



How to Study for the MCAT

We have surveyed hundreds of students over the years, and the suggestions below come directly from our students and the Association of American Medical Colleges, the organization that directly oversees the MCAT. Every student is unique, so no one approach is best for everyone. These tips are meant to help you plan how to create a study plan that works for you.

- Read as much as you can for “fun” while you are in college. This will help you on the verbal reasoning section later on.
- Decide if you want to take a class or study on your own.. Whether you take a class or not, you are going to have to create a study schedule and stick to it.
- Register for the test in December or January of your junior year (unless you are taking a gap year), and plan to take it in May or June.
- Research the MCAT at www.aamc.org. This website has TONS of information, including a fee assistance program, study tools, registration information, scoring, test day tips, etc. Spend some time on their website to find out as much as you can about the exam, even before you register.
- Take a pre-test to get a baseline score. You can obtain practice MCAT's at www.aamc.org. One is free, then they are \$35 each after that. If you take a class or buy materials through AAMC, ExamKrackers, Kaplan or Princeton Review, they usually have practice tests as well, but be sure to take the AAMC ones in addition to any commercial tests.
- Create a study schedule. Make sure it's realistic and that you stick to it. On average, students study between 8-15 hours per week for about 4-5 months. Students usually start out at about 8-10 hours per week and then increase their time closer to the date. Make a calendar and write down specific topics you'd like to cover.
- Take one practice test for each month of studying. Be sure to time yourself and do full length exams, so you know if your studying is accurate. Be sure to review the rules for testing on www.aamc.org and mimic those rules when you are doing practice tests (e.g. no food or drink, take the test in a computer lab, NOT at home, take the entire exam and time yourself, etc)
- Visit Student Educational Services in the AMU, 407 if you'd like help with time management, test-taking strategies, etc. Sometimes, students need help determining how to study effectively (e.g. don't plan to study for 6 hours at a time if you know you'll only be able to focus for 2-3 hours total).
- Utilize various study techniques. Test prep materials vary. For example, you may want to incorporate an audio cd into your studying if you are an auditory learner.
- Think about forming a study group and adding a weekly study group to your schedule.