

Successful Learning Strategies

SLS-Flash Cards

HOW TO MAKE AND USE FLASHCARDS

Why Should I Make Flashcards?

Flashcards are particularly useful in helping store **FACTUAL** information such as medical terms, formulas, equations, dates, names, definitions, etc. in long term memory. The actual writing out of the information on the cards helps to impress it on your memory. Flashcards are also convenient to carry and are, therefore, easy to review anytime, anywhere.

How Do I Make Flashcards?

Create a system that works for you. Here's an example:

1. Buy a package of 3x5 or 4x6 note cards and a large metal book ring. You can buy colored notecards or use your own color coding system on white ones. Punch a hole in the upper left hand corner of each card.
2. On the **FRONT** of the card write the following:
 - the term
 - the dictionary pronunciation of the term
 - the page number of the book or title of the lecture where the term was found
3. On the **BACK** of the card, write the following:
 - the definition or meaning of the term
 - dates or other pertinent details*
 - an example of the information (if appropriate)*
 - a statement of the **SIGNIFICANCE** of the term, name, date etc.*

Example:	On the Front write	C.N. #VIII (Pages 161-162)
	On the Back write	Vestibulocochlear (acoustic) Nerve Pair Special Sense Nerve Vestibular→Equilibrium Cochlear→Hearing; Superior Temporal Gyrus

* Learning this additional information is especially helpful for an essay exam or identification questions.

How Should I Review With Flashcards?

1. Organize the cards on the ring by some system such as chapters, anatomical regions, groups of muscles or nerves, major body system, etc.
2. You will MEMORIZE THE FACTS FASTER IF YOU COLOR CODE THE CARDS. Colors should be associated with particular categories or meanings. Make sure you generate a color key and be consistent with how you use the colors.
3. Review the cards often. Study ten at a time. Put the ones you know in one stack, the ones you need to learn in another. When you have memorized them to the first ten, then review all twenty, etc.
4. Review the cards from both directions—read the term and try to recall the fact; read the fact and try to recall the term.
5. When you feel confident that you know the facts, have someone else drill you. It may be useful to WRITE the answers because that will allow you to practice what you may have to do on the test.
6. Use your flashcards in a study group or on your own at home and speak out loud if you can.