

FOOT AND ANKLE RESEARCH CONSORTIUM Inc.

“where learning is a plus”

MODERN TEST PREPARATION TIPS

1. Memorization will only get you so far.

Today, modern question writers are specifically instructed to avoid testing easily-memorized facts. The exam's goal is to test understanding of podiatric, orthopedic and medical science; not recall. Few questions will ask you to simply name a disease, procedure, pathogen, or enzyme from memory. It's more likely you will be asked to apply a concept to an unfamiliar scenario, something that's very difficult to do purely from recall. While memorized facts may help to some degree, you will do much better if you to understand WHY a memorized fact is important rather than just the fact itself.

2. There are lots of experimental questions that don't count toward your score.

The boards need questions that “discriminate” among strong and weak test takers. The best questions are answered correctly by students who score highly on the test overall, and answered incorrectly by students who perform poorly. These allow the boards to separate students into groups that can be assigned a score.

To find good questions, many experimental questions are placed throughout your test to collect data. Lots of these are later thrown out because of poor performance.

For example, we once saw a question that less than five percent of test takers answered correctly. It was ultimately thrown out, but only after a few hundred students answered it for data collection purposes. Many of those students probably left their exam ruminating over this question. Experimental questions like these can account for as many as 20 percent of your exam, and they don't count toward your score.

Don't panic during the test if you see a bizarre question. And don't base your study plan around comments from other students like, “I had a crazy question on my exam about ...”

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3. About half of the questions on boards are relatively easy.

The boards need a range of question difficulty to spread students out in terms of scores. All questions cannot be brain twisters. Even though super-difficult questions are much discussed among test-takers, not every question is like this. About half the questions on all board exams are straightforward. If you put in solid work to prepare, you will get these questions right.

4. More than 90 percent of what you study will not appear on your exam.

You can pound podiatric facts, figures, formulae and biologic-adjuvants into your brain only to see no questions about them on your test. With only a few hundred questions, the boards cannot even come close to covering every potential topic. When you begin to study, do your best to understand everything. But as the test gets near; don't worry if one particular topic is giving you trouble. It likely won't appear on your exam.

5. Reading comprehension and vocabulary skills are important.

Once a student told us she believed he had found a practice question with two right answers. She thought the word *attenuate* meant the same thing as *accentuate* when in fact these words are opposites. And, of course, one of the incorrect answer choices fit perfectly if you made this reading mistake. It's very easy to choose incorrect answers due to misreading of questions and/or answer choices. The boards often use tricky language to make the exam more difficult. Many students focus on high yield facts and under appreciate language skills

One way to avoid language errors is to read questions carefully. So, develop solid reading and vocabulary skills. These are skills you can't obtain by drilling flash cards, reading a computer screen or watching videos. Some students neglect our printed content files now that video and online cloud based subscription on-line learning services are available. This is a huge mistake.

Test makers employ authentic experts that use scientific words and sophisticated vocabulary just like in the exams. The best students over the years have been avid readers of textbooks, journals and our voluminous copy-righted study content files; in addition to QAs *Do not neglect our content files.*



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