

Background:

I have been an occupational therapist for four years and have worked at the Philadelphia Hand to Shoulder Center since the start of my career. Prior to joining the therapy staff, I completed the Hand Center's Evelyn Mackin Hand Therapy Fellowship, which was a wonderful opportunity to receive mentorship from senior therapists in the field. During my first year at the Hand Center, I started working on an OTD and completed the Drexel Upper Quarter Rehabilitation program as part of my credits, which also expanded my knowledge of hand therapy concepts. I completed my OTD in July of 2017 and was very excited to move on to my next big goal—the CHT exam! Because I was focused on finishing my final OTD project until the end of July, I really only gave myself three months to study before sitting for the exam in November. Since I had a fairly extensive background in hand therapy, I found this was enough time to review, but it definitely required discipline to cover all the material in that time frame.

Study suggestions:

- Know how you study best
 - Find an approach that works for you. Approaches include joining or starting a study group, finding a 'study buddy,' or studying alone.
 - Figure out when you do your best thinking and study then. For me, this was Saturday mornings, since I tend to be a morning person.
 - Identify what kind of learner you are and consider using different learning strategies to fit your needs.
- Identify strengths and weaknesses
 - Build on your strengths. I found that reviewing resources I had used when learning the foundations of hand therapy the first time around jogged my memory.
 - For example, I reviewed resources from an anatomy course from graduate school that reminded me of strategies I had used to learn the brachial plexus the first time I memorized it. Looking back over those familiar resources helped me relearn the information more quickly.
 - "Know what you don't know" and focus your studying in those areas.
 - For example, my personal caseload of patients focused on hand/wrist/elbow conditions, so I gave extra attention to shoulder concepts that I was less familiar with. Likewise, I tend to see mostly adults versus pediatric patients in my practice, so I gave myself time for additional review of pediatric conditions and interventions.
 - When I didn't know a concept or needed review, I went back to the *Rehab of the Hand* book for further reading.
 - A good way to find out what you don't know is to do practice questions!
- Test your knowledge

- Practice questions from “The Purple Book” and ASHT review book were a great way to test my knowledge. This helped me pay closer attention as I read the material and helped me retain the information effectively.
- I used Quizlet to make flashcards for studying on-the-go.
- Two weeks before the test date, I completed a full 200 question practice exam (from the ASHT review book) in one sitting to simulate taking the test within the allotted time limit.

- Test taking
 - Understand how the scoring works: it is better to guess than to leave a question blank.
 - Pace yourself and do not spend too much time on difficult questions. I found it helpful to mark down the question numbers I wanted to review at the end if I had time.
 - Read all questions and answer options carefully.

Resources Used:

Books:

“The Purple Book”
ASHT Test Prep for the CHT Exam
Rehab of the Hand and Upper Extremity
Netter Atlas of Human Anatomy

Apps:

Quizlet
Human Anatomy Atlas 2018
Inkling (the free app that links with *Rehab of the Hand and Upper Extremity*)
Handouts in the app from previous Hand Rehabilitation Foundation
Symposiums

Introduction

- DPT from Drexel University in Philadelphia, PA 2011
- Hand Therapy Fellowship at the University of Rochester immediately following graduation
- Sat for, and passed, CHT exam in November 2016
- Currently an outpatient hand therapist and the fellowship coordinator at the University of Rochester

Preparing for Exam

- Used notes from fellowship year as an outline
- Anatomy first for approximately the first month
- Busy schedule – had 1-2 week goals leading up to the last month before the exam and then studied what I felt I needed more work on
 - Notes went everywhere with me
 - Used my lunchtime at work
 - Quizlet on my phone for quick anatomy and innervation study at any time
 - Used the purple book after I had a good foundation with specific topics included in each chapter
 - Taught newer therapists in my clinic every 1-2 weeks based on my study plan
- Hand Therapy Review Course in Baltimore, MD
- 2 online practice tests

Recommendations

- Know your anatomy!
- Apply what you are studying to what you see in the clinic and vice-versa
- Wait until you have a good grasp on your anatomy and are within a few months of the exam to take your first practice test
- Use practice tests that tell you why the answer is correct or incorrect and use an entire study session to review all of the answers – even the questions you got correct!

Materials Used

- Rehabilitation of the Hand and Upper Extremity, 6th Edition
- The “purple book”: Hand & Upper Extremity Rehabilitation: A Quick Reference Guide and Review
- ASHT Exam Prep book
- Practice tests
- Quizlet
- Coworkers!

