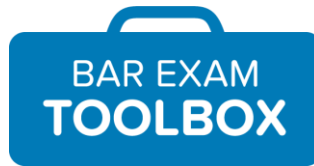
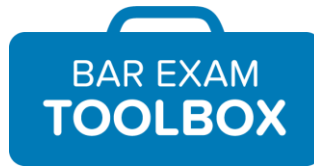




- Lee Burgess: Welcome to the Bar Exam Toolbox podcast. Today, we are talking about your final days of bar prep for the October 2020 bar exam. Your Bar Exam Toolbox hosts are Alison Monahan and Lee Burgess, that's me. We're here to demystify the bar exam experience, so you can study effectively, stay 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. Today, we're talking about making the most of your final days of prep for the October 2020 exam, and a bit of on exam day tips as well. Well, because this is COVID-related and things do change quickly...
- Lee Burgess: Oh, my.
- Alison Monahan: We should probably note this episode is being recorded on September 17th, and so the information we are discussing is current as of today, not as of tomorrow.
- Lee Burgess: It's still so weird that we have to do that.
- Alison Monahan: I know, it really is – particularly California, since they just announced changes by updating a document with no version control is really something. Well, we finally made it to the bar exam, Lee. Can you believe it?
- Lee Burgess: I can't. Well, first, we should tell people that very on-brand for 2020, it was like I was trying to write the script and then my computer completely froze and deleted everything. It was almost like my computer couldn't even take the knowledge that the exam was actually coming, because we did our first COVID-related podcast on this probably six months ago.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah. To be fair, the bar day actually hasn't yet quite arrived.
- Lee Burgess: Oh, that's true.
- Alison Monahan: I'm assuming it's going to arrive.
- Lee Burgess: Oh my gosh.



- Alison Monahan: But fingers crossed. We're getting there, it's getting closer.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah.
- Alison Monahan: I don't think we would have believed you if you'd said there was going to be an October bar exam back in March.
- Lee Burgess: All online, yeah.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, all online. Nobody would have thought of that, I don't think. And now it's mere days away when you're listening to this.
- Lee Burgess: Yes. So first off, if you have been on this rollercoaster – congratulations, you have almost made it to the finish line. I think just getting to the finish line on this one is something you should pat yourself on the back for, because what a crazy journey this has been with lots of twists and turns and pivots.
- Alison Monahan: Oh, absolutely, yeah. If you've been studying for months and months and months – congratulations, you're almost there. And absolutely, I think just getting it together to even take this exam and get through it is cause for celebration.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah. But we're so close to the finish line that now is the time that you really have to make sure that you're ready for this new format. So the final preparation is going to look a little different than our advice that we've had in the past about taking it in-person. But I don't want anyone to... I feel like I need to use sports analogies, like fumble the ball at the goal line. It's like you don't want to make avoidable mistakes at the end that could jeopardize the work that you've been doing in the midst of this pandemic.
- Alison Monahan: Oh, absolutely. Nothing would be more frustrating than studying for months and months and months, and then doing something that is not allowed because you didn't bother reading the instructions or something. That would be so frustrating.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah. So, one caveat before we dive into our individual recommendations is that, unfortunately, there are not nationwide standards that are being put into place. California has its own rules, and then different UBE jurisdictions are actually imposing their own rules. And so, if you have not done a deep dive into your own jurisdictions rules, pause this podcast and do that right now.



