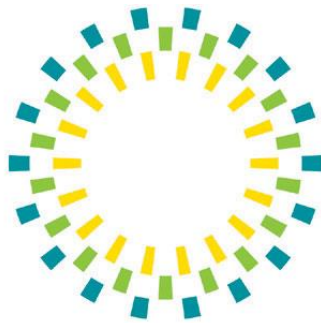


# Grasping Testing Strategies for Nursing Review & Certification



**capita**health



# Grasping Testing Strategies for Nursing Review & Certification Objectives

- Identify steps toward certification process
- Discuss study review tactics
- Identify test taking strategies & tips
- Analyze components of a multiple choice question
- Integrating: processes, theory, Models, Learning styles, real world, prioritization, and Rules of management & positioning
- Discuss preparation for exam day.
- Practice test questions

## What is your process?

- Decide what certification you want.
- Next notify your manager, Unit Educator or Clinical Nurse Specialist to initiate your plan
- Consider joining the nursing organization you are interested in getting certification (discounts & resources)
- Consider attending review course
- Obtain multiple questions and practice, practice, practice, practice.
- AACN has free practice tests  
<https://www.examedge.com/aacn/practicetests>
- Vouchers are purchased and distributed to department managers for staff are interested in getting a certification
- Each organization has specific processes for obtaining vouchers.
- Reimbursement is an immediate option; especially if the no vouchers are accessible through that organization
- [Professional Certification Compensation](#)
- [SEMINARS AND CONFERENCES](#)

## Capital Health's Strive for 5 Magnet Goal

- Pre-Paid Vouchers are available for certifications through
  - AACN -American Nursing Credentialing Center
  - ANCC-American Association of Critical Care Nurses
  - CCI-Cardiovascular Credentialing International
  - ABPNC-American Board of Peri-anesthesia Nursing Certification

- BCEN-Board of Certification for Emergency Nursing
- NCC-National Certification Corporation
- If your organization is not listed above, an initial achievement of an ANCC approved certification is eligible for reimbursement.
- Free certification preparation material is available through On-Line Course Learning (CE Direct) as well as professional organizations <https://cedirect.continuingeducation.com/login.aspx>.
- Contact Christina Allen at [callen@capitalhealth.org](mailto:callen@capitalhealth.org) extension 801-6727 to learn more.

### Why Certification?

- 90% of nurses agree that certification enhances nurses' credibility.
- 97% of nurses report more confidence in their clinical abilities after certification.
- 86% of nurse managers prefer to hire a certified nurse.
- 74% of institutions provide one or more certification incentives.
- Certified nurses make at least \$7,300 more per year than their non-certified peers.
- Research links certification to better patient care

### Points to Prepare

- Determine eligibility: Most certification exams have specific requirements and prerequisites.
- Deadlines: You'll need to know how often the exams are given and be clear on the deadlines for application and payment.
- Test format: Many exams are conducted electronically and offered in testing centers.
- Test structure: Do the questions need to be answered in a specific order? Can you go back if you skip a question or are you able to review all your answers before you submit them?

- Scoring: Understand how your results will be determined.
- Content: Most tests cover a range of topics and assign a certain percentage of the total score to each area.

By now, you may be feeling overwhelmed.

**Don't be — just take a deep breath and keep going.**

### Develop Study Tactics

- Everyone studies differently, so develop a study plan that's right for you
- Give yourself plenty of time to pace your study
- create a schedule to do it & enjoy the process.
- Don't approach it grudgingly or resentfully; you may learn a lot more than you think.

### Consider Study Resources

- Core curricula
- Books
- Test guides
- Sample tests



### What Certification Exams Focus

Certification in a nursing specialty demonstrates advanced knowledge & skills.

The **nursing specialty** is distinct from other **nursing specialties** & is national in scope.

There is an identified need for the **specialty** & **nurses** who devote most of their practice to the **specialty**.

Research Based **Body of Knowledge**: A **body** of research-based **knowledge** related to the **nursing specialty** exists.

