

STUDY GUIDE



FOR THE UK MEDICAL LICENSING ASSESSMENT – UKMLA

By Dr Phil Xui

INTRODUCTION

As a medical student in the UK, no doubt you will be aware of the UK Medical Licensing Assessment which is due to be implemented in the academic year 2024-25. You may be wondering what this means for you and what you need to know?

To help with these questions we have created a short guide to the UKMLA covering objectives, the different components to the exam, skills, advice and preparation strategies so that you can navigate the UKMLA confidently.



Meet Dr Phil Xiu

Phil has played key roles in medical education. He is the editor of Elsevier's Crash Course book series and the Editor-in-Chief of ClinicalKey Student Assessment.

Phil is passionate about helping medical students to succeed and set strong foundations for safe practice.



ASSESSMENT STRUCTURE AND FORMAT

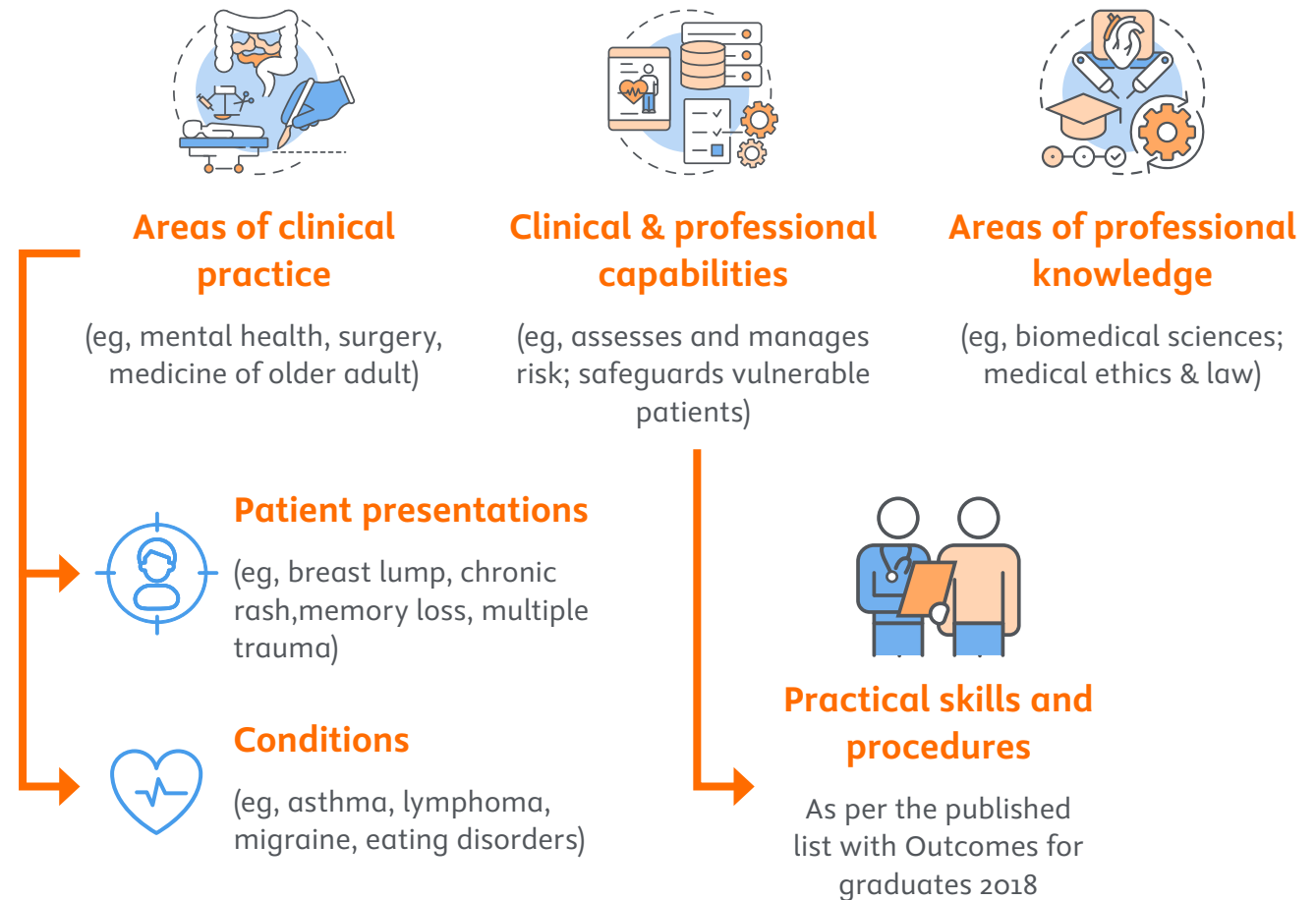
The UKMLA is divided into two segments:

- Applied Knowledge Test - AKT
- Clinical and Professional Skills Assessment – CPSA.

All of the content in the two components is taken from the [MLA content map](#) which sets out the core knowledge, skills, and behaviours needed for safe medical practice.

How is the MLA content map organised?

The MLA content map is organised into six domains:



APPLIED KNOWLEDGE TEST (AKT):

The Applied Knowledge Test - AKT is an online exam that tests the ability to apply medical knowledge to different scenarios.

It consists of two 100-item papers (to be sat on sequential days) The questions are Single Best Answer – SBA format with five answer options.

The AKT will test areas of clinical practice from the MLA content map, ensuring that anyone obtaining a UK medical degree has met a common and consistent threshold for safe practice before joining the medical register. The AKT is a test of applied knowledge rather than factual recall, encompassing basic science, including the pathophysiology behind symptoms.

Clinical & professional capabilities

PAPER 1: 100 items over 2 hours

- Cardiovascular
- Respiratory
- Gastrointestinal
- Medicine of older adult
- Neurosciences
- Ophthalmology
- Endocrine & metabolic
- Renal & urology
- Infection
- Dermatology

PAPER 2: 100 items over 2 hours

- Cancer
- Breast
- Haematology
- Palliative & End of Life care
- Peri-op medicine and anaesthesia
- Musculoskeletal
- Emergency medicine & intensive care
- Ear, nose & throat
- Child health
- Mental health
- Obstetrics & gynaecology
- Sexual health
- Social/population health & research methods
- Medical ethics & law

Acute Medicine, Primary Care, Surgery & Clinical Imaging
will be covered across both papers

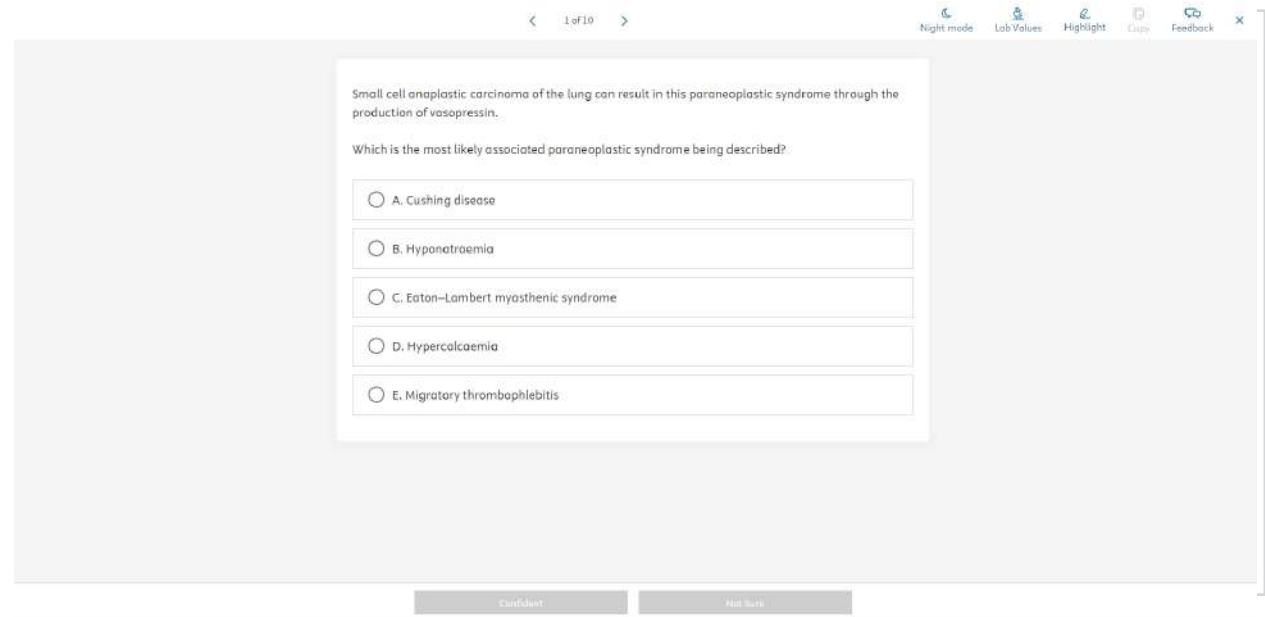
Breakdown of the applied knowledge test by area of clinical practice (from [Medical Schools Council FAQ document](#)).

