I’ve focused on print and more obscure but useful items to complement your web search for useful information on careers and career guidance.

* consider the starred articles as essential reading early in your career (or now if they’re new to you). Sample the remainder as time, interest and need—or need of diversion—dictate.

A. Getting Started - Choice of problem and direction


two interesting perspectives on the vexing issue of choice of a lab are given in: Holden, C. ‘Eight attributes of highly successful postdocs’, and Vogel, G. ‘A day in the life of a topflight lab’ (Bob Langer’s lab at MIT), both in the 3 Sept 1999 issue of Science.


5. series in-print: the ‘Caveman/Sticky Wicket’ series in Journal of Cell Science is very entertaining, very funny and (usually!) anonymous. What redeems this often-biting series is the skillful use of humor to address important topics in science and science or graduate training.

6. series on-line: Science Magazine’s ‘Next Wave’ site has many interesting articles and series, e.g. the recent series ‘Yours Transferredly’ by Phil Dees in which he helps you assess your potential as an independent scientist or gives useful advice on writing and publishing your first, first-author ms.).

B. Getting Stuff Done - I

7. Burroughs Wellcome/HHMI (2006) Making the Right Moves: A Practical Guide to Scientific Management for Postdocs and New Faculty. 2nd Edition (a 250 pp guide that can be requested free from HHMI or downloaded and printed from the HHMI website where you’ll find additional resources: http://www.hhmi.org/grants/office/graduate/labmanagement.html. Includes excerpts from the Barker books noted below as well. Very useful advice and free to boot!).

8. Barker, Kathy (2002,2005) At the Helm and At the Bench: Laboratory Navigator. Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press. (two useful guides, one now in 2nd edition, by Kathy Barker of ISB on setting up and running your lab. At the Helm is the more useful of the two for senior students, post-docs and new faculty).
9. Bliss, E.C. (1976) *Getting Things Done*. Bantam Books, New York. (73 short chapters with a few amusing little drawing on how to tackle daily life. Got me to throw out all the other time management books I bought, but was procrastinating about reading!).


C. Getting Stuff Done II - Design and conduct of experiments


14. National Academy Press (1995 + ) *On Being a Scientist: Responsible Conduct in Research*, 2nd and subsequent editions. (Responsible conduct of research, and dealing with the ethical dilemmas posed by science, are part of all of our lives. This short booklet has case studies and a good bibliography. You’ll receive additional training as part of your graduate career).

D. Essential Skills - Reading, writing and the presentation of science

15. Warren, K., ed. (1981) *Coping with the Biomedical Literature*, Praeger, New York (useful compilation of articles, with the most useful and least dated those of how to approach ‘the literature’).


20. Medawar, P. (1982/1990) *Pluto’s Republic* and *The Threat and the Glory*, Oxford U.P. and Harper Collins. (Medawar and Thomas (see below) were two of the most engaging and elegant stylists writing science in this century. Both are models of high intelligence, clarity and enthusiasm in presenting science and medicine to the public).

21. Thomas, L. (1974/79) *Lives of a Cell* and *The Medusa and the Snail*. Viking Press. (see note above. The first of these books was collected from a very unusual (for the time) column Thomas wrote for the New England Journal of Medicine entitled ‘Notes of a Biology Watcher’).

22. Williams, R. (~1990 on) *The PC (or Mac) is not a Typewriter* series. Peachpit Press, Berkeley. (Very useful series of books that provide a nearly painless introduction to typography and will guide you through the use any word processor/graphics program to produce words/figures that look good on the page and are a pleasure to read. Word processing programs have had the paradoxical effect of institutionalizing lots of typographical mistakes and errors. Use these books to spot and correct the more egregious, or to achieve special effects. Little ‘how-tos’ that make the difference!)


24. Bailey, N.T.J. (1995) *Statistical Methods in Biology*, 3rd Ed. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. 255pp. (Everyone needs a ‘statistical crutch’ - this is mine, and you need to find yours. Good introductions to simple concepts and their application, with a Summary on what approach or test to choose as a function of distribution, sample size and type of comparison. Needs to be used with software, and a biostatistician you can trust and work with).


27. Gladwell, M. (2002) *The social life of paper*. New Yorker 25 March issue. (The real skinny on paper, and why it’s so useful: paper is a remarkably efficient and versatile, low cost, low tech but ‘high-touch’ crutch to support the life of the mind. This article starts with air traffic controllers, who use small scraps of paper to track and clear even very busy flight schedules. Available free at the author’s website: www.gladwell.com).

E. Style in Science/The Wellsprings of Creativity


31. Fisher, D. (2003). The Henry Kunkel Legacy: through the eyes of his last graduate student. Lupus 12:172-174. (another dynasty, this one in a family and based at Rockefeller. (David’s article captures the essence of Henry as a mentor: the creative spark for your science must come from you; smart people will always see an interesting angle on any solid result; and the way to build a big, interesting and potentially important story is with that first small, solid experimental result. So get started!).

32. Austin, J.H. (1977) *Chase, Chance and Creativity: The Lucky Art of Novelty*. Columbia University Press, 237pp. (Austin was the long-time Chair of Neurology at Colorado, more recently famous for his excursions into cognitive neuroscience (see his ‘Zen and the Brain’ MIT Press, 1999, 834pp.). This earlier work is a much more accessible look at the episodes from the author’s career and how a combination of opportunity and insight were leveraged to good advantage. Added historical examples. Certainly not the weightiest of works on creativity, but enjoyable. Recently reprinted).

33. Tharp, T. (2003) *The Creative Habit: Learn It and Use It for Life*. Simon and Schuster, 243pp. (very interesting statement on creativity and the conditions that foster creative thinking from one of the giants of 20th century American modern dance. This book aims to be a practical guide, and is made all the more interesting by where its coming from and by focusing on what promotes creativity across a wide range of disciplines).

F. The Larger World/A Few Just for Fun.


see also: Rousseau, D.L. (1992) Case studies in pathological science. Amer. Scientist 80:54-63. (This includes the story of the disproof of ‘polywater’ by use of a sweaty post-handball T-shirt as lab material - this was included as part of what is still probably the best ‘Methods’ note ever published by Science). In the same vein is the recently published ‘Why People Believe Weird Things’ by Michael Shermer (WH Freeman, 1997, recently updated). Shermer now writes the ‘Skeptic’ column for Scientific American.


G. For those at the University of Washington: The UW’s Research Funding Service, located in the Health Sciences Library, is a remarkable local resource for students and investigators at the University of Washington. They provides an excellent series of handouts and seminars on the very practical issue of locating support for your research. A portion of what the RFS provides can be found at their website: http://healthlinks.washington.edu/rfs/

H. Not just for women only: Fiona Watt’s series of interviews with prominent women in science has been running in the Journal of Cell Science since 2003. Almost all address or illuminate issues women face and feel more often than men (sexism, exclusivity, demands of family and children), and often provide trenchant advice.

Help us with the 2008 Edition! Send your additions, corrections and suggestions to:

Ray Monnat
University of Washington
Box 357705
Seattle, WA 98195-7705
monnat@u.washington.edu

All suggestions and additions we use will be fully credited!