



Lee Burgess: Welcome to the Bar Exam Toolbox podcast. Today we're talking about the ever infuriating topic of COVID-19 and the bar exam. Your Bar Exam Toolbox hosts are Alison Monahan and Lee Burgess, that's me. We're here to demystify the bar exam experience, so you can study effectively, stay sane, and hopefully pass and move on with your life. We're the co-creators of the [Law School Toolbox](#), the [Bar Exam Toolbox](#), and the career-related website [CareerDicta](#). Alison also runs [The Girl's Guide to Law School](#). If you enjoy the show, please leave a review on your favorite listening app, and check out our sister podcast, the [Law School Toolbox podcast](#). If you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out to us. You can reach us via the [contact form](#) on BarExamToolbox.com, and we'd love to hear from you. And with that, let's get started.

Alison Monahan: Welcome back to The Bar Exam Toolbox podcast, where we're talking about – you guessed it – the impact of coronavirus on the bar exam and how to deal with it. Well, this is just the gift that keeps on giving, isn't it?

Lee Burgess: Just when you think we might have some answers...

Alison Monahan: Any time we're not sure what to talk about, we just talk about this. I'm kind of tired of talking about it.

Lee Burgess: I know, this is what we talk about to each other, so we might as well record it and other people can listen to it.

Alison Monahan: Right. Well, this is July 2nd, for those of you playing along at home. It's gotten even crazier! Yesterday, Florida decided to cancel their in-person exam that was scheduled for July, hours after we were having a Slack conversation with all of our tutors about how they could possibly go ahead with this, so clearly, we were prescient. They are moving it to some sort of truncated online version, or mix it up at some point in August. Okay, sure. Why not? August. Yeah, great. Okay, don't pick a day date anyone else is picking, just August. Sure. So if you're in Florida...

Lee Burgess: Right, and that also means no MBE set, probably.

Alison Monahan: Who even knows? If you're in Florida, I guess, stay tuned. What else? Massachusetts yesterday moved online-only for October. That seems to be an increasingly popular choice. Arizona yesterday interestingly said they are still planning to hold the July test in-person, which, side note: How in the world do they think they're going to do that in a few weeks? I will be very curious to see if that happens.



Lee Burgess: I had no idea. Oh, no kidding.

Alison Monahan: But they're also adding an October online option that people can opt into if they feel so inclined. Take your pick. And then today, I just heard that... What was it? Tennessee has canceled their in-person July exam, they're still doing late September theoretically in-person. So, a lot's happening.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. And I also think there's a possibility that California might be closing its exam. This was also just discussed in our Slack channel, so we are going to stay tuned and try... Not closing it, but that it's not possible...

Alison Monahan: They're not letting more people register, which...

Lee Burgess: They're not letting more register?

Alison Monahan: Is a little weird if they're still swearing like pinky promise that they're going to do this online.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. And so we're trying to get that information, but of course we called the bar and the bar's message said to send an email, and let's see when we get that back.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I mean, the great state of California.

Lee Burgess: This is new information to us, so we will also follow up on that, but that's just how crazy this is, because nobody really knows what's going on. We are talking to people who are getting in the information from the Law Deans, we're getting information from the State Bar. And there's just mass confusion.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, this is pretty funny. I really like this tactic, so instead of actually making any decisions about, "Oh, I don't know what month they might want to give this test in", the great state of California has decided the best use of everyone's time is, I think next week, they're holding a call with anyone who's registered for the Bar.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, a Zoom call.

Alison Monahan: Just to chat about what they're concerned about, maybe what they would like to see. It's completely bonkers. We're in suspended animation, it's insane.

Lee Burgess: It's completely bonkers.



