


Guide to Thriving **IN VET SCHOOL**

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Three biggest challenges of being a veterinary student

Dr. Merrill Simpson

1. **Knowing** when to say “no” and when to embrace opportunity. There are many activities to get involved in at school, from clubs to student government. Having extra-curricular activities are important for networking and leadership experience. As you move on to your second and third years, delegation is extremely important, and later you will need to scale back your extracurriculars in order to focus on clinics and for more time to study for NAVLE.
2. **Adulting:** Finding time to take care of all the responsibilities outside of school like getting an oil change or getting a medical checkup. Even simple tasks become much more challenging as a veterinary student. Try to plan ahead and schedule appointments during the weekends or evenings.
3. **Relationships:** Staying in touch with friends and family can always be a bit of a challenge, but this is amplified during veterinary school. Your family and friends may not understand how demanding your schedule has become. Be patient, and come up with strategies to manage your relationships, whether means scheduling a phone call or setting expectations that you will be out of touch at times. But, for your psyche, make sure to make time for those close to you, because it will always be refreshing to talk about something other than school.



Three ways to organize your busy vet student life

Dr. Courtney Campbell

Essentially, when your life is organized, the joy will follow. But it can be a serious challenge to stay organized when the demands on your time are so intense and the chaos of medicine surrounds you.

When vet student life gets makes you feel disorganized, discombobulated, and scattered, collect your organizational composure with these 3 easy steps.

WRITE A LIST

Checklists work! Not only does they serve to organize the most important tasks, but it helps to triage what you need to accomplish. Creating checklists allows your energy and thoughts to focus on the best and most efficient way to accomplish those tasks rather than trying to remember what they are. The best checklists are short and achievable.

MAKE A VICTORYLIST

A victory list is the opposite of a checklist. This is a list that you create at the end of each day in which you list everything that you were able to accomplish throughout the day. Essentially, you're showing yourself that you're accomplishing more throughout your day than you think you are. That gives you a great boost in confidence and motivates you to accomplish tomorrow's goals with more passion and energy.

DELEGATE

Don't be afraid to reach out to others for help. Or, split a task into its component parts, and politely assign them to other people. You'd be surprised how willing some would be to help you when you need it most.

New veterinary graduates, Dr. Merrill Simpson and Dr. Margot Stuchin talk about their journey through vet school.

Listen now by clicking on the link below:

Vet Candy Podcast

FACTS ABOUT VET SCHOOL

The Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges released their 2019 report of data related to member veterinary colleges.

- There are 13,323 Doctor of Veterinary Medicine students studying at 49 member institutions of the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges.
- Of those current students, 2,614 are historically underrepresented populations in veterinary medicine (up 1.1 percent over last year), and more than 81 percent are female.
- Students are paying an average of \$31,979 for in-state and \$52,613 for out-of-state tuition, and 47.7 percent of them are sharing \$35,269,054 in scholarship support
- About 80 percent will graduate with debt that averages \$169,046.



Three tips for great communication

Dr. Courtney Campbell

Veterinary students can have very stressful days. Being able to communicate effectively, while a work in progress, can actually make your life easier. Here are three keys for more effective communication with clients:

1. CONSIDER YOUR AUDIENCE

One of the most intricate relationships to ever exist is the human-animal bond. This dynamic can be complicated because it is highly individualistic and may be based on a specific set of circumstances. As you discuss pertinent medical details, always try to consider your audience. A millennial may have different concerns about their pet than a retiree. Someone who is slightly older may prefer face-to-face communications, whereas many millennials prefer to communicate via text, social media, and email.

2. LISTEN

It's tough to be an effective communicator if you aren't listening to the other person.

Being an engaged listener is challenging when you have a deluge of emergency patients to triage and reams of diagnostics to evaluate.

One study showed that on average, doctors interrupt patients within 12 seconds of them first speaking during primary care visits and throughout the appointment—often, before they have finished explaining an issue.

