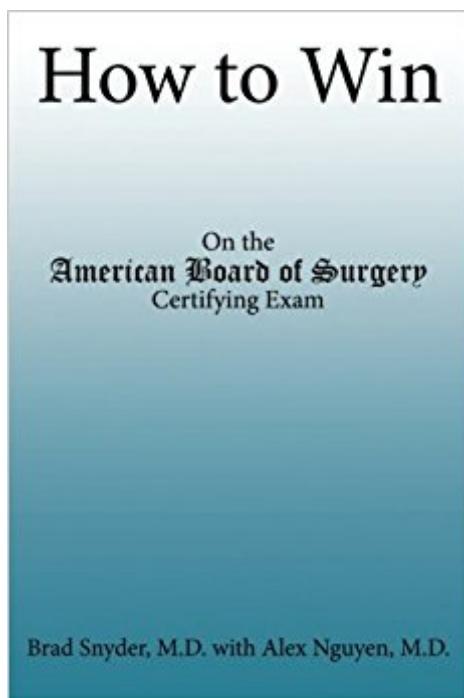


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How To Win: On The American Board Of Surgery Certifying Exam



Synopsis

Facing the American Board of Surgery Certifying Exam is not merely taking another exam. Most surgeons are not exposed to the techniques of oral examinations or to the best methods to prepare for them. It is seemingly a game in which you have to ascertain the rules, but in reality it is no game. The stakes are high. Reading from sizeable textbooks, poorly-organized review books, and one-dimensional autobiographic example scenarios undeniably makes studying for this exam more stressful than fruitful. Knowing what is important and what is not is crucial when studying for this particular exam. The authors have learned how the challenges can be overcome; as a result, this book was written to include everything that you will need to successfully pass this critical exam. This guide provides pertinent pearls of wisdom quoted from others who have successfully taken the exam and includes: * One hundred and forty-five subjects of content, * Twenty-six bulleted descriptions of the most commonly probed surgical procedures, and, * Sixty-nine of the most commonly asked subjects over the last ten years stressed with invaluable example scenarios that show how content and technique should be employed synergistically.

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Customer Reviews

Brad Snyder, M.D. and his contributing author, Alex Nguyen, M.D. met in 2007 during their fellowship in minimally invasive surgery at the University of Texas in Houston. While studying for their certification, they agreed there was a profound lack of well-organized, comprehensive study guides for this exam. They wrote this guide to fill that void.

Me: Recently passed the orals. I used this book and Neff's Passing the General Surgery Oral Board Exam. I also took the Osler course. I read Cameron's 9th edition during residency and had a broad based experience. The Good: The only book that attempts to simulate the oral 'tennis match' between you and the examiners. The author covers most of the topics seen on the boards, including a few scenarios you may not see during residency but appear on the exam. There's also descriptions of common procedure in the back- they're pretty good, but not perfect. The Bad: As others note, a distracting number of typos. The author suggests some questionable treatments and diagnostics. He doesn't go in depth for some scenarios- you'll have to use your imagination to turn a scenario into a 7 minute question. Overall: The author does a decent job considering the breadth of knowledge required for the orals. For a book to be complete, it would need to be gigantic. This book, though, only serves as a starting point. If you *only* used this book, you'd be borderline. Instead, take the scenarios and broaden them. You need to know a few ACLS protocols, not just one, and if a bullet enters the chest / abdomen, be prepared for a variety of injuries, not just the ones the book offers. This book would help you as a starting point for practice orals with colleagues, though you should extend the scenarios and introduce complications. Recommendation: Considering what's at stake, I'd get the book. The author could, however, make an excellent book by fixing the typos, updating some management, and answering some 'common curveballs' as Neff calls them. If you extend the scenarios in 'How to Win', introducing common complications or alternate diagnoses (left lower quadrant pain becomes volvulus, then perforated cancer, etc), you could make your own solid study guide. For the background knowledge, I suggest UpToDate, eMedicine, NCCN guidelines (free and accurate), and begrudgingly Cameron's (the 10th edition was terrible compared to 9th). Neff's book is annoying because it covers some weaknesses in How to Win ('curveballs' introduced into scenarios), but then doesn't expound on them. I would NOT pick up an old copy of Safe Answers. The 2011 version should be re-titled Old, Deadly Answers. I don't know if the 2013 edition fixes those errors, but the cancer management was particularly terrible for 2011. I would also take the Osler course just to get in a proper frame of mind, see some curveballs thrown (and how to handle them), and immerse yourself in the oral's format. Be prepared, though, to have questions on some of the material presented. I wouldn't consider the course to be necessary.

Overall the book is an excellent resource to prepare for the general surgery oral board exam. It is certainly not perfect, but I firmly believe it is the best book available for this purpose. I've purchased and/or read every book on the market for the oral boards, and they all have their

problems. This book describes an excellent technique for how to approach the exam, how to think about the questions, and how to structure your answers. I like the fact that it has a section dedicated to providing short, concise descriptions of operations that you may be asked to describe during the exam. Some of the descriptions are either too short or way too long (Whipple) but most review books do not address concise operative technique description at all. (For those of you looking for a source for good concise descriptions of common general surgical procedures, I highly recommend "Operative Dictations in General and Vascular Surgery" by Hoballah and Carol E.H. Scott-Conner. It provides the key steps for all of the operations in the book, in addition to sample dictated op reports). Bottom line is that no book is perfect for preparing for the oral boards, but this one is great, and should be considered.

Just took my Boards and passed. I used this book and supplemented it with Cameron's, as well as a surgical atlas, to prepare for the exam. I spent a month studying. This book was quite helpful in organizing my studying. I appreciated the fact that the author looked at hundreds of exam questions, and listed how often the topics appeared over the last 10 years in front of each chapter. This helps you focus on the important topics. There are people who tell you to read Cameron's or some surgical textbook in its entirety. With a busy practice or fellowship, you don't have time for that. The examiner's aren't trying to pimp you- you already passed the written exam. And they don't ask esoterica. They want to know how you manage common surgical problems in your practice. Contrary to prior reviews, you're not asked to "think outside of the box"- you have 7 minutes per question, so just answer how you would do it in your practice. And yes, "the complex complications in surgical patients" stated in the prior review is in the book- plus they're not really that complex; just things you should know how to manage after 5 years of surgical training. One annoying thing about the book is the spelling errors. Crohns disease is not spelled "Chrons". Additionally, the sample responses to the scenarios in the book are too verbose. You're not there to lecture these big dogs. Just answer the questions they ask you. But overall, a highly recommended book. I spent \$30. My buddies spent over a grand for their review courses.

A must read book for General Surgery Oral Board prep. Maybe the intro is the most valuable part of the book with its words of comforting advice and psychological prep, but every page is worth looking at. Was one of maybe 3-4 main resources I used to pass.

The number of grammar and spelling errors is so overwhelming that it distracts the reader from the

material. A simple automated spell checker would probably get rid of a significant number of errors. The book should be revised and an updated version offered free of charge for those who purchased the book.

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