Mechanisms have been established for the support, review, and dissemination of research & **knowledge** in the **specialty**.

Certification of staff nurses by **accrediting bodies and specialty organizations'** attempts to recognize those who have developed expertise in particular areas.

In the USA, certification is offered in 11 areas (not advanced practice) by the American Nurses Credentialing Center

(<http://www.nursecredentialing.org/Certification.aspx>).

Further, certification in specialty areas is offered by at least 13 specialty groups (<http://www.nursezone.com/Edu-ProfDevelopment/certification.aspx>).

## What Does Nursing Certification Exam Test?

- Nursing Knowledge
- Nursing Judgment
- Nursing Discretion
- Critical Thinking
- Problem Solving
- Managing personnel (non-licensed or healthcare providers)
- Managing & providing care (groups of clients or healthcare organizations)



## How is Critical Thinking Tested?

The nurse is required to:

- Observe
- Decide what is important
- Look for patterns & relationships
- Identify the problem
- Transfer knowledge from one situation to another
- Apply knowledge
- Evaluate according to criteria established

## Review Course

- **Provides a review of content included on the exam**
- **Provides a way to assess knowledge**
- **Helps to establish strength & weaknesses**
- **Concentrate on content that is new**
- **Taken early will allow time to study weak areas & review**

## Certification Exam

**MOST ALL** certification exams are multiple choice

Multiple choice questions consist of 3 parts:

- a) The information or stem

- b) The question
- c) The four possible answers  
(1-correct; 3-distractors)

### Test Taking Strategies

- Identify parts of a question
- Determine key words/elements in a question
- Pay attention to time frame (post/pre-op)
- Repeated words (in stem and answer)
- Opposites (high/low, increase/decrease)
- Avoid 2-3 same answers or alike usually incorrect
- Odd answer choice from other usual correct
- All the answers are correct/choice the best
- Absolute answers are apt to be incorrect



alike usually

### Successful Strategies for RN Certification

- Good understanding of nursing content
- Ability to articulate test questions with confidence
- Unwillingness to give up on unsure answers
- Correctly identify the question being asked
- Stay focused on the question
- Answer & approach questions based on nursing theory

### Qualifiers

- Always
- All
- Every
- Must
- Nearly
- Never
- None
- Only
- Total

\*(usually false)

Answers containing these keywords are rarely correct because they place special limitations and qualifications on potentially correct answers.

When except, not, or a phrase such as all but one of the following appears in the stem, the inappropriate option is the correct answer

## Key Words

- All of the following are.....
- Best
- Least
- First
- Greatest
- Common
- Less
- More
- Most
- Sometimes
- Generally
- Usually

All answers choices are correct & the incorrect response is the correct answer  
All the answer choices are incorrect & the correct one is correct

## Strategies to Avoid on the RN Certification Exams

- Cramming facts about disease processes & nursing care
- Recognizing & recalling facts
- Predicting answers
- Selecting responses that are different in length
- Selecting the answer choice that is grammatically correct
- When in doubt, choosing answer C
- Assume know or don't know answer
- Memorize facts by recall/recognition
- Repetitively read question than pick an answer
- Choose answer based on a hunch
- Choose answer based on personal experience
- Give up to soon due to a challenging question
- Don't stay focused on the question

## Multiple Choice

- **The well-written multiple-choice question is precisely stated, providing you with only the information needed to make the question or problem clear & specific. Careful reading the**

details in the stem can provide important clues to the correct option.

**Tip: Pay Attention to Specific Details**

**Components of Multiple-Choice Format Question**

- A. Stem=the situation that describes the client's problems or health care needs & other relevant information. Also includes a question or an incomplete statement.
- B. Three incorrect answers; “distracters”
- C. One correct answer

Distracters may sound logical; may be based on information provided in the stem; may be actions that are common nursing practice but not ideal nursing practice

**Reviewing the Question**

**Step 1: Read each question carefully without skimming**

**Step 2: Look for Hints in the stem**

- Adjectives: *most, first, best, primary, initial* indicates priority
- Phrases: *further teaching is necessary* indicates the answer will contain incorrect information
- Phrases: *client understands the teaching* indicates the answer will be correct information

**Step 3: Reword the question in your own words to a yes/no response**

**Step 4: If you can't, read answer choices for clues**

**Test Taking Tips**

- Eliminating obvious distractors allows you more time to focus on the options that appear to be potentially sound answers to the question.
- Reducing plausible options will reduce the material to consider & increase the probability of selecting the correct option.

