

# THINGS I WISH I KNEW AS AN MS1



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## ADVICE FROM UPPER-CLASS STUDENTS

**You have to become a self-directed learner-** You need to figure out when and what to study, how deep to go, and when you've gone far enough. Learning is your full responsibility and things won't be given to you as they were in undergrad. Things might not be clear at first, but they will eventually come together and you'll learn how to be self-directed.

**Trust yourself-** It might be scary at first but rely on the skills you've developed to get here. You are intelligent. You can do this

**The pace moves quickly, use CPR to adjust and don't fall behind-** If you slack off you'll fall behind and there is very little time for catching up. In undergrad you could probably get away with not reading, or not coming to every class fully prepared. Here that won't work.

**The structure of the program and expectations is very different from undergrad-** From the way you study, prepare, attend PEARLS and Large Group to how you are assessed, everything is new. It is difficult to know what you know and know what you don't know on a weekly basis and this can be uncomfortable. Don't be afraid to ask for help-upper class students, the faculty and student support offices can offer strategies to help

*"There is a structure to the curriculum, but it is more open for you to find resources and find how you learn individually and that was the biggest adjustment for me in starting here."*

*"If something isn't working for you, stop doing it. If one textbook doesn't work, stop and find another way. Use the thing that works better. Figure out what doesn't work for you and don't continue it because you think it should work."*

*"I think the main function of CPR is to calibrate you to depth. That's a big thing coming into PEARLS. You'll know if you are over or under prepared. Try everything and try different things and CPR is the time to figure it all out. Let yourself off the hook for random details but know the big stuff. Ask advice from everyone"*

*"It is not enough to have notes and memorize it – to internalize it you have to present questions to yourself and be confident in answering them."*  
*"Write down questions being asked by professors"*  
*"Meet with professors and have them pose questions to you – even getting them wrong is valuable – better technique than just reviewing notes."*

**You'll lean on your peers**– Before you probably relied on professors as your main source of content. Here you must trust your peers to be prepared and to participate in PEARLS to help you gain knowledge and point you in the right direction. This can be an interesting transition, especially if you're someone who is used to studying in isolation.

*"I couldn't succeed without a solid study group of students to work with, quiz, and challenge each other, both through triggers and outside of class. It is integral to be able to work with a group... Groups challenge you and it is the best thing I've learned to embrace."*

**You must learn to connect material**- Instead of thinking about topics as isolated and independent or just memorizing material, you'll think in big pictures and at a deeper level. This is demonstrated by the theme for the week's content so you can really see how things come together. Draw concept maps and diagrams to help synthesize information. This will help you with higher order thinking that you'll need to be a successful physician.

*"I had to learn to understand the WHY behind it vs. memorizing info. I had to figure out what worked for me in terms of sources and active review, which was a big change for me. This was something new for me, but I realized that if I didn't do active review weekly from the start I would fall behind quickly."*

**Find the balance between individual study and group study**- Most students will do prework alone, then come together in a group to review and consolidate

*"To work efficiently in a group for PEARLS means I must research alone and then at night before discussing the PEARLS case in class, we discuss and meet and read different sources all together. This way, someone else can add details I missed. Eventually everyone has to be at a similar threshold level of understanding to work well in groups. Only then can you collaborate, review, check and ask questions from the group."*

Interested in more tips? Stop in or make an appointment with the Office of Academic Success! [SOMAcademicSuccess@Hofstra.edu](mailto:SOMAcademicSuccess@Hofstra.edu)