

# Essential equipment for the ward

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Your **stethoscope** is a hallmark of being a doctor. You will use it on a daily basis. If you couldn't afford a good one as a student, go get one now. It's tax deductible. I recommend something that is in the high-middle of the range like a Littman's Cardiology II or [Cardiology III](#). It always looks a bit weird when the intern on the cardiology team has a superior stethoscope to the consultant! Frankly, unless you are planning on becoming a cardiologist, having a [Cardiology Master](#) makes you look like a tool, not to mention that it is mostly useless if you need to auscultate children. If you haven't already, make sure that you put your name on it though (either engraved or with a name tag), as I guarantee that you will misplace your stethoscope within your first week as an intern.



I consider a **penlight** / neurological torch as essential equipment. Pupillary reflexes are extraordinarily important after someone has had a fall (which happens with alarming regularity). However, the penlight has a much more prosaic use as well. Stumbling around a patient's bed when the light has been turned off is a common occurrence and having a handy torch makes all the difference.



The single activity that you will do more than any other as a junior doctor is writing; be it on a ward round in the progress notes, or transcribing blood results or re-writing medication charts. Thus, I strongly recommend that you buy a **good quality pen**. It will improve your quality of life. My personal favourite is the Uni-ball Eye Micro. [Officeworks](#) has a great range of pens and you get discounts by buying in bulk. Don't settle for the crappy pens they provide in hospital to save a few dollars. Get a good one, and then tax deduct it.



A **notepad** or notebook to jot down quick notes is extremely useful. Some people use scraps of paper or a list and you will quickly discover how quickly these scraps of paper disappear. The words "have you seen my list?" will be muttered around you several times a day. Once you are used to keeping a notepad handy, the chances of you losing it are much smaller.



Your **pager**, unfortunately, is a necessary evil. You will learn to hate the incessant beeping with a passion to the degree that you will develop a conditioned startle/fear response to any unexpected beep or alarm, even when you are off duty.

Although the above are "essential", there are quite a few things that are recommended. The most efficient junior doctors will have a folder with ward stationary such as spare progress notes and pathology forms. Similarly, a small carry bag with ward stock such as your favourite IV cannulas, syringes, alcohol wipes, etc., means that you are never at the mercy of a poorly arranged and/or stocked ward. Having a mobile phone keeps you contactable even when the paging system fails (more often than you think). Your own personal version of MIMS on PDA means you never have to find the battered ward copy.

## ESSENTIAL

- Stethoscope
- Penlight / neurological torch

- Functioning pen
- A5 or smaller notepad
- Pager

### **RECOMMENDED**

- Folder with ward stationary (i.e., progress notes, pathology forms, radiology request forms, etc.)
- Carry bag with ward stock (e.g., IV cannulas, syringes, pathology blood tubes, alcohol wipes, gloves, syringes, needles, etc.)
- Mobile phone
- PDA (e.g., a Palm or PocketPC) with the MIMS drug database

### **OPTIONAL**

- Water bottle/drink bottle (recommended on overtime shift)
- Pocket clinical aid (e.g., Pocket Oxford Handbook)
- Neurological kit (only if you want to impress someone or want to be a neurologist)