**The “ideal” answer choice is not always there**

**Remember: Don't Predict Answers**

- Identify the **REWORDED QUESTION**

- The stem word that clues you to a similar word in the option or that limits potential options is known as a specific determiner.
- Select the **BEST** answer from choices provided

### **Identify Words in the options that are closely associated with words in the stem**

- If one or more of the options are not grammatically consistent with the stem, usually can eliminate these distractors

### **Identify Answer (Option) Components**

- If an answer contains two or more parts, you can reduce the number of potentially correct answers by identifying one part as incorrect.
- Identify words in the options that are closely associated with words in the stem
- Be alert to words in the options that may be closely associated with but not identical to a word or words in the stem.

### **Watch for Grammatical Inconsistencies**

- If one or more of the options are not grammatically consistent with the stem, usually can eliminate these distractors.
- The correct option must be consistent with the form of the question.
- If the question demands a response in the singular, plural options usually can be safely eliminated.
- When the stem is in the form of an incomplete sentence, each option should complete the sentence in a grammatically correct way.

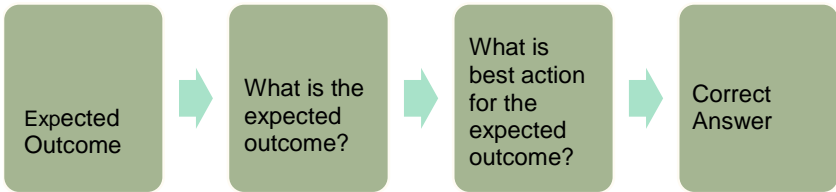
### **Be alert to relevant information from earlier questions**

- Occasionally, remembering information from one question may provide you with a clue for answering a later question.

## Make Educated Guesses

- **When unsure about the correct answer to a question, it is better to make an educated guess than not to answer the question.**
- **Most of the time you can eliminate one or more of the distractors by using partial knowledge & the methods**
- **The elimination process increases your chances of selecting the correct option**
- **Elimination of two distractors on a four-option multiple-choice item increases your probability of selecting the correct answer from 25% to 50%.**

## Strategies to Recognize Expected Outcomes The correct answer is at the end of the path!

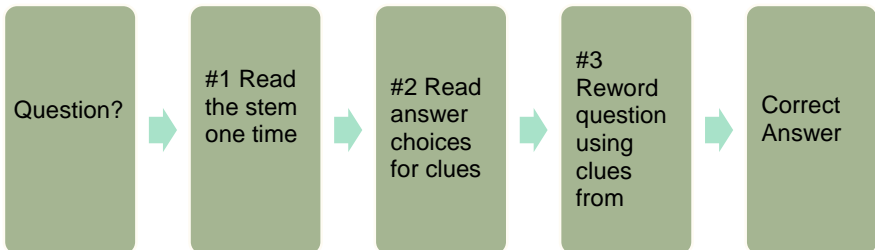


## When Confronted with a Question That Deals with Unfamiliar Nursing Content LOOK FOR CLUES IN THE ANSWER CHOICES INSTEAD OF THE QUESTION STEM



## Read Answer Choices to Obtain Clues Strategies

- **Steps for unfamiliar content or understated topic**



## **Strategic Clues in Multiple Choice Questions**

- **Multiple-Choice Format Exam Question**
- **Beware of Simple Concepts**
- **Hidden Important Concepts in Simple Behaviors**
- **Practicing Rewording Question**
- **Don't Predict Answers**
- **Recognize Expected Outcomes**
- **Read Answer Choices to Obtain Clues**

