Study Secrets

Effective Study Strategies for Big Tests and Boards

Motivate:
Use your boards prep to tune up on topics you want to know for clinics.
For example: Top 20 Equine Diseases, Top 10 Reportables, Top 5 Ferrets. The big stuff.

Be realistic, pragmatic, and have a triage-like attitude. Remember, **you do not need a 100 to pass this test.**
You basically need a "C."

It's better to do your heavy lifting early (study-wise), before time gets short and stress gets high(er). Most people use 4-8 months to prepare.

Develop a routine:
You want your prep to be a routine thing, a simple habit, like going to the gym.

A typical day: ~ 1 to 2 hours, depending on your time and alertness. DO take breaks every 45-50 minutes.
If you are tired, then rest. If time is short, do Zuku questions and NBVME practice questions rather than review notes.
One hour of prep 5-6 times a week is better than 6 hours crammed into a Saturday.

Test practice: ~1 hour
Do an hour or so of practice testing, like Zuku, plus or minus 10-15 NBVME self-assessment questions (make note of ones you don't know).
Try to finish 80% or more the study-mode questions 5 weeks before your exam.

Study and Notes review: ~1 hour
Look up answers to the NBVME self-assessment questions you didn't know.
Review key diseases and notes. Look for **IMAGES** to help key concepts stick.
Here are examples of good visual summary notes:
  **Ketosis**

The Final Five Weeks:

In the final 5 weeks before your NAVLE®, try to do 2-3 timed test-mode tests every day.
<mark>THIS IS IMPORTANT!</mark> Doing timed test-mode tests, which mimic the real thing, is the best practice you can get right before the real test, even if you haven't finished the study mode questions.

Coping with the [inevitable] questions you don't know:
No matter how hard you study, you will see questions you don't know. Thats ok. Totally normal.
These 4 steps are a big help for improving your effectiveness at answering multiple choice questions.

1. **READ** the question, then look away (DON'T look at the answers).
2. **PREDICT** - do you know the answer: Yes or No? (this protects you from distractors among the answer choices...)
3. Read the answer choices - if your prediction is there, **SELECT** it. If not, or if you don't have an answer, does one jump out? If not, then....
4. **ELIMINATE** the ones that look wrong and take a wild guess from what's left. Then move on.

NBVME NAVLE® self assessments:

These are a good study tool written by the same people who write the NAVLE® questions - worth your time.

If you have months to go before your test, it is too early to assess yourself, but they are very helpful as study aids.

Do 15 of these questions a couple times a week. Of 15 questions, there may be 4 or 5 you don't know. Your homework that same day is to look up answers to the ones you didn't know.

You will not see these exact questions on your test, but you may well see a question on this disease or topic. This review orients you to key diseases and concepts that the NBVME and NAVLE® think are important.

Don't give up:
--Keep it real, keep it practical. Don't invest emotion in your daily homework. Just sit down and do it.
--Focus on what you can do. Don't beat yourself up over stuff you didn't do.

--If you are exhausted, rest.
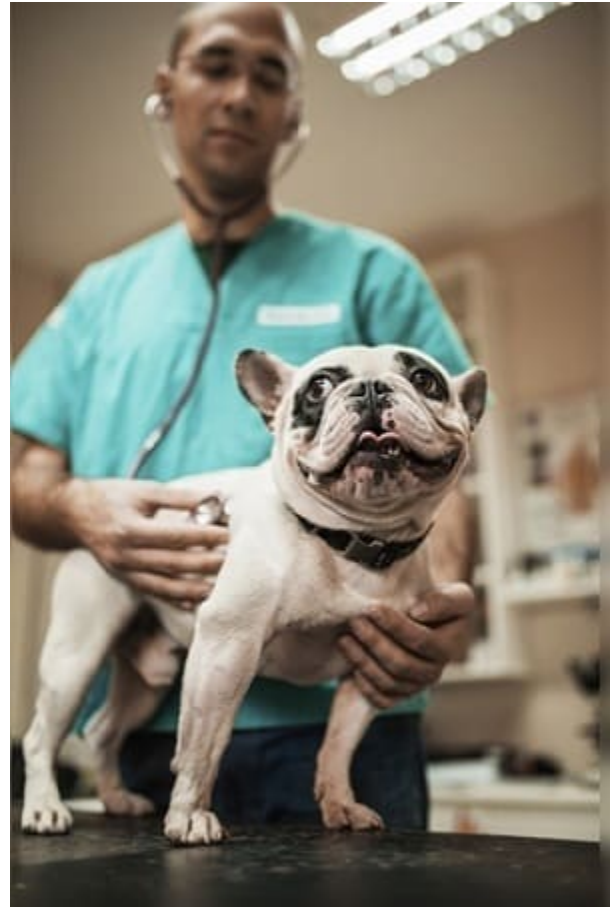
<u>Here is a great TED talk</u> on building confidence before a challenge from Dr. Amy Cuddy at Harvard.

<u>Books:</u>
Invest in a few reliable books.
<u>Cote' Clinical Vet Advisor-Dogs and Cats</u><u>, 3rd edition</u>
An excellent clinical resource, and you get access to the whole book online when you buy a copy.

Plumb's Veterinary Drug Handbook, 8th edition, Donald C. Plumb

<u>Guide to Bovine Clinics 4th edition</u>—Chris and Susan Pasquini
<u>Guide to Equine Clinics 3rd edition</u>—Chris and Susan Pasquini, Phil Woods