One effective technique to help you focus on listening is put whatever you have in your hands down. Similar to looking up from your phone when someone is speaking to you, the act of freeing your hands signals to the other person that you are letting go of what is currently occupying your mind so you can concentrate on them. Essentially, it sends the message to your clients that you value and care about what they have to say.



3. ANNOUNCE YOUR GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

You can give your client's a professional head's up by announcing to them what you would like to discuss. Common examples of this include, "I would like to discuss a few details regarding [condition]." Or, "I have a few concerns about [condition] and I would like to discuss a few of them with you now."

Make Smart Money Moves

We all want financial freedom. We all want to stop worrying about money, gain clarity and accomplish our goals. But how do we get there?

Check out, the **Vet Candy Guide to Mastering your Money** and start making smart money choices today!

Secrets to making fitness fun

Dr. Quincy Hawley

Is the only workout you are getting from walking from the parking lot to your classroom? That is not exercise, check your Fitbit and see.

Fitness is important for a productive and happy person – you know it, you want to do it, but you don't have the time? Are you stuck between deciding whether to spend another hour studying or taking the Zumba class you have been eyeing? Well, if you want to feel better, physical strength and fitness have a role to play.

When you exercise, you will feel pumped with the increased serotonin in your system and also experience more strength, agility and enthusiasm from that 30 minute exercise each day.

Here are some ways to pack some fitness into your packed schedule:

Go for HIIT! Not much time for a workout? Try High Intensity Interval Training which crunches intense workout into a small time-frame. As many as 20 minutes are enough for a power-packed workout. Regular exercise even helps with better sleep.



Have a locker at the gym! Don't waste any time in packing and unpacking the gym bag and rent a locker to keep everything you need there. Every minute counts, doesn't it? And a locker comes with an added advantage of not needing to break your back (literally) carrying heavy bags.

Quickie workouts! Why wait to get on solid hour to work out? If you have 15 minutes, squeeze in a short yoga session, or just do some weights or a quick sprint! Shorter bursts of exercise once or twice a day are good enough to keep you ticking.

Walk! Sitting on your bottom will not make any matters better. it will just make your back bad. Try and walk every 30-40 minutes or so. Take the stairs, park farther so you can walk more, get off one stop before to get a walk to work – these are all tricks to walk it up. The circulation gets a boost and so does your mood.

Go full body! Instead of focusing one body section like they do in structured workouts at gyms and personal training, go for full body toning

and exercising because you are short on time. Go for a swim if you like it, because there is no better full body workout than swimming. You can also try variations of burpees.

Dance it up! If the regular workouts bore you and you are facing lack of motivation in doing them, go for a spicier version of workout – any dance-based exercise like Zumba or bellydancing. The dance keeps you entertained and the moves make you fit. Variety is the spice of life.

TV fitness! Say yes to watch TV and your favorite shows but not like a couch potato. Make it fitness time. If you have a stationary bike in your apartment, place it facing the TV and hop on while you watch your favorite show.

Use the desk time! Study time can be converted into some fun workouts too! the idea is to steal whatever little time is there right, so go for some textbook curls or shoulder shrugs or even some breathing exercises as they do it in yoga.



Ten ways to eat healthier

Renee Machel

In the hustle and bustle of vet school life, it is hard to find the time to cook something healthy. If you have to leave early in the morning and you are coming back late, you won't be quite motivated to begin whipping up some healthy stuff the moment you enter the house, right? But eating right and eating at the right times are extremely important things which can help you feel great and be energetic. The gut has another 'brain' of its own! The amount of neurons and receptors is high enough to give it a 'feeling' of its own. This feeling can be made nice and happy by putting healthy foods in your stomach.

Time is short and there isn't much scope for cooking and other kitchen work so let us help you start small with a few inspirations:

QUICK-FIX MEALS VIA MICROWAVE:

The microwave presents more opportunities to cook healthy meals quickly rather than just being a tool to heat up frozen meals. Be it a quick quiche, a mug cake or cinnamon breakfast quinoa- the microwave can be your go-to for any proper yet

healthy meal. Eat the right food while spending lesser time cooking it.