## **Multiple-Choice Sample Question**

**A client is being treated for heart failure with diuretic therapy. Which of the following assessments *BEST* indicates to the nurse that the client's condition is improving?**

1. **The client's weight has remained stable since admission**
2. **The client's systolic blood pressure has decreased**
3. **There are fewer crackles heard when auscultating the client's lung**
4. **The client's urinary output is 1,500 ml per day**

**What is the stem?**

- **Heart failure**
- **Treatment is diuretic therapy**
- **How do you know the client's condition is improving?**

**Answer Choices:**

**(1) Weight should decrease with diuretic therapy(distracter)**

**(2) A decreased BP may occur with diuretic therapy; but may occur with change in position or emotional state Not best indicator for heart failure (distracter)**

**(3) A client with heart failure has crackles due to pulmonary edema. Diuretics promote excretion of sodium and water via the kidneys. Decreased crackle is the best indicator for improving pulmonary edema.**

**(4) WNL in 24 hours (distracter)**

## Integrating Processes

- The Nursing Process
- Caring
- Communication
- Documentation
- Teaching
- Learning
- Culture
- Spirituality
- Theorist Models



## Nursing Process

- Describes the approach of nursing care
- Takes a clinical & scientific approach
- Uses:

- Assessment
- Analysis
- Planning
- Implementation
- Evaluation



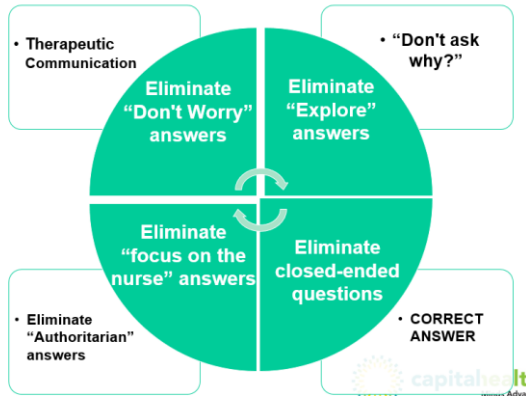
## Caring

- Describes nurses interaction with clients
- Suggests a nurturing atmosphere of:
  - Mutual Respect
  - Trust
  - Encouragement
  - Support
  - Compassion

## Communication & Documentation

- Refers to all interactions (therapeutic communication) between the nurse & the client; significant others; & the entire health care team
- Verbal & non-verbal interactions
- Recording written/electronically client care activities & relative events
- Adheres to standards of practice & accountability

## Rule of Communication



### Therapeutic communication

“A process in which the nurse consciously influences a client or helps the client to a better understanding through verbal or nonverbal communication. Therapeutic communication involves the use of specific strategies that encourage the patient to express feelings and ideas and that convey acceptance and respect.”

Mosby's Medical Dictionary, 9th edition. © 2009, Elsevier

### Therapeutic Responses

Response	Goal/Purpose
Using silence	Allow the client to think& reflect; conveys acceptance. Allows the client to take the lead in conversation
Using general leads or broad opening	Encourages the client to talk. Indicates your interest in the client. Allow the client to choose the subject.
Clarification	Encourages recall & details of particular experience. Encourages description of feelings: Seeks explanation: pinpoints specifics
Reflecting	Paraphrases what client says. Reflects on what client says, especially the feeling conveyed

### Teaching & Learning

- Refers to the nurse promoting ongoing acquisition of skills & knowledge that promote behavioral change in the client

- Sharing information with the clients to achieve optimal functioning

### **Culture & Spirituality**

- Caring for clients as a whole person (body, mind & spirit)
- Caring for clients from different cultures & spiritual beliefs
- Recognize & consider the client-reported self-identified, unique & individual preferences to client care

### **Integrating Strategies**

Understanding the difference and how theory and models are used throughout the nursing or other professions are important and can guide in selecting the appropriate answers

A theory is a conceptualized framework that generalizes a phenomenon which is accepted by many people in the society.