- Alison Monahan: Who... A Zoom call? What?
- Lee Burgess: It's insane, I know. And we have students who are studying abroad, who are like, "What is going on? Am I supposed to... Is there going to be a test?" It's like, they don't want to go on a Zoom call.
- Alison Monahan: No. If the test is not online at this point, which there are tons of problems giving it online that we've already talked about, and we're going to talk about some more, but people who are out of the country literally may not be able to come in-person. These decisions have to be made.
- Lee Burgess: Right. Yeah, and you have people relying on this, people taking time off from their jobs. We have also heard that there are some folks who are worried about their immigration status.
- Alison Monahan: For sure.
- Lee Burgess: Because they need to be able to start working. And I hadn't really considered that actually until we kind of heard of folks who are running up against other deadlines, that if they can't get employed, that they lose immigration status. It's so reckless that the bar is just acting like no one has anything riding on this information. It's really unbelievable.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah. I get this is an unprecedented situation, but there are better and worse ways of handling this really, and California is not doing a great job of it at the moment.
- Lee Burgess: No, they're doing a horrible job of it. It's really shocking. And we all pay a lot of dues, like a lot, a lot, a lot of dues.
- Alison Monahan: I'm not even an active lawyer, and I pay them hundreds of dollars a year. For nothing, literally nothing. They do nothing for me. Nothing.
- Lee Burgess: No. And right now, they're not even testing people running the bar exam. That's the thing. And what's supposed to come from this Zoom meeting? Everyone's going to get on and be like, "You know, we have the right solution. Just give it online in September, that sounds great." What are even people supposed to say? Not to mention the fact it's a huge distraction for people who are trying to study.
- Alison Monahan: Right, and they're giving each student one minute. I mean, can you imagine? I think the problems here are obvious, the solutions are also relatively obvious,



the problems with those solutions are fairly obvious. I could sit down in this afternoon and write a brief, basically, about what your choices are, pros and cons of each. Why has this dragged on for months now with no decision? They should be giving this test originally in a few weeks and we don't even know what month it's happening in. So, we understand you're frustrated. We share the frustration.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, we're frustrated too. Yeah, for our students, for our, I don't know, business. People call us and want answers. I just had a call right before this podcast, and I had to be like, "I don't actually know what to tell you. I'm not sure what the bar exam is going to look like. They can't even tell you really what date it's going to be."

Alison Monahan: No. Or somebody who I talked to earlier in the week who wants to sign up for tutoring, and she's like, "Well, I hadn't registered yet", which didn't seem like that big of a deal until an hour ago. We find out that they're closing registration, and now I'm like, "Well, she can't sign up and work with us if she can't take the exam. We have to figure that out first."

Lee Burgess: And I saw no announcements about that.

Alison Monahan: No, nothing.

Lee Burgess: I saw nothing. Nothing.

Alison Monahan: They just did it. There's a deadline and they just apparently decided not to honor that deadline, and we don't even know if this is true. This is total speculation at this point, it's just what we're hearing.

Lee Burgess: But since I feel like I live in The Onion when I read every piece of news that comes across my life. They could literally say anything about this bar exam situation, and I'd probably believe it.

Alison Monahan: Oh yeah, totally. It is really crazy. So, we're going to talk a little bit about how you can cope with all this uncertainty if you are in the unfortunate position of having to take an exam at some time in the next few months.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, good times. Okay, deep breaths, everybody.

Alison Monahan: I'm just thinking if I was sitting in, say, Tennessee or even Florida, and I was thinking I was taking this test in three weeks, and now suddenly I'm thinking I'm taking it months from now – wow, what a crazy situation to be in.



Lee Burgess: I know, and what if you took a leave of absence from work? We know so many people who do that.

Alison Monahan: Well, that's pretty normal.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, super normal. It's just really unbelievable. It makes my blood boil and it's so disrespectful to the people who are trying to take this test. I know it's a pandemic situation, but you can't just play with people's schedules. This is something they have control over. The pandemic, we do not have control over. It is clear that gathering in large groups is not going to be safe for a very long time. I think everyone can basically agree on that, we hope.

Alison Monahan: Hopefully.

Lee Burgess: Hopefully. But if that's the case, why are we even talking about? All of these jurisdictions need to be responsible and say, "We cannot gather in large groups, come up with a new solution."

Alison Monahan: Yeah. I feel like it's been obvious, at least to us, for a fairly long time that most places the July exam was probably going to be a bad idea. But I'm not sure that September is going to be a better idea. I'm not sure online is really actually that much better of an idea. There are not a lot of great options.

