

Tips for Saving Time

- **Make it easy for staff and other residents to reach you.** Provide your pager and cell phone numbers. This will ensure that you are at the right place at the right time and you will avoid standing around waiting when you could be studying, reading or completing other tasks.
- **Bookmark the Web sites you use frequently.** Then organize your bookmarks so you can find a site you're looking for with a quick click of your mouse. This is a simple thing to do and it saves a lot of time!
- **Learn to rely on medical mnemonics when you don't have a lot of time to look things up.** A mnemonic can jog your memory and enable you to quickly remember what to do next. For example, to develop a consistent differential diagnosis, use this common mnemonic for a quick framework: MINT CANDY.
Metabolic
Infectious
Neoplastic
Trauma
Collagen vascular disease
Allergies
Nything else
Drugs
Youth (congenital)
- **Use clinical journals that are online to research patient problems and study for shelf exams.** Online clinical journals have searchable databases that are faster and far easier to use than pouring through stacks of back issues.
- **Group tasks together by location and type.** Do similar tasks in batches and run errands within the hospital that are in close proximity. For example, if you need to check several labs, wait until all are completed and get all results at once. If you need to go to the third floor to check on a patient, plan to tackle assignments with the highest priority on the way there or back.
- **Develop your own electronic "peripheral brain."** Download references and tools (e.g., patient tracker, pharmacology reference, antibiotic guide, pregnancy calculator, formulas for drug dosing, etc.) that provide a quick answer to the many questions that may come up during rounds and throughout your rotations.
- **Don't go anywhere without something to read.** Since you never know when you'll have an extra few minutes while waiting for a patient, lab results, or another member of your team, make the most of this time. Keeping journal articles or reference materials with you will afford you the opportunity to study, read up on a patient, or prepare for your next set of rounds.
- **Keep and prioritize daily to-do lists.** Medical students are bombarded with questions, tasks and assignments. Taking a moment to jot things down as they are assigned to you will help you recall and accomplish multiple assignments when fatigued or overwhelmed. Be sure to seek direction when you are uncertain which assignment has the highest priority.