- Alison Monahan: Right. And even if you have, I would say read them again just to be sure because, like I said, in California they're just updating them willy-nilly, and so I feel like every few days we get a message from one of our tutors who just happened to look for something and then saw something else and said, "Oh my gosh, have you seen this?" And we're like, "No, we didn't see that." And there's no version control, so stuff just shows up and disappears. It's really crazy.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah, but we have one student who – it'd be great if he was listening because I'm sure he would love that I'm complimenting him for this – he does doc comparisons between the FAQs on a regular basis to see what's different.
- Alison Monahan: Right, which the bar should be doing on their own. These are lawyers, they know how to do this.
- Lee Burgess: Yes, yes, yes.
- Alison Monahan: At first I thought we were going crazy, because if we do a podcast then we go look for something, I'm like, "Wait, I'm pretty sure it said that a few days ago when I scripted this. What is going on?" And we realize they're just changing it.
- Lee Burgess: I know. Doesn't instill confidence, but this is the game we all have to play. So, yes. So if you haven't read your instructions in a few days, read them again, and I would probably read them on a regular basis between now and exam day. There are a lot of things you need to really think about, and I think you don't want to leave it to the day before the test to think about. And the first one is really about the space where you're going to take the exam, because there are a lot of rules about what they can see on that camera and what can be in that space. Some examples of these rules are that you can't have any books, no paper, unless it's a part of the exam. They can have scratch paper, which depends on your jurisdiction. So therefore, no pens, nothing to write with. You can't have anyone else be seen by camera. They shouldn't be in the room. I think your pets can't be in the room. You can't have any water or anything to drink. It's quite a long list, and I think some of it may feel a little bit harsh. So depending on your living situation, you really need to think through that list and make sure that you're not going to inadvertently have issues.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, I was even thinking this morning whether... Obviously, a lot of stuff is just not covered in these lists. So in the situation we've been in for the last month where the air quality has been really bad, I just started thinking, "I wonder if I'm allowed to have a HEPA filter in my closed office space where I might be taking this."



- Lee Burgess: Oh, I don't know.
- Alison Monahan: I don't know either, and I don't think anyone knows. But yeah, you definitely want to be really aware of complying with any requirement that is actually listed.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah. And just a reminder, the way that this is working is they're recording you on your camera the whole time. And I believe AI is going to be monitoring that recording and flagging anything that looks funky. So, they're tracking eye movement to see if they think you're reading something somewhere else in the room, or communicating with someone else in the room, or looking down at a phone or something like that. I think it's just wise to remember that you are being recorded. I think you can't move out of the camera screen. You just sit in front of your laptop and get it done, unless you have special accommodations for something else.
- Alison Monahan: Right. I think you're not even allowed to stand up and things like that.
- Lee Burgess: I don't think so. Yeah.
- Alison Monahan: So you definitely want to know what the list of "don'ts" is. It might seem innocuous enough if you kind of stand up and stretch a little bit, but that is probably going to flag a review, and you probably don't want that. You just need to be sure you are very, very aware of what you're allowed to do, what you're allowed to have and what you're not, to make sure that you don't inadvertently cause yourself problems.
- Lee Burgess: Right. No external monitors. A lot of people, I think, have tried to get creative on how to make this exam easier on themselves, but they have removed a lot of those options.
- Alison Monahan: Right. At least I think in California – obviously check this – but I think you can have things like an external keyboard, but not an external monitor.
- Lee Burgess: I agree, yeah. At least that's my latest and greatest understanding.
- Alison Monahan: Right, but then you think, "Can that be USB? Does it have to be wired? What are the requirements on that?" You want to make sure that you know.
- Lee Burgess: Right. The other thing that I have heard some people are doing is taking the exam in a different location. So, if somebody has an empty room at their house or even an empty office space, I think that that can be great. I can think of so



many realities where you can't actually make your home meet all of the requirements that the bar wants for a space.

Alison Monahan: If you live in a studio apartment.

Lee Burgess: If you live in a studio with a partner who's also working from home, with a cat. What would you do?

Alison Monahan: Right. You have books on the shelf – where are you going to put them in your studio?

Lee Burgess: Yeah. So, if you're doing that, I just want to make sure that you don't wait until the last minute to go make sure that the space does meet all the requirements. The last thing you want to do is walk in the day of the test and then have things be there that shouldn't be, or that you don't understand that you were supposed to bring something you don't have. You just need to make sure that you've tested everything out and know exactly what you're getting into.

Alison Monahan: Right. You don't want your friend who nicely offers you a place at their law firm, and it turns out it's the firm library or something.

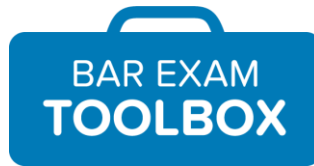
Lee Burgess: Right. Because I think most people who haven't read all these documents don't understand how quirky some of these rules are, that I think would make a lot of assumptions that it's not a big deal. I'm thinking what's behind me in the room I'm in right now, and there are probably things that would violate the requirements just in my own office.