Lee Burgess: No, no. And the thing is, if they could've just... And I'm just going to harp on California because I'm so angry and I pay them money on a regular basis. I remember us doing these initial COVID podcasts in March.

Alison Monahan: Yeah.

Lee Burgess: In March, talking about what could happen, what's it going to look like, all of that kind of stuff. And so it's like, "Okay, what have they been doing since March? It's July."

Alison Monahan: That's the question, right?

Lee Burgess: Yeah, it's July.

Alison Monahan: The basic like set of options was pretty clear in March, and it really hasn't shifted that much.



- Lee Burgess: No, no. Complete mess. And I think that's one of the things that's so frustrating. We were part of email chains and recommendations that were being sent to the State Bar about what to do back months ago. It's not like this is new news. I think from my perspective, these states that are shocked that they're not able to pull off the exams in-person in July, or they're shocked that people expect them to put together an online exam in September – what have they been doing while the rest of us had been sheltering in place, wringing our hands because the world had changed?
- Alison Monahan: Yeah. There's a lot of blame to go around, certainly.
- Lee Burgess: There is. Okay, but enough ranting.
- Alison Monahan: Enough ranting.
- Lee Burgess: I love how on our list of things to talk about is trying not to get caught up in the craziness, as we just rant and vent...
- Alison Monahan: Right, for 10 minutes.
- Lee Burgess: Over and over again. Alright guys, we're going to move to productivity now. I'm going to follow my notes and stop just going off about how frustrated we are.
- Alison Monahan: Right, we're going to try to be productive now. I think my best advice right now, if you are studying for any of the exams that are supposed to be coming up, is just assume that some type of test is likely to happen. Maybe you get lucky and they give you a diploma privilege. It has happened in a few states. But I think you have to assume some test is going to happen and keep studying, because you're going to need to know the material you're learning if that test happens. That being said, I also think you want to make sure you're making study aids as you study, that you're going to be able to later reference, because even if you think you're taking this in July, that might not happen. It might be September, it might be October, it might be apparently August in Florida. So you need to be sure, probably more so than normal, that you have the resources that you can go back to to refresh your recollection and not just be starting from scratch if you're looking at a topic area in two months.
- Lee Burgess: That makes a lot of sense. And I'm in my head right now imagining a nice binder of flow charts or handwritten outlines or...
- Alison Monahan: [Attack plans.](#)



- Lee Burgess: Yeah, you've printed out your [SmartBarPrep](#) outlines and you have your annotated notes on them. I really think being thoughtful and being organized is a great thing to focus on in the midst of all this chaos.
- Alison Monahan: Right, because you might have just thought you're going to cram this in your head, and that's not going to happen if suddenly a week before the exam is postponed for two months.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah, I totally agree. So that's a great thought, is to just make sure that what you can control is your study materials and your own organization, so you can pivot, because you may have to pivot.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah. Frankly, I have some of my bar study materials that I kept, because I'm a total dork, and if I looked at some of those, I could start to do a pretty passable analysis fairly quickly because that's kind of what you're going for. So, I think it's just a way to think about it that maybe could be helpful for people.
- Lee Burgess: I think so. I guess the other thing people need to think about is, even though there is a lot of uncertainty – and thanks, Florida, for just picking a random date in August – I think by going through the chart of the [National Conference of Bar Examiners](#), we know the possible dates that are really floating out there. And I think for most jurisdictions, it's this September date and this October date.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah. I think basically everyone who's thinking of taking the exam needs to block that October date, because that's kind of the fallback emergency date. You want to be sure that if your exam is cancelled in July, or even in September, and they decide to do it in October, you've got to have that date available. So, block that if you're listening to this right now, if you haven't already done it.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah. I think you need to block that. And then if your employer is counting on you sitting for the test in September, you need to go to them and start having those conversations, at least warning them that things could be changing. If you're on a leave of absence or something like that, you need to make sure that you've got your bases covered, so this isn't a fire drill at the last minute.
- Alison Monahan: Right. I think most people are probably sort of aware.
- Lee Burgess: Even though it might still be a fire drill.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, it's going to be a fire drill. I think they're probably sort of aware, but in case they're not aware that maybe this could be shifting, I think just make them



aware that, "Hey, totally out of my control, but just FYI, this might be shifting. And obviously if it does, we'll have to figure out what to do."