THREE INGREDIENT MEALS:

It may sound a little strange but 3 ingredient meals can be high on nutrition as well as great for your tight schedule which allows little time to prep extensive meals. Ample ideas are available on the internet for your quick and easy meals.

IRON FUEL-UP:

We seldom pay any attention to the importance of minerals but the lack of them can produce severe symptoms of deficiency. One such mineral is iron which when deficient causes depressive symptoms and also fatigue. Iron also improves muscular strength and can improve the quality of your day. Munch on oatmeal, lentils, spinach and lean meats.

SOUPS AND STEWS TO THE RESCUE

Soups can be great comfort foods and also can be dense in nutrients without loading you up on excess carbs or fats. Make a batch for the week and store in freezer and you can thaw as required. The healthy soups can be made in variety and stored for emergency food situations! Microwave comes to the rescue here as well!

SMOOTHIE SHORTCUT

Dump all the dry, non-liquid ingredients in a Ziploc bag and stash in the fridge. When you want a smoothie you can simply unzip and pour milk or water and blend in the blender for instant, no-think smoothie which is great for health and tastes great too. Instead of sugar use dates or banana and make it even more healthy! Don't forget to put spinach in, for the extra iron boost.

CAFFEINE DOSE FOR THE DAY

People might look down upon when you are at the 5th cup of coffee for the day, and it is even not advisable to go for so much coffee for its high caffeine content but a little coffee revs up the metabolism and helps you feel more energetic and alert. Keep ground coffee or a portable manual grinder and enjoy your cup anytime of the day right at your work desk.

DON'T DO EVERYTHING YOURSELF

You don't have to go at it alone. If family doesn't or can't help, or you live alone, why not take assistance from apps and home delivery services that can provide your groceries at your doorstep? Maybe you can hire some help when you prep weekly meals? A slight investment now can help you get started on a healthier lifestyle.

PREP WEEKDAY MEALS ON WEEKENDS

Make and store as much food you can when you get your weekly off so that there is less chaos on a weekday when you are trying to get everything on time. Chop veggies, prep them, make smoothie bags, precook your quinoa and meat and rice and just keep the assembly pending for the particular weekday.

LESS SNACKING, MORE MEAL

Snacking can easily lead to overeating, gaining weight and feeling lethargic. Too much snacking can even be bad for your sugar and electrolyte levels. There is lower satiety despite a lot of food. Instead, limit the snack time to 2 or 3 times a day and have 3 square meals at any rate, a cup or two of tea or coffee thrown into the mix for a fulfilling, nutritionally sensible meal plan for the day.

MINDFUL EATING

Eating with your focus elsewhere confuses the brain as it is engaged in two activities and hence digestion becomes improper and hormone levels also fluctuate. You eat well but you don't get the benefit of you don't eat with your mind focused on the food. For those 5 minutes, close your laptop and set your phone aside, and actually taste what you are eating. Pay the food respect and it will respect your body

USE A SLOW COOKER

Just dump the ingredients into the pot, set timer and leave! A healthy dinner will be ready when you reach back home and it will even stay warm, thanks to this wonderful invention called the slow cooker which takes the number of hours you would want it to take to cook anything. Some can even be controlled via smartphone-based controls – so that there is more involvement with the cooking process even when you are not near it.



Start having a good relationship with food today and read [Vet Candy's Guide to Healthy Eating](#)

Why we all need more wellness in our life

Dr. Quincy Hawley

Wellness is a state of mind – but it can be inducted into the mind easily! You can do certain things, even when short on time, to ensure that you feel alive and well at all moments.

It is more than being just “free from illness.” A mentally, physically and emotionally fine person can be said to be in a state of wellness. That’s the goal. Being well is what we are all working hard for. Toiling day in and day out is mostly because we want to be comfortable at the end of the day. But is it happening?