**Theory** is a **generalized thinking or conclusion of something** which is a consequence of an analysis.

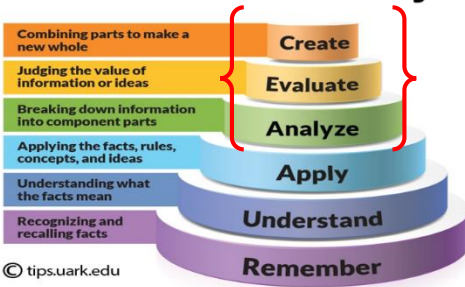
A theory is always **proven scientifically with evidence**.

A **Model** is a physical, symbolical, or verbal representation of a concept which has been found in order to make the understanding of something clearer.

**Models can be considered as a representation created in order to explain a theory.**

Difference Between Model and Theory. (2015, October 27). Retrieved from <https://pediaa.com/difference-between-model-and-theory/>

# Bloom's Taxonomy



Levels of Questions in Nursing Tests are...?

## Basic & Comprehensive Level

### of Testing

- Test a specific body of content
- Questions based on a knowledge level
- Recognition & Recall of ideas; materials read; classroom discussion
- Understanding the meaning of materials

### Application & Analysis Level Primary Focus

- Test ability to make safe judgment about client care by taking facts & using them to make a nursing judgment
- Test ability to problem solve

### Finding Your Strength In Your Learning Style

Identifying the learning style will help you to develop a study plan specific to your learning style.

### Adult Learning Process

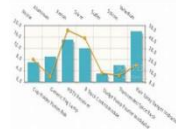
Interested Learner

- Visual
- Auditory
- Tactile /Kinesthetic
- Intellectual



# Visual

## Use of Imagery



- Tips
- Flashcards
- Rewrite Notes
- Use Highlighters
- Power Point Presentations



# Kinesthetic

- Writing
- Hands on activities
- Skills Fair
- Learning with physical activities



- Tips
- Move around
- Engage in active studies
- Need frequent breaks while studying

# Tactile/Intellectual

- Reading
- Studying
- Concepts
- Memory
- Concentration



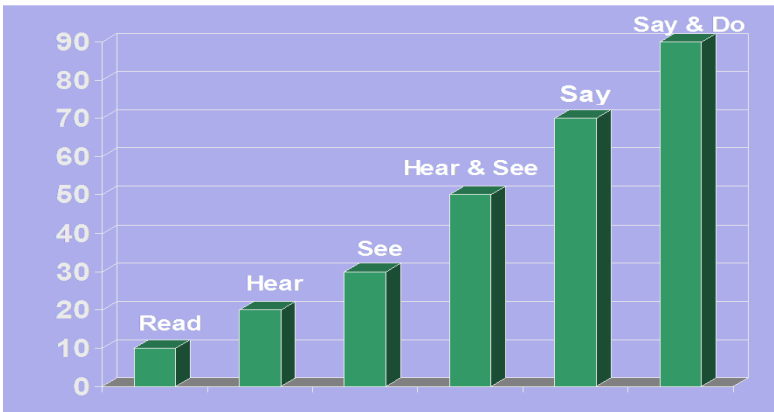
- Tips
- Flashcards
- Doodle
- Rewrite notes in own words
- Pen/Pad



## Strength in Your Learning Style

- Recognizing your learning style can help you during the testing process.
- Learning is accomplished by a combination of learning styles.

## Learning Process



## Question

A client is being treated in the burn unit for second-and- third degree burns over 45% of his body. The physician's orders include the application of silver sulfadiazine cream. The **BEST** way for the nurse to apply this medication is to use which of the following?

1. Sterile 4 x 4 dressing soaked in saline
2. Sterile tongue depressor
3. Sterile gloved hand
4. Sterile cotton-tipped applicator

Implementation includes:

- a. Assisting in the performance of activities fo daily living
- b. Counseling & educating the client & family
- c. Giving care to clients

- d. Supervising & evaluating the work of other members of the health team

### **Intervention may be:**

- I. Independent actions: requiring no supervision
- II. Dependent actions: written orders of a physician
- III. Interdependent actions: shared with other health care team members
- IV. (3) sterile gloved hand will cause the least amount of trauma

### **Real-World Nursing**

Is Experience Enough to Answer Questions?

