



THE NEW RT'S SURVIVAL CHEAT SHEET

ASK AN RT.

Breathe. Learn. Succeed.

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Before Your Shift

- Pack extra pens, a watch/timer, snacks, water, comfortable shoes
- Check your badge, stethoscope, and required equipment the night before
- It's normal to be nervous — that means you care, not that you're unprepared

Prioritizing Patients

- **Airway, breathing, and stability come first** — always
- "Waiting" ≠ "unstable"
- Talk through triage out loud with your preceptor when unsure

Equipment Safety

- **Green = oxygen. Yellow = air.** Trace the tubing back to the wall, every patient, every time
- All equipment plugged into a **RED emergency outlet** — never assume it still is
- Never assume a machine's settings are correct just because it's running
- An order existing doesn't mean it's the right order

When You Don't Know Something

- "I haven't seen this before — can you walk me through it?"
- Ask in the moment, not after the shift
- **Being yelled at is not the same as being wrong**
- Guessing wrong can hurt a patient. Asking never does.

If You Make a Mistake

- Speak up immediately — every time
- Fix what can be fixed, then talk it through with your preceptor
- Owning a mistake builds trust. Hiding one breaks it.

Taking Care of You

- Protect your sleep like it's part of the job
- **Don't feel guilty about resting when you need to rest**
- Watch for early burnout: dread, numbness, irritability, exhaustion that doesn't lift
- Check in with yourself every few months: how am I really doing?

You are not expected to know everything. You are expected to be willing to learn.

Want the full Survival Guide?

Real near-miss stories, mistake recovery scripts, and more — from 23+ years at the bedside.

Get the full guide at Lung & Learn →