AKT QUESTIONS

Questions in the AKT will not appear in other medical school exams. The AKT question bank will be a unique set of questions separate from the MSCAA bank.

The format of each AKT question will be the same:

- A clinical scenario
- A lead in question
- A set of five options, one of which is the best answer (the correct answer).



1 of 10

Night mode Lab Values Highlight Copy Feedback

Small cell anaplastic carcinoma of the lung can result in this paraneoplastic syndrome through the production of vasopressin.

Which is the most likely associated paraneoplastic syndrome being described?

A. Cushing disease

B. Hyponatraemia

C. Eaton-Lambert myasthenic syndrome

D. Hypercalcaemia

E. Migratory thrombophlebitis

Confirm All Done



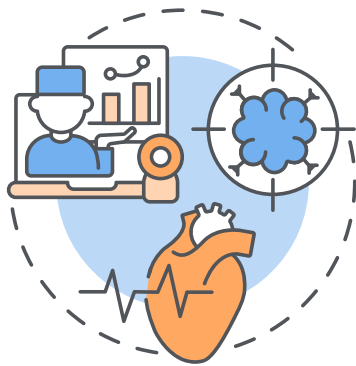
CLINICAL AND PROFESSIONAL SKILLS ASSESSMENT - CPSA

The CPSA will replace the clinical exam (OSCE/OSCLER/PACES) portion of your assessments in medical school. It is designed to assess minimum competency across various clinical practices with a transparent and fair format. It plays a crucial role in ensuring that each graduate fulfils the criteria set by the General Medical Council (GMC) for safe medical practice.



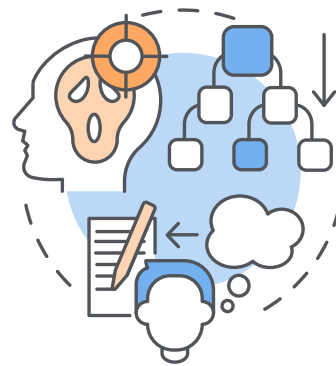
HOW DO I PREPARE FOR THE UKMLA?

Your medical school curriculum will really help you with the familiarity of the content as will the practice materials created by the Medical Schools Council-MSC for the online assessment format.



Clinical Conditions

The MLA content map encompasses an expansive list of 311 clinical conditions, **such as pulmonary embolism and cardiac failure**, which are potential topics for the MLA. These conditions may form the basis of questions within the AKT or scenarios within the practical component of the assessment.



Patient Presentations

Included within the MLA content map are 212 distinct patient presentations, **like breathlessness and chest pain**, all of which are pertinent to the medical licensing assessment. These presentations can be featured in the AKT questions and practical assessment tasks.