The overworked and overstressed forget why you are working so hard and what for, sometimes we want to focus on the bad things like looming bills, disrespectful customers, and debts. Wellness as a goal can stop all of this and enable a better lifestyle infused with more energy, willingness and excitement amongst vets.

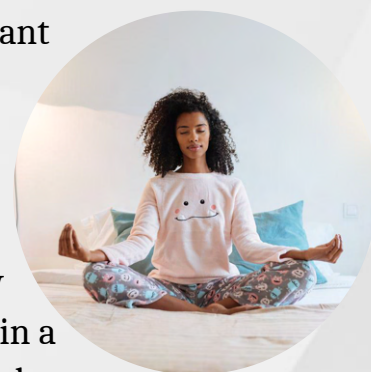
Here are a few inspirations to help you feel kicked and ready for any kind of life struggles:

Hydrate! We often forget the magic of drinking water and how important it is for our body and soul. Water is the best. Keep bottles of water on your desk and bring water with you when you travel.

Understand and manage stress! Look for addressing your stress instead of shoving it under the carpet. Sip green tea, listen to music, or take a quick walk around the block instead of turning to unhealthy options like binge eating ice cream or chips.

Limit the tech How much phone and how much gadget in life directly points towards how stressed you are in life because clearly the more social media, the more the escapism of reality. Mute the notifications put the phone far away from the bed. Better yet, avoid your phone completely when at home.

Meditate It is important for your wellness. 5 minutes in dim light before bed can calm you down, help you think clearly and will likely result in a more productive next day.



To-do list They help you stay organized and give you more focus. But being realistic in your to-do's is equally important.



Travel You don't need to spend all your savings but a small, not very fancy holiday can be just the recipe for your wellness. Everyone needs a break from time to time.



Do you need therapy?

Dr. Dara Querimit

Seeking out therapy is an individual choice. There are many reasons why people come to therapy. Sometimes it is to deal with long-standing psychological issues, or problems with anxiety or depression. Other times it is in response to unexpected changes in one's life such as a divorce or work transition.

Many seek the advice of counsel as they pursue their own personal exploration and growth. Working with a therapist can help provide insight, support, and new strategies for all types of life challenges.

Therapy can help address many types of issues including depression, anxiety, conflict, grief, stress management, body-image issues, and general life transitions. Therapy is right for anyone who is interested in getting the most out of their life by taking responsibility, creating greater selfawareness, and working towards change in their lives.



What actually happens during therapy?

Dr. Dara Querimit

Every therapy session is unique and caters to each individual and their specific goals. It is standard for therapists to discuss the primary issues and concerns in your life during therapy sessions. It is common to schedule a series of weekly sessions, where each session lasts around fifty minutes. Therapy can be short-term, focusing on a specific issue, or longer-term, addressing more complex issues or ongoing personal growth. There may be times when you are asked to take certain actions outside of the therapy sessions, such as reading a relevant book or keeping records to track certain behaviors. It is important process what has been discussed and integrate it into your life between sessions. For therapy to be most effective you must be an active participant, both during and between the sessions. People seeking psychotherapy are willing to take responsibility for their actions, work towards self-change and create greater awareness in their lives.