### **In the Testing World**

- You have all the Time
- You have all resources
- You have all equipment
- There are no staffing problems
- All care to client's is done by the book
- No shortcuts are used

### **It's the Real World**

- Real world experience
- Real world logic
- Select text book answers
- Client vs equipment
- Laboratory Values
- Medication Administration
- Notifying the doctor
- Real world situations



## Question

A client is treated in the emergency room for acute alcohol intoxication. He has a five-year history of alcohol abuse. He is agitated and verbally abusive. His admission orders include chlorthalidone 50 mg IM or PO every 4-6 hours for agitation. The nurse should take which of the following precautions after chlorthalidone is administered?

1. Place the client in restraints
2. Leave the client in a room by himself until the tranquilizer takes effect
3. Assign a practical nurse to stay with the client & document his condition
4. Ask the security guard to stay with the client

## Real-World Logic

- (1) Restraints are used in the real world
- (2) Done in the real world, but not the best answer
- (3) Assigning sounds reasonable however there may not be enough staff to sit with the client
- (4) **Yes security is called for an agitated patient (Code Grey)**

## Strategies for Prioritizing

### Three Strategies to Establish Priorities

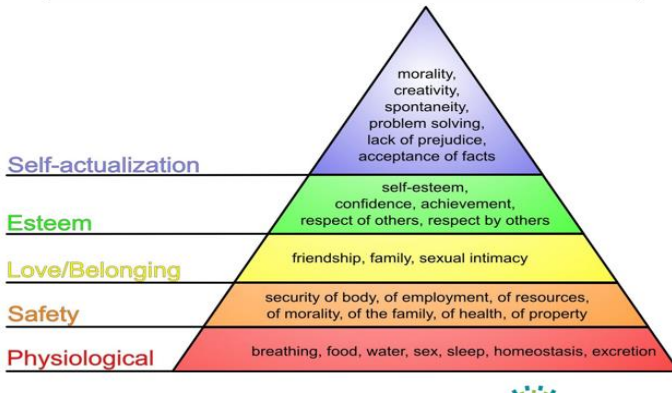
- Maslow
- Nursing Process
- Safety



# Maslow Strategy

## Five Levels of Human Needs

## Nursing Process Strategy



## Assessment vs Implementation

**Assessment is the first step of the nursing process and takes priority over all other steps.**

**Implementation is the care you provide to your client/s:**

- **Assisting**
- **Counseling**
- **Educating**
- **Giving care**
- **Supervising**
- **Evaluating the work of others**

## Examples of Implementation

A. Independent

- Instructing a client to turn, cough & deep breath after surgery

B. Dependent

- Need a doctor's order (testing world you will always have an order)

### C. Interdependent

- Nutrition education shared with dietitian; chest physiotherapy shared with a respiratory therapist

### **Safety Strategy**

**When answering questions about procedures always think safety**

- Safety includes:
  - Healthcare facilities
  - Home setting
  - Work place
  - Community
  - Meeting basic needs
  - Reducing hazards
  - Decreasing transmission of pathogens