- Introduction
 - Education: B.S/M.S. in Occupational Therapy from Dominican University of California in 2011
 - Professional experience:
 - Received a Commission in the U.S. Navy
 - U.S. Naval Hospital, Yokosuka Japan-Provided pediatric early intervention/school related OT services
 - Naval Hospital Camp Lejeune, North Carolina-Worked part-time in hand therapy and part time in a leadership role
 - Philadelphia, PA- Currently completing the Philadelphia Hand Foundation Fellowship
- Studying
 - FOCUS FIRST ON UNDERSTANDING ANATOMY
 - Innervations, compression sites, origin/insertions, brachial plexus, shoulder, bony landmarks, extensor compartments, extensor mechanism, etc.
 - Notecards
 - You can't make a notecard for everything!
 - Purple book
 - Prioritize chapters starting with the more difficult ones first, and then alternating with easy chapters (save ergonomics/practice management, etc. for the end)
 - Take the Purple Book everywhere you go!
 - Practice tests/quizzes
 - Practice tests provide opportunity to understand time management during the test
 - Quizlet or <http://handtherapy.com/quiz.asp> are easy to use on cell phones while on the go (bus/train/at lunch/waiting in lines/etc.)
 - Study groups
 - Online or in person
 - Careful, study groups can help AND hurt your confidence
 - Mentorship
 - Seek out another CHT if possible
 - Capitalize on your learning style
 - Visual learners: make note cards with pictures (vs. words), search for visual illustrations online (image searches, YouTube videos, etc.)
 - Develop acronyms/gestures/songs to memorize topics
 - CMRTOL (order of elbow ossification), PT3MC2TTS (order of sensory return)
 - Vary the environments: coffee shops, bookstores, home, work, etc.

- Repetition/practice writing out a “one page guide” (my guide included order of innervations, Brachial Plexus, Shoulder force couples,
- Pre- test
 - Review all of your notes
 - Practice one page study guide
 - If possible, have someone around for moral support the week of the test
- Test
 - Skip questions you don’t know. When you come back the second time, the answer may seem more obvious. If not, guess
 - Don’t feel rushed! There is plenty of test time
 - Watch for “which one is NOT...” or “ALL but...” and don’t hesitate to re-read the questions—remember time is not an issue.
 - Test questions/answers seemed a little more obvious compared to the Purple Book. The Purple Book often had at least 2 similar answers and the actual test generally had one clear answer. There are no trick questions.
- Post-test
 - Don’t expect to walk away thinking you passed
 - Get a massage the week after the test- you deserve it (and you will need it)!
- Other tips
 - I was sitting where you are one year ago. You’ll never feel ready enough for the exam-that is a normal feeling!
 - Give yourself more credit
 - Go down the rabbit hole when studying; investigate a topic further until it is clear to you
 - Have a game plan for reviewing the results (at work, at home, with friends)
 - Don’t throw away your study material, even after you’ve passed!
- Resources
 - Purple Book
 - Netters book/app, anatomy app
 - Rehab of the Hand Vol 1 and Vol 2
 - ASHT’s Test Prep for the CHT Exam, 3rd Edition
 - <http://handtherapy.com/quiz.asp>
 - <http://handtherapynow.com> hard but good to practice the timing
 - <https://quizlet.com> (search “hand therapy” or “certified hand therapy”)

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Time line:

- One year prior
 - o Drexel Hand Program
 - Current Concepts
 - Rehabilitation of the Hand and Upper Extremity
 - Tissue healing
 - Anatomy
 - Neuro
 - Musculoskeletal
- Two months prior
 - o Purple book (Hand and Upper extremity rehabilitation: a quick reference guide and review)
 - Tag things that need to be reviewed again
 - o Review Anatomy
 - o Draw cervical plexus
 - Check out YouTube for quick instructions
 - o Draw peripheral nerves and innervations
- One Month Prior
 - o Review Tagged items in purple book
 - o Review anatomy that you struggle with
 - o Draw Cervical plexus until you have it memorized
 - o Draw peripheral nerves and innervations
- One week prior
 - o Review trouble spots
- One day prior
 - o TAKE A BREAK!!!
 - o Relax
 - o Clear your head
- Day of Exam
 - o On your scrap paper draw the cervical plexus and peripheral nerves with innervations to use as reference
 - o Draw anatomy you sometimes mix up (extensor mechanisms/flexor pulley system)