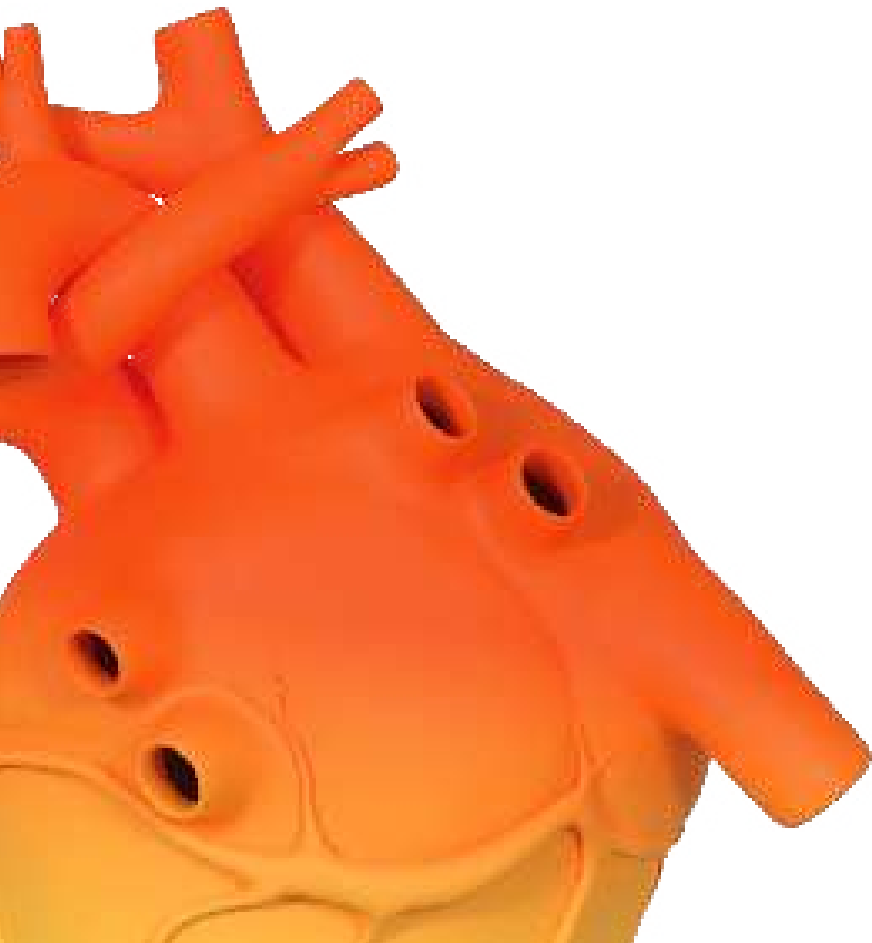


Practical Skills Assessment

The GMC has created a definitive register of [practical skills](#) that all newly certified doctors must possess in order to practice safely. These skills will be assessed as part of the CPSA.

REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

Reasonable adjustments are available for the AKT and the process for applying is managed by individual medical schools in the usual local process. You should contact your medical school to enquire about arrangements for reasonable adjustments.



EXAM DELIVERY AND SECURITY

The MS AKT is a university-led exam, and each medical school is responsible for most local decisions regarding how the exam is delivered. This includes registration, venue selection, and ensuring compliance with local university exam conditions. The exam is invigilated in person and utilizes lockdown software to maintain exam integrity.





INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND THE AKT

The AKT taken by students at UK medical schools will be designed specifically for that group. This includes students who are based in the international branch campuses of UK medical schools. All UK medical students, regardless of fee status, will sit the MLA. International medical graduates who want to practice in the UK must take an MLA that includes an AKT, but this will be a separate assessment designed and delivered by the GMC rather than medical schools. The Professional and Linguistic Assessments Board (PLAB) exams will continue for international medical graduates (IMGs). However in 2024 onwards the PLAB Blueprint will be aligned with the MLA content map.