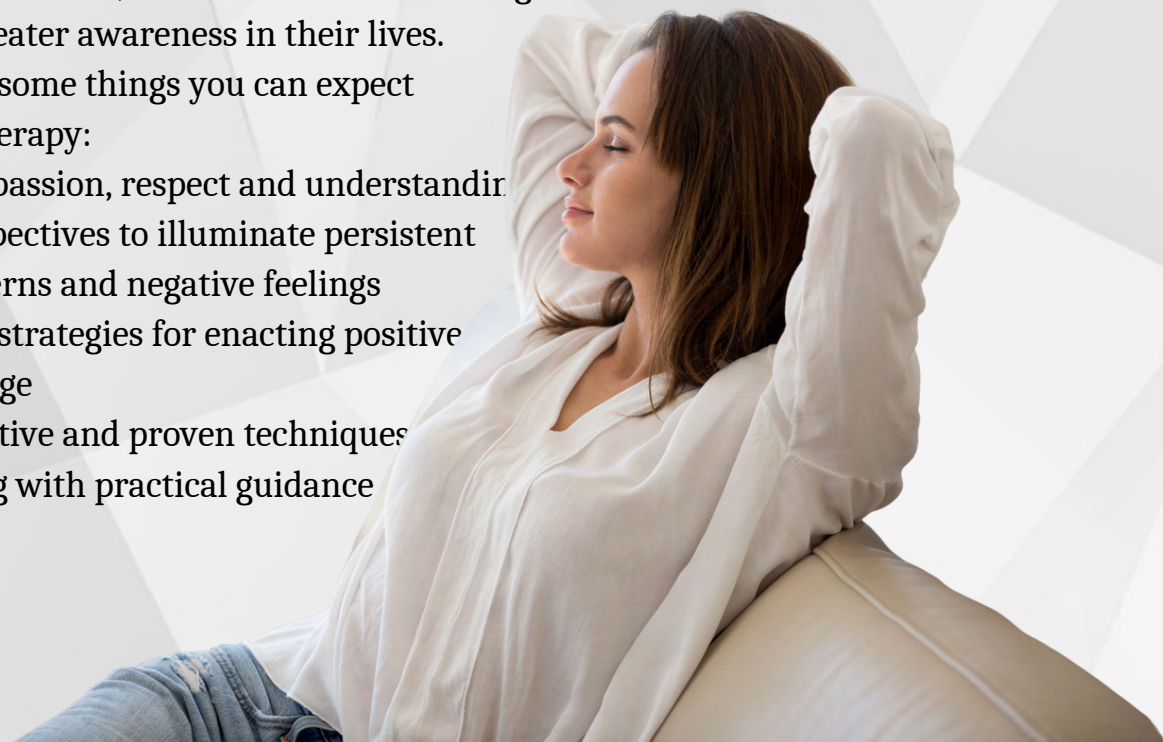
Here are some things you can expect out of therapy:

- Compassion, respect and understanding
- Perspectives to illuminate persistent patterns and negative feelings
- Real strategies for enacting positive change
- Effective and proven techniques along with practical guidance

Get happy, Get mindful!

Renee Machel

Mindfulness is usually defined as a way of paying attention and being aware of the present moment and of the concomitant experience, assuming a mindful attitude, that is intentional and non-judgmental, in order to reach an acceptance of self through a greater awareness of sensations, perceptions, impulses, emotions, thoughts, words, actions and relationships, as they occur in the here and now. Check out [Vet Candy's Guide to Mindful Living for more.](#)



The struggle is real

According to a 2011 study by Kansas State University, veterinary medicine students are more likely to struggle with depression than human medicine students, undergraduate students and the general population.

The researchers also discovered that veterinary students experience higher depression rates as early as the first semester of their first year of study. Their depression rates appear to increase even more during the second and third year of school. During the fourth year, depression rates drop down to first-year levels.

The research team's studies found several other factors connected with higher depression occurrence, including: homesickness; uncertainty about academic expectations; a feeling of not belonging or not fitting in; and perceived physical health. The researchers had students rate their own physical health to indicate how they felt about their overall health. Students who were happier with their physical health had lower depression rates.





GET CONNECTED

Being involved and connected during school can definitely help with your mental wellbeing and help you with your networking skills. Being active in a student organization can also help strengthen leadership skills and build up your resume.

Below are some great groups to consider joining along your journey:

PrideSVMC is the student-run arm of the Pride Veterinary Medical Community. The group fosters acceptance and inclusivity for people of all sexual orientations and gender identities within the veterinary profession.



BlackDVM Network serves as a place to connect black veterinarians, technicians, assistants, and students. Their mission is to create a community for black veterinary professionals to connect, find mentorship, and advance veterinary medicine.