Lee Burgess: Yeah. Also, you need to just take a step back and look at your life. I talked to somebody recently whose wife is due with their baby in October and was really counting on the September date, but now is worried because there's all this flux. You've got to look at your life and make sure that you can manage all of these dates too. If not, then you need to figure out if you should delay till February. I think that sometimes maybe this is not craziness you can take a part in, and I think that no one would ever fault you for skipping this administration of the exam, if that's what you decided to do.

Alison Monahan: No. And frankly, if you want a portable UBE score, you may need to wait till February in a lot of places anyway, although maybe they'll switch that at some point. Who knows? But if you take this October test, right now they're saying that that's not going to be a portable score. So yeah, if you have something like that, I think just calling it and moving to February and hoping for the best at that point is a completely valid choice.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. Okay, so you've got to also just find some ways to cope with uncertainty, because you can only spin about this stuff so much. And I think trying to compartmentalize, trying to... I think that we've talked about this in other podcasts, about trying to only read the news certain times of the day and not become so obsessed that you get derailed. If you are sitting down to study, try and still be able to get work done, and then give yourself time to try and figure out what's going on in the world separately, or else you're never going to be able to get anything done.

Alison Monahan: Right. I think this is a great example of where [The Circles](#) will come in handy, where for each hour that you're going to study, you decide what you're going to do, and for 45 minutes or 50 minutes you sit and you focus without your Internet and without any distractions. And then you get your 10 to 15-minute break and you can go read the news if you want to, but then you get back to work. You've got to put these in different buckets, or you're just not going to get anything done.

Lee Burgess: Yeah.

Alison Monahan: And a lot of people are not getting anything done, that's the reality. So many people are trying to say, "Well, I can't start studying until we know the date and whatever", but you just can't do that because we may not know for weeks or





months. Who knows? Like you said, we started this whole thing in March. It's July.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. So you need to be studying, basically. If you are going to take this test in the fall, you need to be studying now.

Alison Monahan: Oh, for sure.

Lee Burgess: So, you can't delay. If you're going to try to sit for this administration, you can't just hand over all the power and say, "Well, I'm going to wait until the bar comes back with an answer", because clearly, they are not to be relied upon. They've blown every deadline. The California Bar specifically has blown every deadline they have set for information.

Alison Monahan: I think they claimed they were going to have an answer in May.

Lee Burgess: Yeah.

Alison Monahan: It's July.

Lee Burgess: Like around the time results came out. I know, it's July.

Alison Monahan: They're not even saying now they're going to have any answers for another couple of weeks. I mean, they're doing their Zoom call. This is crazy.

Lee Burgess: What's going to happen after that Zoom call? I just don't understand it.

Alison Monahan: I'd just love to be a fly on the wall.

Lee Burgess: I know. Yeah, do you get to listen to everybody else's? I guess maybe we should go. I don't know if we can go. But it's just unbelievable. And what a waste of time if people just sit in there and listen to thousands of people complain. I don't know.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. Well, speaking of... There may be actual questions that you want answers to from the bar examiners, not saying you're going to get them if you're in California on this Zoom call. But I do think there are a lot of legitimate concerns that people have, both around safety precautions, but also around how this is even going to work.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. What is their safety precautions plan? If they are in-person, are they going to require everyone to wear masks? Different parts of the country have



different standards and understanding around masks. If you don't want to be in a space of people who don't have masks on, you need to find out if they're going to let people not have masks on.

Alison Monahan: Or what they're going to do if the person beside you decides halfway through that theirs is uncomfortable and takes it off.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. I saw a Facebook post by someone that you and I both know, and that person was talking about that masks give them anxiety, and that they don't like to wear them. Not to say that they wouldn't wear them, but they don't like to wear them. I wouldn't want to be in a situation where I'm trying to take the bar exam and I look over and I see somebody take off their mask, and then what do you do?