Alison Monahan: I was just thinking, "Huh, I wonder if my plants are allowed." I don't know.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, I don't know. So, this is something that if you haven't really gone through and really understood these requirements, make sure that you do. If you get accommodations and your accommodations are different than these requirements, I just want to make sure you really understand what your rules are for your accommodations. Because it would still be possible that you would run afoul of your own rules accidentally. I don't think anyone is trying to cheat. If you listen to bar exam podcasts on your free time, I doubt that you were trying to figure out how to cheat on this exam.

Alison Monahan: We'll just tell you not to. Don't risk it.

Lee Burgess: Right, don't risk it. But it's just like, you just have to make sure that you don't inadvertently do something wrong. It's not that easy sometimes not to screw



up. It used to be easier. In the big exam it was like, "Don't pull out your cell phone, don't bring food in your pockets, and don't talk to anybody." It was a lot easier in-person.

Alison Monahan: Right. You have your little plastic bag that they check, with your pen in it or whatever. But there's a very short list of what can be in that bag.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, exactly.

Alison Monahan: I wonder if they would need their IDs. Are they going to make them show their ID? I don't know.

Lee Burgess: Oh, I'm sure there's some sort of ID verification that has to happen. It's got to, right?

Alison Monahan: I would assume. I don't recall seeing that anywhere, but presumably somewhere. I just remember what went into that plastic bag and I'm like, "I had my license in there, I do remember that."

Lee Burgess: Yeah. And I think I remember you could take sort of a wallet or something. I remember I took one of my husband's, who was my boyfriend at the time, one of his little money clips or something, and I had just my driver's license and maybe like a credit card, or a dollar or something.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, wrapped up in a headband or something.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, so strange. Okay, I have been spending a lot of time on our team, so just so you know what kind of cool, fun stuff we do here at the Bar Exam Toolbox. The last couple of days, the entire tutoring team has been meeting to talk about the testing software, and maximizing the testing software, and recommendations for students. I know you're jealous. I know you're jealous. You're like, "Man, couldn't I be in those phone calls?" That was like three hours of fun right there that you all missed out on. But one of the things that I really learned by doing a deep dive just this week with our tutors about the testing software is, you've really got to practice and mess with it, because a lot of people in Facebook groups or other descriptions of the testing software, it doesn't really explain exactly what it looks like until you see it yourself. What does an online scratch paper outline box look like? How is the question going to be balanced with the answer? All of this stuff, it's kooky. And I had had it explained to me a number of different ways, and then I saw screenshots of it, and my first reaction was, "That's not what I thought that was going to look like."



Alison Monahan: Oh, totally, yeah. I saw that I was like, "Huh? Really? That's..." And then I started asking questions like, "Can you move this? Can you resize this? What happens if you do this?" And so we basically had to have a tutor talking to their student on a screen share to get these questions answered.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. So you've got to do a deep dive with the testing software. That means if you haven't done so – and I hope everyone listening to this has done so – make sure it's loaded on your computer and that you've done some of the mock exams. But don't just run the mock exam. Use it, test it, do questions, do performance tests. This stuff is not easy to change into this format; you've got to get used to it. One of the things that we were talking about, specifically with the performance test today, especially in UBE jurisdictions where we don't have insight into every single jurisdiction's testing software – it's like, are they going to be able to see page numbers and the answer screen, like the packet? I think that they're going to see like a number two at the bottom, but how are you going to note what pages things are on? Does your jurisdiction allow highlighting in the question or not? In California, they just decided that you're going to be able to highlight the performance test packet. There're a lot of unknowns, and so the best thing you can do is just spend as much time as you possibly can taking practice questions and messing around in the mock exam format. You've just got to get comfortable with it.

