



## WHAT NOT TO DO

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Recently my PA school released the highly anticipated, inevitable, non-changeable list of assigned clinical rotations. All the second-year PA students were eager to know what the preceptors were like, what the hours of the rotation consisted of, how many days a week or if the rotation included week-ends, various locations, housing options, if there was a Starbucks near-by...etc. You get it, never ending, anxious, anticipating questions. Looking back at this time last year, I was in that same position, and wow does it ever feel so good to know I am a month away from graduation! I remember the feeling of excitement in starting the clinical year and finishing up my didactic year, after all this is what my heart truly desired to finally do, get out in the medical field and serve others. However, I still remember the feeling of nervousness and the thoughts of “what to do” and “what not to do” that played in my mind. So I decided to write an article on 3 of my biggest recommendations on “what NOT to do” during clinical rotations, to help you as a student avoid common mistakes in your upcoming clinical rotations to make a lasting impression on your preceptor and to hopefully score an awesome evaluation!

### 1. SHOWING UP LATE

This is number one on my list for a reason. I particularly struggled with being on time to my clinical rotations. Although I was never late, even early on certain days, it was a struggle waking up. I had to set 6 alarms on my cell phone as well as a physical alarm clock, purposefully set across my room, so I would physically get up. Whatever it takes for you, 6 alarms or going to bed at an earlier time, make sure to wake up and show up at your clinical rotations on time, if not earlier if you really want to make a lasting impression! Time management skills are such a key asset not only for clinical rotations, but in classes, studying, and taking exams. Having good time management skills will not only benefit you now, but will also be of further use in your future career as a PA!

### 2. FALSE DOCUMENTATION

This is not only a mistake that happens with students, but with nurses, residents and medical providers as well. Always make sure you document your findings after performing a history and physical exam on a patient, DO NOT document something you did not perform or discover yourself. Unfortunately, there are people in medicine who do not actually examine the patient or find out a patient’s history, yet document that they did perform a physical exam or history. This is not only false documentation, but it creates provider and patient error in treatment and care for the patient. Always make sure what you document is truthful, honest, and accurate. Never document a false finding to make your “documentation” look better or to impress your attending.

### 3. BEING A “KNOW-IT-ALL”

Remember that the majority of PA students have already had clinical experience and you are probably not the first PA student the preceptor has allowed to work alongside. Although you always want to make a lasting impression, that doesn’t mean you have to be overbearing. Remember that you are there to learn and grow. It is perfectly ok to ask questions, be intrigued, or want to participate in procedures. Just remember to be respectful when asking questions, never interrupt, and never try to correct an attending in front of a patient. Bottom line, use your manners, study on topics that align with your rotations, and use this time to grow not only yourself but as a future PA.