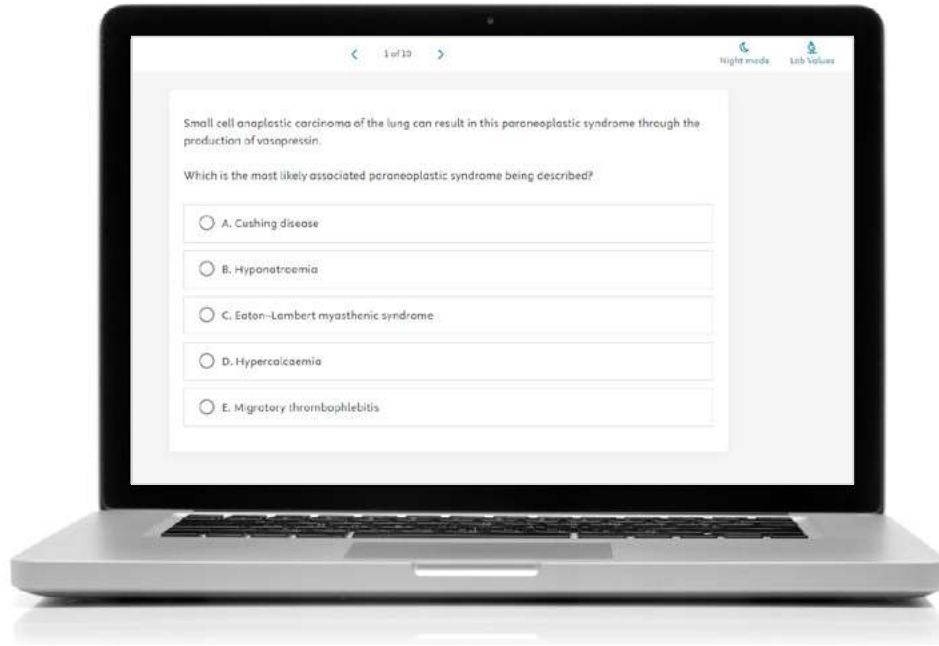
RESULTS AND FEEDBACK

The MLA is a pass/fail assessment, and scores will be provided for the MS AKT. The assessment is not used for national ranking, but medical schools may choose to use the scores of their students to award prizes and honours. The maximum waiting time for results will be around four weeks.

MOVING FORWARD WITH THE UKMLA

Remain proactive in seeking out the latest information from both your medical school and the GMC and take advantage of trusted resources to help you to prepare for your next step as a doctor.

RESOURCES



There are plenty of resources out there to help supplement the teaching at medical school. However, make sure that you are using resources from trusted providers.

Many of Elsevier's resources such as **ClinicalKey Student** are available via your institution, [click here](#) or ask your librarian to discover if your school has access.

The assessment capabilities on [ClinicalKey Student](#) are designed to help test your knowledge as you learn but is also a great way to prepare for the AKT section of the UKML. Each question adheres to the content guidelines of the UKMLA and using it to practice allows you to get used to the UKMLA exam-style questions, perfect your second-order multi-step question-tackling ability and maximise your exam potential.

The Elsevier CK question bank has transformed my preparation for the UKMLA. The question stems are structured very similarly to the real UKMLA questions and the rationales are all based on NICE CKS, meaning the bank's content is reliable, up-to-date and relevant for finals.

Mehar, UCL Medical School

ClinicalKey[®] Student

[ClinicalKey Student](#) has over 250 books to help you through medical school. However, the following books available are great resources for preparing for both sections of the UKMLA. Focusing in on revision notes, practical procedures and skills:

[Medicine in a Day. Revision Notes for Medical Exams, Finals, UKMLA and Foundation Years](#)