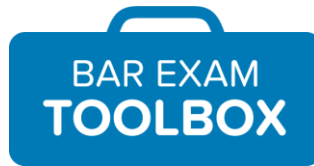
Alison Monahan: Right, because sometimes you'll uncover weird things. Someone was telling us in some jurisdiction apparently, if you... I can't remember exactly what it was, but something with the performance test, which you know has multiple pages. And somehow every time they switched out of the document when they went back into it, it would go back to the beginning instead of going back to where they were.

Lee Burgess: Yeah.

Alison Monahan: Which is crazy.

Lee Burgess: Crazy.

Alison Monahan: And there was a way kind of around it if you did something differently, but it was just one of those things where we were like, "Why should typing in scratch paper make this go back to the beginning? What?" But it did. So, you've got to figure out how you're going to deal with that.



Lee Burgess: Yeah, so you've got to take a number of exam questions. And if you don't have a tutor who will geek out on this with you – which is cool; we're special snowflakes in that way – I think that a Zoom call with your friends where you all sit down and talk about the functionality that you guys have been testing out could be great, because I think everybody's coming at it differently. And this is the first time that this is really being done, so everybody's learning on the fly. So, try and really dive in and make the most of it. I don't think all this testing software is necessarily bad; you just need to understand the boundaries of its functionality.

Alison Monahan: Right, and you need to have a plan for how you're going to use it beforehand. So for example if you have the option for virtual scratch paper and you have the test window, do you type your outline in the virtual scratch paper or do you type your outline in the testing window? I wrote a detailed document about the pros and cons of that. So, this is not something you should just think about on the fly. You should choose an option and practice it and go with it.

Lee Burgess: Right. And then today, after spending some time seeing what one student was seeing on their screen, I became much more on the side of, "Don't use that virtual scratch paper box, it's too small."

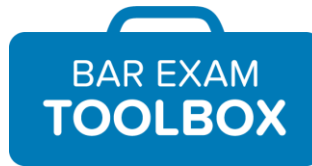
Alison Monahan: Right. I later learned after my pro and con document that you can't really resize it, which would also change my opinion on whether you should use it.

Lee Burgess: Right. This is why you've got to do a deep dive and try different things out. Yeah, it's a lot. This is a side note, and I'm even diverging from a script that I wrote myself. One thing I do want people to keep in mind is that although the test, especially if you're a repeat taker, feels very different in this format, the questions themselves and what is being asked of you is the same. And I think that I find even sometimes in this process of trying to navigate this October 2020 exam that we forget that they're trying to give you pretty much the same test in this different format. So, the performance test isn't going to be extra wacky because it's in this format. It's going to be a normal performance test in this format. And so, just don't lose sight of all of the work that you have done to prepare for these types of questions and think that this virtual environment is going to make it impossible. You have been working on the skills to do this. The test is the same; it's just the way the test is administered is different.

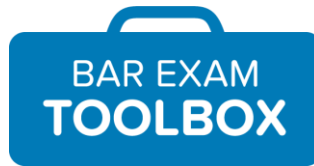
Alison Monahan: Right. No, I think that's a great point. Also, it's still curved.

Lee Burgess: Right, there's that too.





- Alison Monahan: If everybody does a little bit worse, which is probably pretty realistic, and that's okay. You just need to still be in the better part of that curve.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah. Alright, so one other tip – and I think this is just generally acceptable – once you have uploaded the software and you got it up and running, don't update your computer. Don't do any system upgrades.
- Alison Monahan: Oh my gosh, I upgraded my OS yesterday, and it's just amazing all the little things that that messes up. You're like, "Where is that thing I'm expecting to see? Okay, it doesn't exist any longer." Don't do that. Do not decide to upgrade your OS like the day before the exam.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah, so just turn them off. Turn off the updates. They can wait a week, nothing's going to happen to your computer. Okay, this is another big one that I think is really important in this final push for this exam – you need to be practicing under the conditions of which you are going to be taking the test. It used to be that we would say, "Sit down in three-hour blocks", dah, dah, dah, dah, dah. Well, it's a little different now because you have an essay, and then a tiny break; and then you have an essay, and a tiny break. You need to really understand where your essays and the breaks are. Now you're going to get 90 minutes of multiple choice and then a break, not a three-hour session. And you need to practice sitting in your chair in front of your laptop with the camera on, because that's what's... Maybe you don't have to have the camera on, but the idea that the camera is watching you during this practice, because we all have habits that make ourselves feel better, many of which are getting taken away. So, no water on the table, you can't get up and go to the bathroom, you can't stretch, and like you were saying, you can't get up and walk around the room. You need to start doing all of your practice under the conditions of what you're going to be asked to do on testing day.
- Alison Monahan: Right. And I think as part of that, you also need to be thinking about how you're going to handle these breaks and how you're going to be prepared to make sure that you're not going to have to run to the bathroom in the middle of a 90-minute session. It seems prosaic, but really things like, what snacks are you going to have available for yourself? What is your caffeine intake going to look like?
- Lee Burgess: Right.
- Alison Monahan: And so, I think even in this short break... In some ways, I would love this because I want to snack all day long. I think even if it's 10 to 15 minutes, you want to plan out what that's going to look like. Are you going to run to the kitchen and



