



## FIVE THINGS EVERY NEW PA SHOULD CONSIDER BEFORE STARTING THEIR CAREER

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### DEALING WITH NIGHT SHIFTS

There is a reason night shift staff gets paid more. As an eager new graduate with lots of student loans to pay off, I was given the opportunity to work night shifts and I gladly accepted. However, what I didn't realize was working nights in a PA profession is much different than working nights in a student rotation. I used to stay up studying until early morning hours during PA school. Thinking working nights would be a piece a cake, I was wrong. My day-to-day life was not the same. Seeing the nursing staff "eat lunch" at 1:00AM was an adjustment for me. My stomach had to adjust to my new schedule, therefore, my body didn't know when or what to eat and my nutrient and energy level suffered because of this. Eventually my body got into a routine, however, as one of the nurses put it, if you work only night shifts, you're like a "zombie" to the real world. Sleeping happened on my "off" days, so I never really got an "off day" but more of a "catch up" sleep day; then again, working sixteen, twelve hour shifts per month wasn't the best idea starting off either. If you enjoy working nights, I highly encourage you to continue to do so, it's just not for all people, including me!

### FINDING BALANCE

As I mentioned before, I was excited to start my career as a PA, begin earning a real salary, and pay off my student loans that I had accrued over the years. However, my eagerness led me to sign a contract for the highest number of shifts and hours. Despite a high paying job, my personal needs were suffering. Planning a wedding, spending time with my fiancé, attending church, and spending time with family & friends, soon became stressors in my life rather than what used to be enjoyment and pleasure. I had to come to the realization that I needed balance in my life. I decided to decrease the number of hours and shifts I was working just by a little. I eventually switched from night shifts to day shifts while still working a couple of night shifts every month. Although my salary slightly decreased, finding that balance in my work life improved my overall quality of life as well as those around me. It has been one of the best decisions I have made thus far in my career as a PA.

### FINANCES

I would highly recommend saving some money throughout PA school. Once you graduate and even months before, you will be expected to pay a lot of expenses, including your PANCE, study materials for the PANCE, medical licensure, NPI, DEA, health evaluations, background checks, medical equipment, scrubs...etc. It can be very costly if you are not expecting it. So be financially prepared and start saving now!

### CME

Most work places will offer a CME credit between \$1,000 to \$3,000. I would recommend taking the time to sit down & look through the various national and local specialty conferences as well as online and local courses, you wish to attend or take. Ask yourself, what are your intentions in attending the conference and/or taking the online course and what do you plan to get out of it? Also, how many CME credits does the conference/course offer? For example, it is not worth, in my opinion, to sign up for a conference across the country for an \$800 registration fee which requires \$800 in airfare to get there. At that point, one has pretty much used all their CME allowance. I would recommend trying to receive as much free CME credit as you are able. For example, attending educational/specialty related journal clubs, reading journal articles and taking online quizzes and surveys. There are many free CME opportunities, just take the time to do a little research! It never hurts to have left over CME money to purchase a new iPad or laptop for further educational purposes!



NEVER FORGET WHAT BROUGHT YOU TO WHERE YOU ARE

It can be difficult adjusting and/or transitioning into your new role as a PA. There will be times of joy and times of trial in your new career. Never forget your purpose, intentions, and desires and how hard you worked to become a PA. Let that not only motivate you, but drive you to succeed and become the best PA you can be!