First Year Anatomy Guide

INTRODUCTION

The information presented here is based on the collective wisdom of previous first years on the best way to approach learning anatomy. Anatomy undoubtedly requires a lot of attention and effort but there is a hard way and a less hard way. This guide aims to help make it as easy as possible. This guide is split into three main sections, general approach, resources and approach to worksheets. We would also recommend this guide be read in association with the AMSS Textbook Talk guide.

There are many different methods for anatomy, so you really need to try things out to find what works for you. Nonetheless we have some suggestions:

“An anatomy textbook should be read with an anatomy atlas (the Gray’s one is good) especially for complex things it helps a lot for visualising.”

“Drawing anatomy is a very useful way to understand how structures are related to each other and how structures are formed”

“Make sure you try drawing structures out and do LOTS of flashcards to get used to labelling and pointing them out.”
“Do anatomy sheets before the session (this is neglected by so many people, and you just end up getting nothing from the session)”

“Barge people out the way in anatomy sessions so you can actually see and handle specimens, really good for learning how stuff actually sits in the body not on a 2D textbook picture”

“Keep in contact with older year students who can be particularly helpful in distinguishing topics which are core e.g. lung surface anatomy.”

The highest rated resource for first year anatomy is teachmeanatomy which really does as it promises, “making anatomy simple”. It is well organised and provides clear information with appropriate detail and easy to interpret images. The most well-liked anatomy textbooks include Moore’s Clinically Oriented Anatomy, Tortora’s Principles of Anatomy and Physiology, and Gray’s Anatomy of the Human Body. These are each discussed in more detail in Textbook Talk. Netter’s anatomy flash cards are a favourite when it comes to revision and are incredibly useful for learning and remembering detail, especially regarding musculoskeletal anatomy (if you don’t want to buy them WebAnatomy is a good alternative). For imaging, radiopaedia all the way, and Net anatomy for cross sections. But don’t forget, if in doubt ask your peers and more importantly your anatomy tutors!
“Find a resource you’re comfortable with and get a general idea of the system before going into detail in the sheets”

“Make sure you do the worksheet before the session and focus on what the tutors are saying not the sheet during the session”

“Recognise source of images and use them”

“Smash out the questions, work together with friends for labelling things as you can explain to each other and it saves time”

“Discussing answers with friends after finishing most of them.”

The anatomy worksheets can be difficult but stick with it, it is absolutely worth your while to do them and do them early, i.e. before the anatomy session. Also try and avoid the temptation to google the answers. Try starting the sheet with all your resources laid out in front of you so you are more likely to use them. Google might get you an answer, but it won’t help you learn.