Alison Monahan: Right, because they're not going to stop the exam. I mean, they don't even stop it for people having seizures and that kind of thing.

Lee Burgess: Right.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. You want to get clear on what these rules are, and if something's not going to work for you, are there certain options... I was just thinking about even under the ADA, there may be accommodations that need to be made. How in the world are they going to do this by July? But I think you've got to be asking these questions. Who you ask them to – good luck with that. But...

Lee Burgess: Yeah.

Alison Monahan: I guess you can call the bar and wait on hold for a long time.

Lee Burgess: I guess so, yeah. You need to start trying to get some answers. And if you are in a higher risk category or if you live with people who are higher risk, you just have to evaluate your risks. Everybody's got to evaluate their level of risk that they're comfortable with. And again, if you need to delay, 10 years from now, no one is going to be able to tell if you sat, or think about whether you sat for the Feb...

Alison Monahan: The July.

Lee Burgess: The summer, we'll just call it summer.

Alison Monahan: Summer 2020.



- Lee Burgess: Summer 2020 bar exam, or the February 2021 bar exam. Hopefully there will be... That will be a little bit more of a solid date. But when people look at your resume, they're not going to be like, "What happened in late 2020?" Everybody's going to know what happened in late 2020.
- Alison Monahan: They're going to be like, "We know what happened. You didn't want to sit in a room with a thousand other people with a huge pandemic going on out of control in the U.S., thank you."
- Lee Burgess: Yeah. We're reading articles about how 40 people gathered for Mother's Day brunch and 20 people got sick. And that's like 40 people.
- Alison Monahan: It's crazy, it really is.
- Lee Burgess: And I guess that they could never consider doing it outside. That would be my only other thing. It's like, if you really wanted to be outside the box, you would give people the option to sit outside. I just don't know how you'd get power, and you'd have elements and all that kind of stuff.
- Alison Monahan: No. Also, you'd have to set up a tent, and then once you have a tent, you're basically indoors anyways.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah, that's so true.
- Alison Monahan: So, I don't know. I think there are a lot of questions, but definitely, if I were in a position to be taking this exam, I would want to have at least the answers that I could find.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah.
- Alison Monahan: And practice, in that scenario. Practice with a mask on, that kind of thing, if that's what you're going to end up having to do. But yeah, it's going to be a little nuts. And then I think if states are deciding to do it remotely, then obviously there's this whole other set of questions, which we also don't really have any real answers to, like what is the software? What type of computer do you need? What type of Internet connection might you need? What are you going to do if there are problems with your Internet and something drops? My Internet has been really flaky lately – that would be very disturbing if I were taking the bar.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah, because everyone's on the Internet.



- Alison Monahan: Yeah, I've never had so much trouble as I have in the last few weeks. It just randomly stops working.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah.
- Alison Monahan: In California, at least for the "baby bar", the [First-Year Law Students' Exam](#), they were saying, "Oh, if you have an Internet issue, that's on you and you just lose your ability to take the test. Sorry."
- Lee Burgess: Yeah. So, great. They don't really have processes to deal with all of this stuff. And so, if you do have sketchy Internet, then you probably want to find out where else you maybe could take it, or whether or not you could take it not on Wi-Fi. There are events circulating different requirements for different jurisdictions about even the room that you're in, that you have to be in a room with a door where no other people could be in the room with you. So I think for a lot of people with roommates or significant others, that could be a challenge.
- Alison Monahan: Or pets, I love the pet ones. Or books.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah, no pets. I don't know. Yeah, did you see my cat walking by with a crib sheet on his back?
- Alison Monahan: You're just in a studio apartment. You're a law student and you've got bookcases everywhere and you happen to own a cat. Like, what in the world? I mean, what are you supposed to do? I guess at that point, you've got to start trying to find another place to take it.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah. And where is that going to be that you're going to feel safe? It's not like it's easy to call your friend and go over to their house. This is complicated stuff, we're all just supposed to stay away from each other. So, if you haven't gotten requirements from your state about what a remote exam is going to entail, try and get a copy of that or reach out if you have a law school that you went to in that state, maybe they have more information. You might want to reach out to the Dean's office, see if they can start sharing what these requirements are going to be, so you can make a plan.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, I don't feel like any states who are going online have really announced how they're doing it yet. The best information we have is how California did the "baby bar", which was like a week ago. So we've talked to people who did that test and we know what they did.
- Lee Burgess: Right.