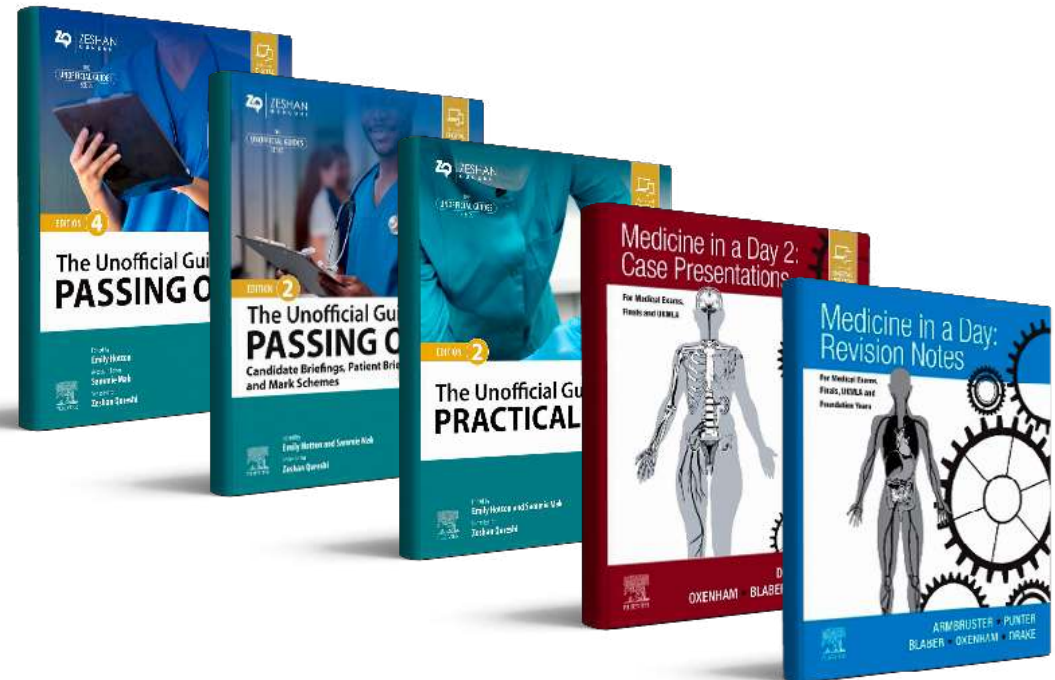
Medicine in a Day 2: Case Presentations. For Medical Exams, Finals, UKMLA and Foundation **Coming Soon**

[The Unofficial Guide to Practical Skills](#)

[The Unofficial Guide to Passing OSCEs](#)

[The Unofficial Guide to Passing OSCEs: Candidate Briefings, Patient Briefings and Mark Scheme](#)

Also available in print on www.elsevierhealth.com



ClinicalKey[®] Student

Great for revision and designed with the UKMLA in mind. Who doesn't love flashcards:



- Crash Cards: Medicine and Surgery for Finals and UKMLA
- Crash Cards: OSCEs and History Stations for Medical Finals and UKMLA
- Available from www.elsevierhealth.com



Other great resources from Elsevier include:

 **OSMOSIS** from Elsevier

Osmosis expert-reviews videos to simplify complex information, high impact notes, great study techniques to retain, understand and study more efficiently.

SOME PRACTICAL TIPS... ABOUT STUDYING

"In medical school, studying is a lifestyle. However, this lifestyle doesn't just involve reading books, attending lectures, and sitting exams. You also need to ensure that all the other aspects of your life work for you, too."