The Latinx Veterinary Medical Association is the first organization representing Latinx veterinary professionals in North America. Our mission is to empower Latinx professionals in the veterinary field and support the next generation of Latinx veterinarians.



The Multicultural Veterinary Medical Association mission is to promote racial and ethnic diversity and cultural competency within the veterinary profession so as to better serve a diverse, multicultural society.

Five tips to stay motivated during vet school

Shannon Gregoire

Vet school is going to be one of the most stressful but also the most amazing time in your life. There are challenges and victories scattered along the way. It is going to be a struggle to stay motivated and focused. Here are a few tips I use to stay motivated through each semester.

YOU ARE STUDYING TO SAVE LIVES

Always remember this – you are studying now to save lives later. One of these days you will find yourself being the one person standing between life and death for your patients. So remember that when you are studying. Study smart and study well for your benefit and for the future benefit of all the animals that will be lucky enough to have you on their side.

IT IS OKAY TO MAKE MISTAKES

School is the time to mess up. It is okay and it is expected of you to not know everything right away. You can learn a lot from a failure, and your faculty and colleagues are always there to help you. Don't be afraid to ask questions. And, above all else, go easy on yourself. Perfection is not reality. Everybody makes mistakes!

OBTAIN A GROWTH MINDSET

Too often I hear colleagues, and even catch myself, saying 'oh I'm not good at that'. Since you are what you repeatedly do, use that to boost your capabilities by saying 'I'm not good at that - yet'. This allows you to acknowledge an area where you may lack confidence, but can also showcase that you are aware of it and working to improve your skills.



TAKE BREAKS

You are going to be working hard to become the best doctor you can be, but nothing happens overnight. It is very easy to overwork yourself. Remember that medicine is a skill that must be learned and repeated many times to become proficient. It is okay, and necessary to take breaks in your studies. Taking small breaks will leave you feeling a renewed and ready to take on more.

REMEMBER YOU ARE HUMAN

Don't forget that you are a human being with feelings, needs and interests outside of veterinary school. Try to do at least one thing each day that brings you happiness. It could be working out, cooking a healthy meal, connecting with your family, or walking your dog. Whatever it is, enjoy the opportunity to be happy, and go slay your dream career.

Secrets to thriving in vet school

Shannon Gregoire

Vet school is going to be tough! Think about how hard it was just to get in. Some say it is even harder than getting accepted to medical school. And, I can tell you from my experience, it is going to be an uphill from here.

USE YOUR LIBRARY:

Before you go out and spend money on books, try checking them out online. Also, check reviews to see which textbooks are the best.

GO ON THE EXTRA-CURRICULAR TRIPS:

Whenever there is an extra hands-on opportunity– sign up! You will never regret having more hands-on experience! It is also a great way to get to know the faculty member offering the opportunity also, so you can pick their brain and learn so much from them, as well as getting to know them on a personal basis as well.

DON'T DO IT ALONE:

Create a study group. Talking through material and concepts with others is extremely helpful as a learning process. Being in a study groups allows you to reinforce what you already know, and clear up questions about topics that another classmate may have a better grasp on.

CONNECT WITH UPPER CLASS STUDENTS

Students in upper classes have gone through everything you are about to experience, a great resource. From secrets to handling coursework, to the best locations to study, their opinion can help make your life easier.

Some colleges will have a “Big-Sib, Little-Sib” program where as an incoming first year you get paired with a second year- if yours doesn't check with your advisor for recommendations.

TAKE IT ONE DAY AT A TIME

It's a huge challenge to get used to life as a veterinary student. It is completely different than any undergraduate program. Sometimes, it is hard for friends and family to understand the stress that you are under because they haven't experienced it themselves. Make sure to communicate with them and explain what you are going through. And also, remember every one of your classmates are going through the same transition. Make sure to reach out to them as well. Success is so much easier when you help each other.



Do you know the latest?

