there long. Your gifts are the real deal. Home in on your mission, your why. Be as curious as your mind allows. And most importantly, be kind to yourself. There is always a victory everyday, no matter how small. Your entry into medicine is, in and of itself, a victory for the field.

You've got it!

Dear M1,

Hello! I am super proud of you for making it here and you should be proud of yourself too. It's not easy getting to where you are now.

A lot of people will tell you also about how hard med school is and that you need to be prepared to be a robot, to study all the time, to be embarrassed by other things or yelled at by nurses. But medical school is just school and you are still you. Still do the things you like, still find friends you love cooking with or working out with or watching movies with, still sleep in and take days off and go on trips when you can. You won't never a mistake but there will be people who will be there for you when you do and your real life which is eating and sleeping and hanging out with friends and cuddling your pets will still go on.

Sometimes, things will be hard, that's true. Sometimes you'll be tired and won't have the energy or time to do much besides school responsibilities. But those times ~~are~~ come and go. What stays is whether you can find the humor in ridiculous hospital situations or the joy in small comforts or the surprise in randomly seeing a friend during a busy time for both of you. You'll be told or convinced you have to let go of the funny and fun parts of yourself if to do medicine but you don't and you shouldn't.

Go on walks, touch some grass, use the free med school therapy, go to the Haunted Bookshop if you need to pet a cat for free. Give as much grace to yourself as you would give to others, ~~and~~ because this is a hard thing and you deserve it.

And for M4 year is as great as everyone says it is. You'll get the core day too! And you're going to be great! Hang in there and I think it's epic that you and I got to go to the same school and I got to say hi to you.

Good luck! :)

Sincerely,
mM4

Dear M1,

You are probably not going to remember all of the muscles in the forearm, or which microbes are catalase positive, or what distinguishes a papule from a macule at the end of these 4 years. And honestly that's okay! That's what google is for! But, you will remember when you and your friends stifled laughter during an attendance required lecture, the first time you broke sterile field in the OR, the first baby you saw being born, & the first time you actually helped a patient. You will remember the trips you took, the weekends you stayed up late doing something other than studying, & all the big life milestones that happen in these 4 years that have nothing to do with med school. Please don't let studying consume you. There is so much more to be learned in living a joy-filled life outside of work & school that will make you a better doctor more than doing those extra

anki cards will. There surely will be days you have to study, but don't let that be all of your days. When it is hard, remember why you started, and find things that reconnect you to that why. This will help you not only to get through the day you are in but also figure out where you should go.

you got this! Find people who love + support you, to celebrate your wins + grieve your losses with. You will look back on this crazy journey in 4 years, and I hope you can smile at the person you've become. I didn't think I could do it, but I did + I know you will too.



Dear M1,

I want you to know that it all turns out okay. In the beginning, I had so many fears about everything- would I make friends, would I pass, am I smart enough, am I good enough. Every exam felt like life or death. Looking back now, I wish I hadn't spent so much time worrying. You are here for a reason. You are exactly where you are supposed to be, and you will always end up exactly where you are supposed to be. Med school went by really fast. I remember when I started, I cried because I couldn't imagine doing this - sacrificing so much - for 4 entire years. But now, nearing the end of that journey, I wish it had lasted longer. Not the crying, of course, but all the other things. I made my best friends for life in med school. I entered med school at the beginning of my 20's, and now I'm leaving on the later half. I grew, I learned, I became new versions of myself. I watched two of my best friends get married. I watched one of my best friends become a mom. I spent countless evenings at MERF with them, laughing so hard our stomachs hurt, laughing at the absurdity of everything we were going through. I learned what actually matters - not grades, not prestige, but people. I fell in love (twice) and experienced heartbreak. I felt the unimaginable joy of opening my step score email. I felt the terror of standing in an anatomy practical and not having a clue what the structure is. Med school made me feel so human, and it brought me so much closer to understanding what being human means. Talking with a crying patient, helping a newborn baby enter this world, watching a man take his last breath; all these things are powerful reminders of how beautiful our time here is, and what an honor it is to be able to dedicate your life to walk with people through these moments in their lives. My advice for you is to take a breath between Anki cards and slow down to realize how special and beautiful this process is, and how lucky we are to be able to experience it, even in the hard parts. My advice is to say yes to the post-exam drinks at Joe's place, take the extra elective that interests you, and spend the extra 5 minutes hearing your elderly patient's story. As crazy as it may sound to you, you're going to miss these moments when your rank list is submitted and all the hard work is done. You're here to learn and experience, and your life does not get put on hold during med school. Make sure to slow down and live it!

Sincerely,

M4

Dear M1,

Congratulations on starting this transformative journey.

No doubt about it, but it will be a long and arduous journey. But you already knew that!

Perhaps you are one of the blessed ones who always scores highly on exams and can absorb material from a fire hydrant like a sponge. Or perhaps you may find yourself struggling like so many others. I want you to know that it is not just about scores and tests in medicine. Whatever specialty you choose, start forming connections and network when you can. It doesn't have to be right away in your first year, but great mentors are ~~truly~~ truly essential. And it's okay to search for and drop mentors as needed if you feel you are not a good fit with them.

And don't compare yourselves with others, tempting as it is to talk about grades and such! Even the AOA and GHHS-awarded, high 280+ Step 2 scorers do not match while the "average" medical student may. Have a good narrative for why your chosen specialty and be kind to yourself and others. There's always going to be some toxic students and gunners. Don't be one of them!

In terms of studying, don't go overboard with too many study resources. Pick a few you like and stick with them! Active recall works well in med school, no cramming last minute!

Make time for sleep, good food, and friends. I slept an average of 7 ~ 7.5 hours every night, even in surgical rotations. It can be done! You got this! You are not just a medical student. Perhaps you are a parent (to humans or fur/scale/feather babies) or you are a runner/swimmer/gamer. Keep your hobbies up! Lots of residency interviews ask about those hobbies. They want to work with kind and cool people, not robots.

And lastly, if you need help, reach out! No one will think less of someone who admits they need help. I wish I learned that earlier.

Good luck, M1. I'm proud of you.

Lots of hugs,

M4

Dear M1,

Congratulations on getting accepted to med school and having the opportunity to pursue one of the most rewarding yet challenging career paths! The beginning will no doubt be filled with excitement and joy, especially as the higher-ups transition you into your new life. But be warned that the next four years will change you - possibly for the better but potentially for the worse. You will learn more than you ever thought possible; however this may come at the cost of your sanity (even if only temporarily) and overall well-being. You may have little time to spend with loved ones. You may have little time to enjoy your hobbies and interests. You may have little time to do much of anything. The initial joy and desire to help every aspect of your patients' lives will wane. You may find yourself losing your empathy. You may find through any gaffes you commit that many of your peers and the administration don't truly care for you. You may find yourself on the brink of failure and even suicide. But through your own grit and determination, you persevere. You realize what got you this far and why you pursued medicine in the first place. Through this adversity you'll come out stronger and more resilient than ever. And remember that you're here for a reason - and that you'll become a great doctor for it.

Sincerely,
An M4