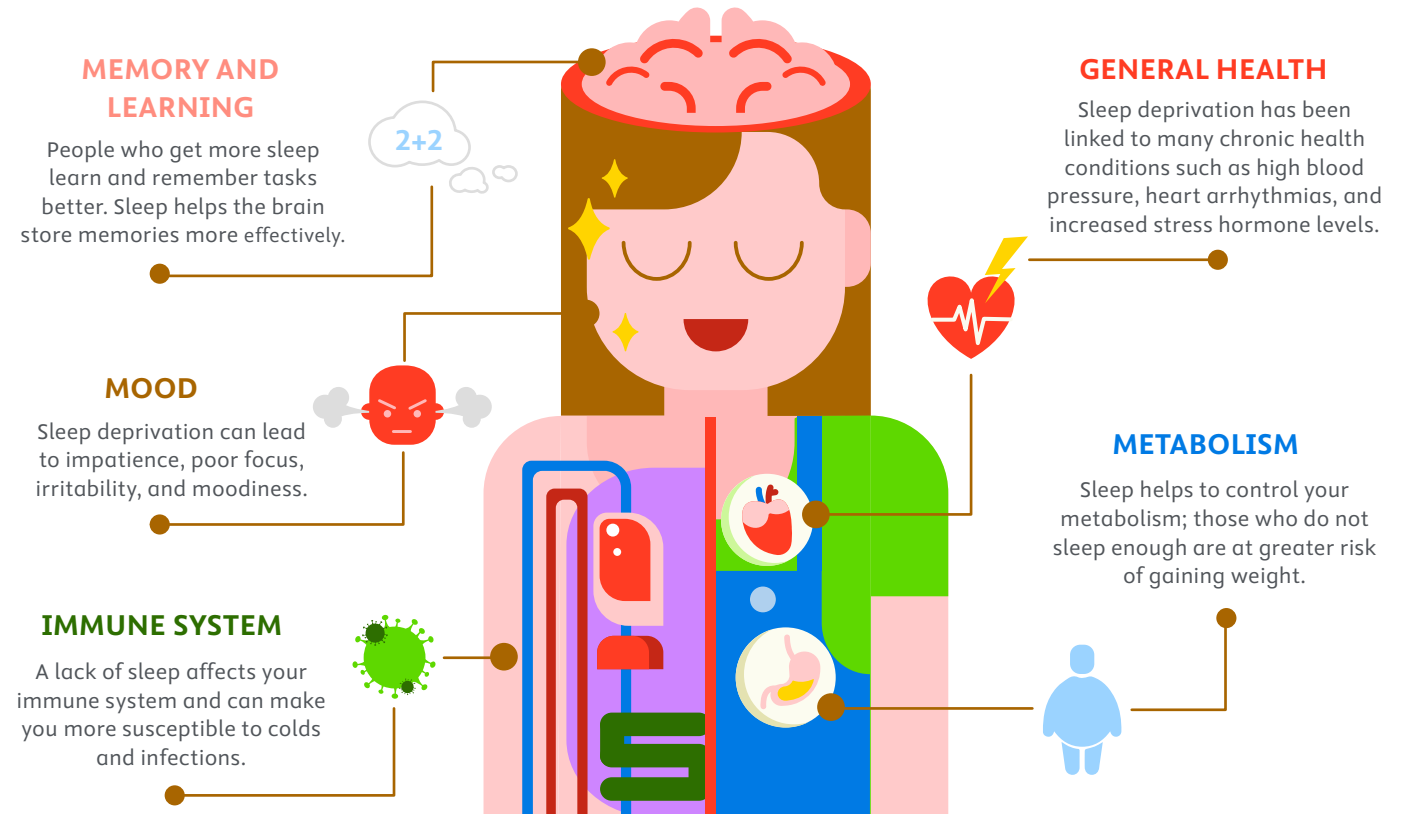
...You will need to **take care of all aspects of your health**, which means:



... AND WHY IT'S IMPORTANT TO LOOK AFTER YOURSELF...

When you look after your body, your body looks after you! If you're physically and/or mentally fatigued, it will make staying alert and learning much more difficult.