Alison Monahan: That doesn't have a performance test element, though. It's only the essays and the multiple choice, but hey, let's talk about that. Let's do some speculation about what California might be doing, maybe other states. Yeah, so what did they do? I mean, what happened?

Lee Burgess: So, in the California "baby bar", it seems that they weren't allowed to have scratch paper, and they had some sort of split screen option. So, at the top of the screen, you had the question, at the bottom of the screen, you had your open document, and then you could read and take notes on the screen. And then I think what was reported, that there was this third scratch paper screen, but that that made it hard to look at stuff.

Alison Monahan: Like a pop-up, I think.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, like a pop-up. Didn't seem like that was going to be very helpful. I hate split screen stuff by myself, so the first thing I thought was, "Wow, I'd really have to practice doing things on split screen", because that's not an easy way for me to personally work.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, and I think it was also top and bottom, which I think the one on top is problematic because then you've literally got like four lines, basically, that you can see in each document if you've got a 13-inch laptop.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, so that's going to be tricky. So that was just for the essays. The performance test – and this is in any jurisdiction that does the performance test – how they're going to manage that packet online is going to also be tricky. If you can't have any paper, scratch paper – practicing organizing all of those thoughts by flipping through the documents and I guess taking notes – it's going to take some work. One of the things we're trying to do is come up with recommendations for our students, but they're not giving us enough information to know how to study for this test.

Alison Monahan: Well, and I think a lot of these online options have just kind of said, "Oh, we're going to do 100 multiple choice questions and three essays or something." But that doesn't even say if they're doing a performance test or not.

Lee Burgess: Fair point. We don't know.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. On the one hand that actually seems easier to do a remote proctor, because there's no way you can cheat by just having your attack plan on the



wall behind your screen or whatever, but it also means you really need scratch paper, and how do you go back and forth on that? It's a lot.

Lee Burgess: It's a lot. So, if you're not getting information from your jurisdiction, you should start asking these questions. And hopefully, like I said, you can reach out to your law schools to see if the deans have any more information, but also just try calling the bar or sending emails. Maybe your jurisdiction will set up a Zoom call, too. Who knows?

Alison Monahan: Maybe set a webinar.

Lee Burgess: Webinar.

Alison Monahan: And our understanding was, at least in this one California trial run, you were able to highlight and things like that in the essays, but not in the multiple choice, which I don't really understand because [AdaptiBar](#) is online and they can do highlighting and they can have you mark out answer choices and things like that. And I know for a fact that [ExamSoft](#), which is the software they used also can do this, so I'm not really sure why that wasn't turned on. It could be turned on. For me, the multiple choice seems a little easier to deal with if you have the ability to mark off answers that you clearly don't want.

Lee Burgess: Right.

Alison Monahan: But one of the people who did this test said actually it wasn't all bad. They actually felt more comfortable being in their own space and not having to go someplace and sit around other people. So, I don't think every element of it being online is terrible, but I do think there're some pretty problematic aspects that haven't really been dealt with, in terms of how are you going to be able to structure your sample or your pre-writing outlines and things like this? For me, that would be really difficult because I always do them drawing. So this would be a really different way of doing it. So, that goes to this piece of advice, which is, you've got to practice starting as soon as possible, even if you don't exactly know how this is going to work, because it is a very different technique.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. And I think that it seems like "no scratch paper" is probably the direction places are going. So, I think you should start practicing without scratch paper, which is heartbreaking to us because we're very pro-scratch paper, so it's hard for me to make that recommendation. But I would probably try doing some of it, maybe this top-bottom split screen, side by side split screen. I think that you do really want to try and become more flexible in your exam taking, and then when the final word does come down, then you can just hammer away at that



one option that is going to be the actual way of the exam. But I think you need to practice flexibility, and the more you are flexible, the better you are at being flexible. It's a learned skill, or a practiced skill, I guess. So it's something that you just have to try. We're going to continue to come up with recommendations on how to manage that online process. Our team is also working on how you take these questions online, because this is not the way we would ever recommend people take tests.

