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### About me

My name is Laura Marie Drudi and I am a current PGY-4 in Vascular Surgery at McGill University. I was born and raised in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. I completed a D.E.C. in Health Sciences at Dawson College, a Diploma in Space Studies at the International Space University and Technical University of Graz in Austria, Medical Degree at McGill University, and a Master's of Epidemiology, Biostatistics, and Occupational Health at McGill University.

### Why I chose Vascular Surgery

Choosing vascular surgery was a whirlwind of a decision. I was always torn between medicine and surgery as I pursued my undergraduate medical training. However, vascular surgery, in my mind, combined the worlds of medicine and surgery seamlessly.

Vascular surgeons, or vascular specialists, provide comprehensive vascular care to our complex patients from counseling, conservative and medical management, and endovascular and open interventions. We often provide life and limb-salvaging care and support our patients with a multi-disciplinary team addressing not only vascular care but psychosocial aspects of care. I chose vascular surgery to be a part of this dynamic team providing the highest quality of comprehensive medical and surgical care to these patients.

## Clinical Life

### What does a typical day of clinical duties involve?

Being a senior resident in vascular surgery, my schedule is quite predictable and follows a similar routine on a daily basis. The schedule below shows a typical day/week on the vascular surgery service.

My clinical day starts as early as 06:30 and usually end by 18:00. Typically, we round beginning at 06:30 and grab a quick bite before heading off to the operating room (OR), which usually begins by 08:00. The OR day usually runs from 08:00 to 15:30. Following the OR, the team grabs a quick bite before heading off to finish the consults.

By 17:00 we perform our closing rounds and do a quick teaching around an interesting case that was seen during the day. Friday is our calm day. After rounding, we have vascular surgery teaching from 07:00 to 08:00, and vascular surgery academic rounds from 08:00 to 10:00. Following our half day of teaching, we disperse and finish the clinical activities. I usually try to have our team finish early on Friday so they may have an early start to their weekend.

I do call nine times a month depending on the service coverage and usually have to do 1-2 weekends a month. When I do call, I am first call and it is a home-call. However, when I have a junior or senior resident unfamiliar with the service, I am always available as second-call.



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# Vascular Surgery Resident Profile — Laura Drudi

Like all areas of medicine, vascular surgery is a team sport. I have a lot of interaction with a variety of healthcare professionals including vascular nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, nutritionists, dieticians, vascular laboratory technicians, and radiologists.

A typical day	
4:30	Wake up and go running (need to prioritize my wellness in order to be effective at my job). Breakfast
6:00	Head to work
6:30	Rounding on our vascular patients
7:45	First time out at the OR
8:00-15:00	ORs (with time to break for lunch)
15:00	Review or complete pending consults. Finalize work on the ward. Review pending exams for patients
17:00	Quick closing rounds and final pass to make sure everyone on the ward is stable. Review cases for the next day
18:30	Head home and have supper with my family
20:00	Read, study, complete pending research items
21:30	Usually in bed to start the day bright and early.

Weekly Schedule at a Glance											
	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday				
06:00	RUN	Rounds	Rounds	Rounds	Rounds	Rounds	RUN				
07:00						Teaching					
08:00	SWIM	Operating Room (OR)	OR	OR	OR	Academic rounds	SWIM				
09:00											
10:00	BIKE										BIKE
11:00											
12:00		LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH					
13:00		OR	OR	OR	OR	OR					
14:00											
15:00											
16:00		Consults	Consults	Consults	Consults	Consults					
17:00											
18:00		Closing rounds	Closing rounds	Closing rounds	Closing rounds	Closing Rounds					
19:00		Home-Call		Home-Call		Home-Call					
20:00											
21:00											
22:00											
23:00											
00:00											

## What kinds of rotations are required in your program?

Vascular surgery is a 5-year training program. The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada require 2 years of foundational training in surgery (general surgery, vascular surgery, trauma, critical care, internal medicine or medical subspecialties).

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The remaining 3 years include rotations in vascular surgery, cardiac surgery, thoracic surgery, non-invasive vascular laboratory, vascular imaging, and research.

Although research is not mandatory in my program, my choice to pursue postgraduate training in Epidemiology was supported by my division. In so doing, I developed a research platform for frailty assessment in vascular surgery, which I will continue to pursue in my career.