get yourself a handful of nuts and maybe have a little bit of a coffee drink or something? But probably don't have three of them, because you have to sit for the next hour or 90 minutes. I think all this should be planned out, like some nice, high quality snack food that you can have. What are you going to have for lunch? Are you going to leave the house, are you going to walk around the block? All of these things you want to have thought through.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. It's amazing what you have to think through. Total side note conversation, just because I think it's fascinating, speaking of caffeine, because it's one disaster after another. I've been updating my disaster planning for my house, and what you need to have as supplies. One of my friends is an expert in putting together emergency kits, and she and I were talking on the phone yesterday and she says, "What are your caffeine needs?" And I was like, "Oh, what do you mean?" And she's like, "Well, what if you can't get coffee for a few days?" And I was like, "Oh." She's like, "The last thing you need is a caffeine headache in the middle of a disaster." And I was like, "Oh, you are so right. Oh my gosh, how do you prepare for that?"

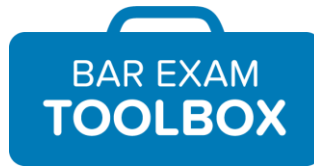
Alison Monahan: Yeah. This is what I was thinking when I was thinking about what you would do in the breaks. I'm like, "Well, I have this Nespresso machine, so maybe I could make that." But maybe what I probably want to do is just have the refrigerated coffees that are pretty popular now. I would have those for the bar. I think in my 10-minute breaks, I would have those and then at lunch, I would probably make myself like a cappuccino or a latte.

Lee Burgess: Right, because you can't let it cool. You probably don't have time to let it cool. You've got to sip it.

Alison Monahan: Right. You've got to drink it really fast. I used to bring stuff like that actually to in-person exams in law school. I'd have my whole snack tray and my caffeine supply, which you think is crazy, but I went through all of that stuff during that exam.

Lee Burgess: I do think it's crazy. I know. And I'm a cold brew person myself. Chameleon, vanilla, cold brews concentrate sits in my fridge every day, because I have small children, and let me tell you, I need caffeine as soon as possible in the morning. I don't have time for some great caffeine ritual. My ritual is dump, and then I dump some cashew milk in there, swirl it around, and then just suck that sucker down.

Alison Monahan: The one thing you've got to be careful of... For me, the cold brew makes me crazy. I basically start shaking and things like that. That is not something I would



want to do on bar day, but there are other ones that are more mellow that I know.

Lee Burgess: That's true.

Alison Monahan: But point being, you need to test this.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, you have to test it out.

Alison Monahan: You need to know how all your food is going to impact you, how this caffeine intake is going to impact you. We had a student once who literally would drink so much caffeine before the bar, she would throw up, and there was nothing we could do to talk her out of it.

Lee Burgess: Yeah.

Alison Monahan: She eventually passed, but I'm like, "This is crazy."

Lee Burgess: Yeah, that's a lot. And you're right, the cold brew is best. My husband has a really strong reaction to the cold brew, but I love it.

Alison Monahan: It makes me so jittery. I literally can't type, I'm so jittery. I feel like I've had meth or something at that point. Literally. I mean, that is not a state of mind I could take an exam in.