Alison Monahan: No, exactly. It's definitely challenging. And I think when you're thinking about how to outline online, or on your computer, you can think of baby steps too. So, this isn't like you have to finalize your process. For me, now I have an external monitor, so when I sat down and tried to do this, I actually did it on the external monitor where I had more space and I could see everything at once, knowing that even that's not exactly the way that it would be done in real life, but it was kind of a way to ease into it, like, "Okay, if I can see everything and I have to type it, what would I do?" And then I think you can get better and better at that, and then you'd you can hopefully be 90% comfortable when it's like I can see four lines at a time, and that's all I get.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. I think one of the things that's going to happen for a lot of folks when they start to do this is they're just... Because this is one of the reasons we recommend people don't outline on the computer, generally speaking, is that they just dive into writing; it's not really outlining anymore. And so, when you are practicing, what I do think you need to do is continue to plan and prep an outline and take that time, because I think with the split screen option, the fact that you're going to have your thoughts organized is going to be even more critical to make sure you don't forget anything. And if you just dive in and just start writing, I think it's a high likelihood that you're going to start to forget things.

Alison Monahan: I agree. I think you've got to take a deep breath, really think about this. How do I want to structure this answer? And some people on our team think you should have an outline that you can just type your answers into and kind of expand as you go. I personally didn't find that effective. So I think there're going to be different ways to do this, but I agree with you. I think just skipping that step of thinking about your answer is likely not going to result in a very strong answer.

Lee Burgess: No, and that's a really common step to skip.

Alison Monahan: Right, it's very tempting.



- Lee Burgess: It's very, very tempting. And on one hand, like you were saying, I think that some people might find this in-home test a little less anxiety-inducing, because you're not in a room with thousands of people and you don't have the weird proctor telling you what's going to happen to you if you pull out your cell phone and all of that stuff. But there is still going to be adrenaline rushing through your body because the stakes are still pretty high on doing this test, and it may even feel odd, especially if you didn't take any online exams in law school. So, you want to have a plan in place and stick to that. Don't just throw it all out the window in the moment. That is common in the exam room, and I think it's going to be common for these remote exams as well.
- Alison Monahan: Right, and you can't even do what you might do in an exam room, where you're starting to feel a little bit queasy and so you get up and you throw some water on your face, that kind of thing. You can't leave the room, you're literally stuck there. If you want to throw up, I guess you just have to have a trash can.
- Lee Burgess: It's true. You can't go to the bathroom. I don't even know if you're allowed to stand up, I'm not even sure you're allowed to stand up.
- Alison Monahan: No, I think you basically have to be there for the entire... It's basically also going to be a little bit different on the timing, I think, because they'll do like a one-hour block and then a break, so it'll be one essay at a time, which actually that might work better for people too, because you can't screw up your timing at that point by stealing time from other questions if you just have one-hour sessions with a single question.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah. It'll help force you to have time management, which is great. But you can't go pee. If you have to go pee, you can't go pee.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, too bad. Don't have like eight cups of coffee.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah, you're also going to have to practice not going to the bathroom every time you sit and do a practice essay.
- Alison Monahan: I was going to say it might be better for me, or someone like me who is always hungry, because you can get up between ones and you've got your 10-minute break or whatever. You can actually go have a snack, so that could work out well.
- Lee Burgess: That's true, yeah.
- Alison Monahan: So it's not all bad. I mean, you could have snack time. Do some jumping jacks.





