

# Empowered Learner Checklist



## *What You Can Do to Increase Your Own Entrustability and Intraoperative Autonomy*

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### PREOPERATIVELY

- Read about the operation**
  - Know textbook operative steps
  - Be aware of potential pitfalls
  - Review videos of similar operations if possible
- Read about the patient**
  - Know the operative indication
  - Know comorbidities that may contribute to complications
- Practice applicable skills in simulation lab**
- Discuss the case and set shared goals with the attending surgeon**
  - Timing of discussion depends on the attending surgeon and type of case
    - Scheduled/elective case: evening before
    - Add-on/urgent/emergent case: during prep dry time or scrubbing
- Let the attending surgeon know you have read and are prepared
- Highlight portions of the case you have previously completed independently
- Suggest an operative plan and ask questions about the overall plan or specific steps
- Identify key goals you have for this operation
- If you are struggling to gain autonomy with a specific attending surgeon, ask senior residents for advice**
- Prepare the patient in the preoperative area**
- Assist with properly positioning the patient**
- Familiarize yourself with necessary instruments/equipment**

#### Sample dialogue from resident/fellow to attending surgeon:

I have reviewed the patient chart.

I have reviewed the description of this procedure found in \_\_\_\_\_.

I have spent time in the simulation lab practicing specific techniques related to this case.

I have done portions of this type of case before with Dr. \_\_\_\_\_.

I have set a goal to try to do \_\_\_\_\_ in this specific case.

What else should I do to prepare for the upcoming procedure?

## INTRAOPERATIVELY

- ✓ Anticipate upcoming steps and ask questions accordingly
- ✓ Suggest a plan for upcoming steps or even the entire operation
- ✓ Progress through steps to advance the case with instruction from the attending surgeon as appropriate for your experience level
- ✓ Identify solutions to intraoperative struggles and implement solutions as appropriate for your experience level
- ✓ Continuously verbalize your thought process while operating. When you are unsure of anatomy or how to proceed, state that.
- ✓ If you want to regain autonomy:
  - Articulate next steps and ask if you may do that portion of the operation
  - Ask the attending surgeon to teach you how they are doing that portion of the operation
- ✓ If you are struggling to gain autonomy, ask for specific feedback and commit to work on your deficiency before the next case

### Sample dialogue when the attending surgeon has taken over the case:

One day, I will be doing this operation solo; help me understand how you are \_\_\_\_\_.  
I know I need to work on the \_\_\_\_\_ portion of the case; could you help guide me through it?

## POSTOPERATIVELY

- ✓ Develop a postprocedure care plan, discuss that plan with the attending surgeon, and ensure the plan is implemented
- ✓ Ask for specific feedback in key areas:
  - Operative knowledge and plan
  - Problem solving
  - Operative independence and decision-making
  - Areas to practice or improve
  - Tissue and instrument handling

### Sample dialogue from resident/fellow to attending surgeon:

How was my tissue handling and decision-making?  
Did I communicate to you and the team appropriately?  
Did the case flow properly?  
What should I practice?  
How can I improve for next time?

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