## **Which of your personality characteristics have been particularly helpful in your field?**

Having empathy, being approachable, and developing an immediate close relationship with my patients and interdisciplinary team. I entered vascular surgery with the goal to change the culture of surgery, and specifically women in surgery. I believe my open personality has helped me tremendously to be a successful clinician and surgeon and I hope to continue growing in this regard.

## **What are the best aspects of your specialty/sub-specialty?**

I get to perform life and limb-salvaging procedures on a daily basis. The flip side to this, is that unfortunately certain limbs are not salvageable, and we must perform amputations. However, the support I give to my patients during their trials and tribulations is another aspect I value tremendously. By being present for my patients and hopefully enabling a better quality of life will be the cornerstone of how I will continue to practice medicine and surgery.

## **What are the most challenging aspects of your specialty/sub-specialty?**

The most challenging aspects are juggling work-life balance. The rates of burnout are one of the highest in vascular surgery. Integrating wellness activities and being present with family in a busy schedule is certainly a challenge. I am aware of these challenges and make a conscious effort to take care of my wellness so I may provide the best care to my patients.

## **What is one question you're often asked about your specialty/sub-specialty?**

The one question I am constantly asked is “Would you choose vascular surgery all over again?”. And I will be frank, it was a difficult and tough residency.

The culture of surgery is still difficult to navigate being a woman in surgery, there is frank sexism and gender bias in surgery, and despite my goals to change that culture – it's difficult to steer big ships. It is clear that female and male residents are treated different in and out of the OR and there were various moments during my training where I experienced bullying and intimidation. Despite the bad, there was a lot of good as well.



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In a nutshell, I am extremely happy of where I am now. It is a pleasure to provide the best quality of medical and surgical to our complex and often debilitated patients; however, if someone asked me to do it all over again, I would say “NO!” pretty speedily.

My goal is not only to be an outstanding academic vascular surgeon but pave the way for a safe psychological environment free of judgment and gender bias for women in surgery and create and develop a program where that “NO!” would be maybe a “Yes”.

## Can you describe the transition from junior resident to senior resident?

Transitioning from junior to senior resident is always a difficult one. One of the biggest challenges is learning what your students or juniors are comfortable with and learning to delegate tasks effectively. Although I would love to do it all, I simply can't.

It's always difficult for me to oversee certain tasks as opposed to actively doing them (consults, etc.); however, it's still a work in progress and I am growing and learning to be an effective senior resident every day.

## Can you describe your experience with the subspecialty matching process? What resources did you find helpful for this (e.g. choosing electives)?

I entered vascular surgery directly from medical school (through the integrated vascular surgery residency).

## Will you be pursuing further training or looking for employment? What resources are available to you for future planning?

I will be looking for employment in Canada and the United States. My ideal job is to be an academic vascular surgeon. I hope to continue to build a platform for frailty research in vascular surgery.

The resources that are available to me are job postings on the Canadian Society for Vascular Surgery and Society for Vascular Surgery websites, but most importantly networking with colleagues and learning of opportunities by word-of-mouth.

## Non-Clinical Life

### What are your academic interests?

I am a research associate in the Frailty Research Group at the Jewish General Hospital and actively pursue research in frailty in vascular surgery. I present my research findings at local, national and international conferences yearly. I am also a reviewer for vascular journals.

I am an active member of the Association for Academic Surgery and Society for Vascular Surgery and participate on committees that addresses burnout and wellness. I am also a Resident Editor for the Vascular Specialist (the official newspaper for the Society for Vascular Surgery).

### What is your work-life balance like, and how do you achieve this?

My work-life balance is a little skewed towards work; however, I do participate in many activities to ensure my wellness. I am a triathlete and participate in half ironman competitions every year. Therefore, I train during the week (early in the morning or late at night) for swimming, biking, running, or strength training.

Given the training and fatigue, I do yoga to rest my mind and body and try to meditate daily for 10 minutes. In the midst of work and wellness activities, I am present for my family and my partner when I am home. My family is my rock and keeps me grounded and sane when challenges arise.

*Disclaimer: These specialty profiles illustrate some aspects of the lives of individual residents, and convey their personal perspectives on the challenges, opportunities, and rewards of their chosen fields. These views may not be shared by all residents, as there is tremendous diversity in lifestyle, experience, and interest among the residents in each specialty.*