- Lee Burgess: Snack time. Just make sure your cat doesn't walk in the room.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, exactly. Hide them in the other room, don't let them howl. So, I think it's probably going to be not exactly desirable, but I do think there could be some upside, so think about the bright side, make your snacks.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah, yeah. So, I mean, this is still in flux. I think you can probably tell how frustrated we are. We know everybody who's trying to study for this test is frustrated and scared. I think my final recommendations – everybody needs to sit with whether they want to sit for this exam in the fall.
- Alison Monahan: Do you want to deal with this or not?
- Lee Burgess: Do you want to deal with this? And I really think that it's okay to say "No", that this is too much. And that's okay. That's okay. It's also okay to say you want to try and check off this box and move forward with your life. That's also okay. But be thoughtful. I think taking a breath, sitting with it, and playing it out in your head, what would it feel like if I didn't do this and delayed until February, when hopefully at least they have the process down more? Even if COVID is still a huge problem, they've at least run this test once. Maybe that is what you want to do, but you just need to really commit to it, and then if you're going to sit for the fall test, then start studying because it's coming.
- Alison Monahan: Hopefully, you're already studying, but yeah, I completely agree. I think make a decision about whether you're going to do this or not do it, and if you are going to do it, stop worrying about everything else and just really commit to the process and do your work every single day, and then hope for the best. And if you're not, then just say you're not. There's no reason to kind of half blah, blah, blah this. Family friendly podcast. Because that doesn't do you any favors either. Just make that decision, commit to one or the other, and then go for it.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah. It's going to be okay, guys, one way or another. I will say, my husband just constantly keeps telling me, "You know this will end. There will be a time after this."
- Alison Monahan: It's really hard to believe that. It really is.
- Lee Burgess: I know it is, but I mean...



- Alison Monahan: I see a sign up every day on a corner that says something along those lines, and someone finally graffitied that sign, and I was actually pretty happy about it. I mean, it's kind of helpful, but also like, "Shut up."
- Lee Burgess: I know. I think that it is hard. I know that I struggled imagining that there will be an end to this, because right now everything feels like it's getting so much worse again. But it will end and your career will go on. This just really sucks, and you just have to make the best out of the crummy hand you were dealt.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, it is true. Talking to my friends who are lucky enough to live in Europe at this point, it's kind of ending there.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah.
- Alison Monahan: Different podcast, but yeah, this might one day be over here too.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah, yeah.
- Alison Monahan: Well, everybody, good luck!
- Lee Burgess: Yes. Okay, well, hang in there. More information to come as we get it. If you attend the Zoom call in California, can you send us an email, because I'd just love to hear everybody's perspectives on that?
- Alison Monahan: Gosh, what an interesting choice.
- Lee Burgess: What a twister. Okay, well, that's all the time we have for today. I do want to take a few seconds to remind you to check out our [blog](#) at BarExamToolbox.com, which is full of helpful tips to help you prepare and stay sane as you study for the bar exam. We even have COVID-specific tips. You can also find information on our website about our courses, tools, and one-on-one tutoring programs to support you as you study for the UBE or California bar exams. If you enjoyed this episode of the Bar Exam Toolbox podcast, please take a second to leave a review and rating on your favorite listening app. We'd really appreciate it. And be sure to subscribe so you don't miss anything. If you're still in law school, you might also like to check out our popular [Law School Toolbox podcast](#) as well. If you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to reach out to myself or Alison at [lee@barexamtoolbox.com](mailto:lee@barexamtoolbox.com) or [alison@barexamtoolbox.com](mailto:alison@barexamtoolbox.com). Or you can always contact us via our website [contact form](#) at BarExamToolbox.com. Thanks for listening, and we'll talk soon!



**RESOURCES:**

[Bar Exam Latest News: COVID-19](#)

[National Conference of Bar Examiners](#)

[NCBE COVID-19 Updates](#)

[The State Bar of California COVID-19 Updates](#)

[June 2020 First-Year Law Students' Examination](#)

[SmartBarPrep](#)

[AdaptiBar](#)

[ExamSoft](#)

[Podcast Episode 90: COVID-19 Bar Exam Updates and Strategies](#)

[Podcast Episode 94: Impact of COVID-19 on the Bar Exam – June 15 Update](#)

[Coming Up with a COVID-19 Contingency Plan for Bar Study](#)

[Bar Exam Delayed Due to COVID-19? Here Are Five Tips to Help You Prepare](#)

[Attack Plans for Conquering the Bar Exam](#)

[The Girl's Guide to Law School: Need to Get More Done in Law School? Try The Circles.](#)