

A Recipe for Family Medicine Clerkship Success

1. **First and foremost, be enthusiastic and engaged!** Act excited about what you are learning and show an interest in the specialty. Remember, there's a little bit of every specialty in family medicine so you will learn pertinent skills no matter what your ultimate interest is.
2. **Be a great team member! Helping your team and showing initiative are essential ingredients of success.** This includes anticipating what needs to be done and doing it.
3. **It's essential to know your patients well, which includes reading up on their illnesses and upcoming surgeries.** You can also do the corresponding articles/cases that pertain to a patient's diagnosis (see the assignment tracker for details)
4. **Share what you've learned with the attending and the team.** "Spending 10 minutes during lunch looking up your patient's complaint, common causes of this and reporting back to your team at the appropriate time is much more important than spending a couple of hours at night reading about it and never discussing this with your team."
5. **Participate (even if you are shy or uncertain) and don't be afraid to get answers wrong!** A majority of students commented that being wrong is not nearly as important as students fear it is. Go back and find out the answer to a question you got wrong and report back to your team. One medical student said, "Answering questions wrong is NOT a red flag, but not trying is."
6. **Ask for concrete feedback. Stay positive when you receive it and don't be defensive (even when it's tempting!)** Try not to view it as a personal attack but an opportunity to learn. Remember, once you ask for feedback, follow through on the suggestions that you receive.
7. **Oral presentations are very important so put in the time to do them well.** They should be well-organized and CONCISE, touching on only the most important details. Keep in mind the goal of the presentation-to convey information to your attendings and the team.
8. **Be personable and never underestimate the importance of getting along well with others.** This includes attendings, residents, nurses, janitors, receptionists.
9. **Asking questions is a great thing but moderation is important and there is a time and place for all things. Don't pester but rather be engaging!** The team's top priority is the patients. When a team is busy or a patient is really sick, you may be ignored. Pay attention to what they do, read, and ask questions at a quieter time.
10. **Adapt, Adapt, Adapt.** "Adaptability is, hands down, one of the most important keys in third and fourth year. Every rotation, site, attending, resident, and staff member is different. Go with the flow. They all want something different and may give critical feedback. I tried to take this as an opportunity to learn different styles and not as an insult."
11. **Study hard for the exam.**
12. **Find a mentor.** Forge a relationship with someone on the team. In general, identify a mentor (such as your college mentor) that can help you strategize for your clerkships and career planning. You can share information or difficult experiences with that person confidentially, and he or she will help you to figure out what to do next. This is not "whining". It is helping you to respond in the best way for you.
13. **Work hard to master the skills of the clerkship.**

The Don't List

1. **Don't just disappear.** "This seems obvious but a lot of students will disappear for a few minutes to hours. You may seem invisible but you're not. "Don't leave without asking."
2. **Never try to outshine your classmates or your teams.** "This is a big red-flag."
3. **Don't show disinterest in the clerkship.** If you are interested in another specialty, tell the family medicine faculty. They can help shape your experience to be more pertinent to your career goals.
4. **Don't show up late.**
5. **Don't give a case presentation without being prepared.**
6. **Don't be defensive when given feedback.**
7. **Don't rely on residents and attendings to initiate teaching.** Go in with attitude that it is your responsibility to learn.
8. **Don't get so comfortable with residents that you "jokingly" say things that come off as offensive or uncouth.**