**What Every Intern Should Know:**

**Professionalism**
You have only one chance to make a first impression. Always be professional, no matter what.

Cardinal Rules:
1. **Never lie:** never, never, never. Once you do you will not recover.
2. **Be reliable:** Show up on time, be prepared.
3. **Be respectful:** You are the role models. Patients and colleagues deserve this.
4. **Remember that you are part of a team.**
5. **Don’t be lazy.** This reputation will stay with you throughout the rest of the program.

**Interpersonal and Communication Skills**
Spend some time honing these skills. You are in a profession where good communication is essential.

Cardinal Rules:
1. Don’t be afraid to call your senior. They take the hit if something goes wrong. Keep them informed at all times. Surgeons DO NOT like surprises.
2. Communicate with your colleagues:
   a. Sign Outs are Critical
      i. Who to call if needed
      ii. Identify sick patients
      iii. Tasks to do overnight
      iv. Pick up the pager each morning BEFORE rounds—ask about problems the night before
3. Communicate with Consultants—be clear about recommendations and the plan.
4. Take the time to explain things to patients and family members. They deserve this. Take the time to get an accurate history. You may get additional important information.
5. Write clear and legible notes. You are responsible for maintaining the medical record.
   a. History and Physical
      i. Don’t copy anyone’s note—write your own observations
      ii. Spend time talking to the patient and family and make sure you have gotten all of the information that is important
   b. Daily Notes
      i. SOAP format
         1. Subjective: patient complaints, responses to your query of symptoms
         2. Objective: vitals, PE, lab and radiology results
3. Assessment: problem list
4. Plan: have a plan for each problem. ALWAYS know the plan.
   ii. Must convey all important information including a thorough assessment and plan. Any consultant reading the chart should be able to know what is going on with the patient.

c. Discharge summaries
   i. Must be dictated in a timely fashion for all patients (within 24 hours)

Patient Care

This is why you are here. Do it well. Treat everyone like a family member.

Cardinal Rules:
1. Be informed. Know your patients! You are the primary data gatherer. Follow up on studies.
   a. History (allergies, PMH, PSH, medications—dose, frequency, including PRNs)
   b. Reason for admission and/or operation
   c. Hospital course
      i. Type of surgery—when, why
      ii. Complications during post-op period
      iii. Daily medications
         1. keep informed as they change frequently
         2. antibiotics—when and why started, how many days, endpoint (antibiotic orders last only 5 days so remember to check daily)
         3. IV pain medications last only 72 hours
         4. Oral pain medication orders last 7 days
   iv. Results
      1. Labs—trends, compare values to yesterday
      2. Cultures—source, date, results, sensitivities
      3. Radiology—results of each study
   v. Drains
      1. location, output (trends) quality
   vi. DAILY PLAN
2. Be a patient advocate. They trust you. When is comes to patient safety—don’t take no for an answer
3. Read, read, read
4. Get used to a daily routine:
   a. Morning Rounds
      i. Pre-round
      ii. Pick up pager prior to rounds
      iii. Have a clean list prior to rounds
      iv. Know significant overnight events
v. Have vital signs and labs ready prior to rounding (if available)
vi. Make a TO DO list

b. Throughout the day
   i. Chart
   ii. Request studies (early in the morning)
      1. Urgent radiology studies or consults should be personally communicated with radiologists or responsible services in the morning and followed up during the day (i.e. UGI, CT, interventional studies, echo)
         a. You may need to gently pester the appropriate people to get studies completed (especially at county)
         b. Remember to get approval for all studies (if necessary)
   iii. Follow up on all studies
   iv. Call consults early—follow up on recommendations
      1. Have a system for tracking these results each day

c. Evening Rounds
   i. Depending on the senior resident these may be informal
   ii. This is the time to update the rest of the team regarding lab/test results, etc.

d. Emergencies
   i. Communicate with the appropriate people early—do not wait
   ii. If your senior is in the OR—go to the OR to speak to him/her

Promoting Your Own Well Being
Surgical training is incredibly stressful. If you don’t take care of yourself nobody else will. Incorporating well-being strategies into your schedule is essential for long term happiness and success.

Cardinal Rules:
1. Be aware of what is important to you—develop a plan to keep these things in your life
2. Keep up with hobbies and friends—set patterns now—you will always be busy
3. Pay attention to nutrition and exercise—take the stairs instead of the elevator, look for something healthy in the DDR—set patterns now, habits form quickly
4. Set some goals for yourself—personal and professional
5. Spend some time alone each day—even if it is for 5 minutes
6. What doesn’t kill you makes you stronger.