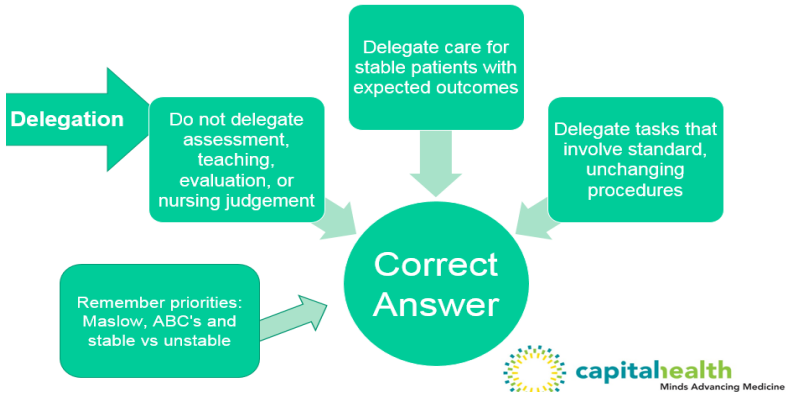


## Rules of Management

According to the ANA, “delegation is a complex process in professional practice, requiring sophisticated clinical judgment and final accountability for patients’ care.” The reality is that delegating is a necessary skill in nursing practice today, due to nursing shortages, rising patient acuity, and the new emphasis on patient satisfaction.

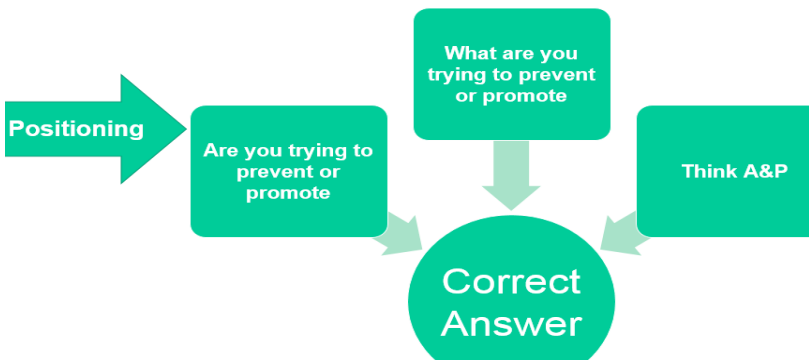
**As a nurse, you are a steward of healthcare resources:** delegating appropriate tasks to assistive caregivers can be a cost-effective way to ensure high-quality care and good patient outcomes.

## Rules of Management



## Rules of Positioning What Goes Where & Why?

## Rules of Positioning



## Essential Positions to Know Exam

Position	Therapeutic Function
Flat (Supine)	Avoids hip flexion, which can compress arterial flow
Dorsal Recumbent	Supine with knees flexed; more comfortable
Side Lateral	Allows drainage of oral secretions
Side with leg bent (SIMS)	Allows drainage of oral secretions; used for rectal exam
Head Elevated (Fowler's) High Folwer's: 80-90 degrees Folwer's: 45-60 degrees Semi-Folwer's: 30-45 degrees Low Folwer's: 15-30 degrees	Increases venous return; allows maximal lung expansion

Position	Therapeutic Function
Feet & Leg elevated	Increases blood return to heart
Feet elevated & Head lowered (Trendelenburg)	Used to insert central venous pressure (CVA) line, or for treatment umbilical cord compression
Feet elevated 20 degrees, knees straight, trunk flat, & head slightly elevated (modified Trendeleburg)	Increases venous return; used for shock; may be used to prevent shock
Elevation of extremities	Increases venous return;decreases blood volume to extermities
Flat on back, thighs flexed, legs abducted (Lithotomy)	Increases vaginal opening for examination
Prone	Promotes extension ofhip joint; not well tolerated by persons with respiratory difficulties
Knee-chest	Provides maximal visualization of rectal area

## Certification Examination Day

### How to Prepare for Examination Day



- Control anxiety
- Do not listen to gossip about exam
- Set reasonable expectations
- Prepare mentally & physically
- Access knowledge
- Institute a systematic study plan
- Wear layers. Depending on the time of year, the testing center may also be unreasonably hot or cold.
- Be prepared (sweater or jacket)
- Believe in yourself.
- You're a great nurse
- You know your stuff.
- Take a deep breath to help you calm down & stimulate your memory
- Focus. Ignore the people around you
- Commit yourself to the task at hand.
- Be aware of the time.
- Don't rush, but know how fast you're proceeding & how much time you have left.
- Celebrate when you're done.
- Be Prepared to celebrate on Certified Nurses Day on March 19 each year

*You  
got  
this.*

*Celebrate*

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