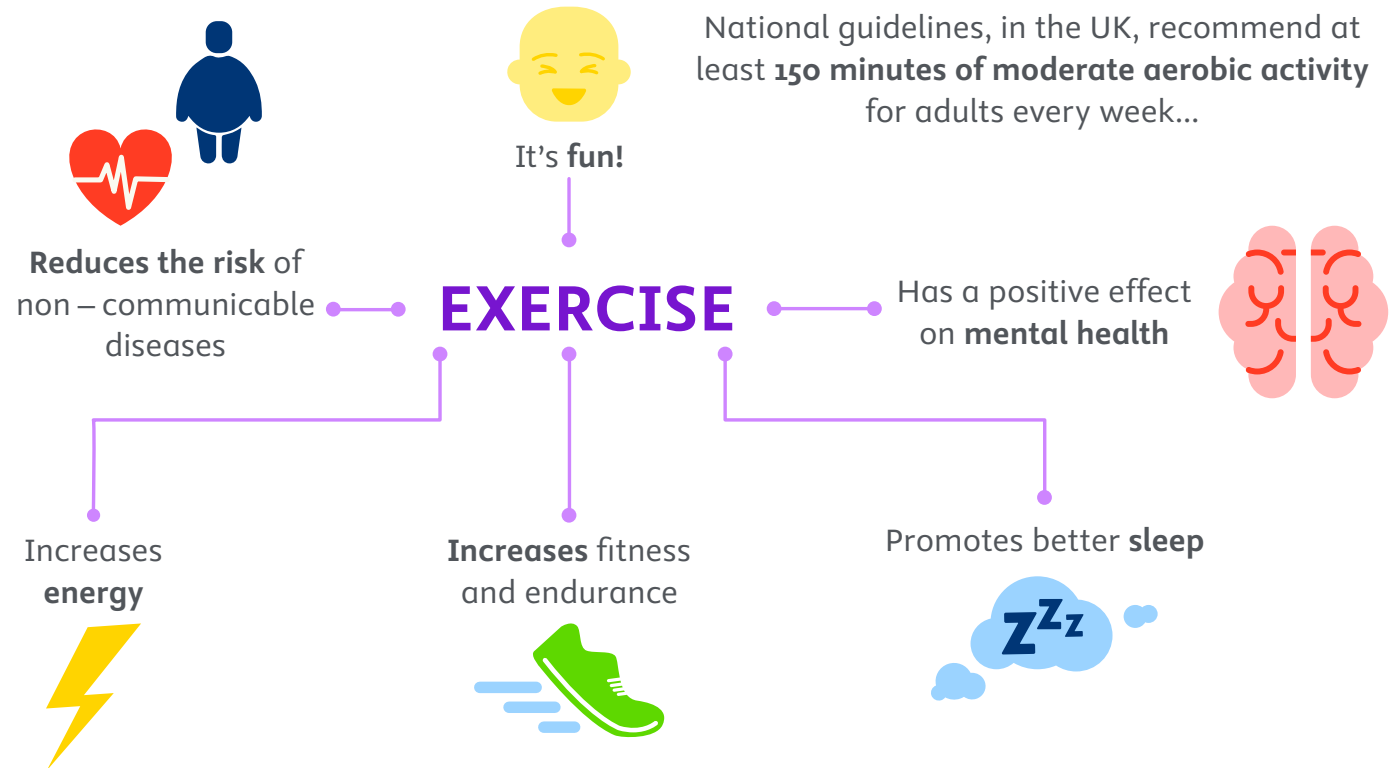
- Take a break; In short, when you need a break, take a break and make it a real break.
- Get some sleep, as much as you can; Sleep is crucial for learning and, more importantly, your general health.



A TIP HERE: ditch the phone! Try and dim the lights in your house around an hour before you want to go to bed to help your body adjust. Listen to [Prof. Matthew Walker](#) from Harvard University who is an expert of sleep talk about this. He even talks loads about medical students and doctors!

“Physical inactivity is one of the leading causes of preventable death from non-communicable disease worldwide.”

- Exercise and eat well; a healthy diet and exercise have been shown to be increasingly essential for your brain’s functioning. Treat your body well, and all will fall into place!



Learn more with this [Osmosis video on the physiology of your body whilst exercising](#)

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- Infographics created with content from: [Student Success in Medical School; Raman Mehrzad](#)↗
Also available in print.
- [MLA content map](#)↗ document created by the GMC.
- [Breakdown of the applied knowledge test by area of clinical practice](#)↗, from Medical Schools Council FAQ document.

