

7 points to evaluate when choosing your next educational event

Selecting the right educational event is not always easy. For orthopedic and neurosurgeons, the quality of a course can make the difference between superficial exposure and a true transformation in clinical practice. Use this checklist to ensure meaningful learning, patient-focused education, and to gain structured, evidence-based, hands-on training that improves surgical decision-making.

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1. Clinical fit and right level of expertise

- Standardized, validated content prepared by global experts matching your career stage
- Which pathologies and approaches does the course cover? Does it match your case mix?
- Do the learning objectives match your current gaps and skills to upgrade?

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2. Format and educational design

- Balance of didactics, case-based small groups, and hands-on
- Designed for measurable learning outcomes
- Prioritize flipped classroom approach and active learning
- Look for high faculty-to-learner ratios and pre-learning

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3. Practical exercises

- Hands-on practical activity with clear roadmap: what skill is taught, what steps are required, what learning points participants should take away
- Cadaver/dry bone/simulation—not all are created equal for all course content

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4. Faculty and outcomes

- Faculty experience and track record in specialty and teaching
- Participant feedback and objective assessments, certificates and diplomas
- Network building, membership, fellowship and observership opportunities

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5. Independence, accreditation, and ethics

- Prefer ACCME/EACCME-accredited CME
- Policies, transparent sponsorship, diversity of viewpoints/technologies
- Transparent conflict-of-interest handling
- Built on educational goals, not on industry interests

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6. Real-world transfer

- Clear learning objectives and take aways to use at your practice
- Access to tools and planning templates to standardize across your team
- Measurement standards, checklists, planning templates, risk calculators, how-to guides

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7. Access and practicality

- Time, travel, language, visas, device availability/approvals in your region, tuition vs. CME value, scholarship/traveling fellowship options