Lee Burgess: Nitro coffee though – that will send me through the roof. That is a whole special... I don't know what it is, but if you get a nitro...

Alison Monahan: You see, that doesn't bother me.

Lee Burgess: That will send me through the roof.

Alison Monahan: I don't know. Point being, we're all different, and you definitely want to calibrate this so that you are not totally strung out while trying to take exam questions. Or like collapsing because you're so exhausted, because you just stopped having caffeine.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. Or that you just cram sugar right before the 90-minute performance test, and then 60 minutes in, you want to take a nap because you ate five cookies during your break or something like that.



Alison Monahan: Yeah. I feel like you need to have high quality food going in, because your brain is actually using a lot of glucose. So I think even if you're not a snacky person, I think you do probably want to have something before each of these sessions, even if it's just a few almonds or something.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. Or an apple and some nut butter or something like that.

Alison Monahan: Yeah.

Lee Burgess: Alright. But you've got to have a plan and you've got to test it out. And I think testing out what you're having for lunch, all of that is really important. Breakfast too. Maybe not a pancake breakfast type of morning. You've really got to make sure that you're feeling good. Try that rhythm the few days before the test. Also, if you know the timing of all of those sections, I would get up in the morning, practice eating breakfast or whatever that time's going to be, and then sit down at the time the exam would start, especially if you're not a morning person. Time has taken on some very weird characteristics during COVID, and I think that you need to be able to be like, "Okay, it's 9 o'clock, here I am."

Alison Monahan: Right.

Lee Burgess: Probably dressed. I don't know, I probably wouldn't wear pajamas to the bar.

Alison Monahan: No.

Lee Burgess: Or a suit. But I think you need to get up and put on clothes and brush your teeth, and create some sort of ritual to get your act together so this doesn't just feel like, "Hey, I'm rolling in in my sweat pants and my fleece, here we go."

Alison Monahan: "I got up five minutes before, I'm ready to go."

Lee Burgess: Yeah. So, something that was actually brought up in our tutor meeting today, which I hadn't really thought about was, do you know what's going to happen if something goes wrong?

Alison Monahan: Right.

Lee Burgess: Because we have heard other jurisdictions who have done virtual exams, that some stuff went wrong and people started getting really upset, which I completely understand. The story that came from one of our tutors was that when she was sitting for the California bar, there had been a fire alarm situation in one of the testing sites, the year before or something like that. And so, they'd



talked about this fire alarm situation and they were like, "No. When something like that happens, you either have to finish the test", or whatever. Anyway, so she became obsessed with disaster planning around it, and so she's like, "Well, what am I going to do if the fire alarm goes off?" And so, she had this whole plan and the fire alarm went off during the MBE. No joke. And it was right at the end of a session. She bubbled in C, the last five questions, ran out of the building. But she's like, "I felt so good about having a plan." I was just like, "Wow." But she's like, "What's going to happen if something goes wrong? Are you allowed to... Do you call somebody? How do you deal with a problem that doesn't violate whatever are the ethics requirements?"

Alison Monahan: I read in some jurisdiction – because someone asked this question obviously – and I think their answer was you were supposed to leave the room and get your phone and call from outside of the room. It was just like, "Well, but then you've left the room." I don't know, you definitely want to be sure you know how they want... Because you can't have a phone in the room, so you would have to leave.

Lee Burgess: Right. Yeah.

Alison Monahan: But then what happens, because you've left? I don't know.

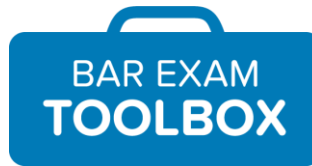
Lee Burgess: Yeah. Oh, that's an interesting one because we both were talking about Apple Watches earlier today on our other podcast. I bet you can't have an Apple Watch.

Alison Monahan: Oh, I'm sure you can't.

Lee Burgess: Because you can't be getting notifications. So, if you have an Apple Watch, don't have your Apple Watch.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, do not have that on.

Lee Burgess: See? These are the things that it's really hard to think of, and they don't have all of these things on the list, which is why you really have to think through it. The other thing that I think is likely going to happen is that stuff is going to take longer than they said. There's going to be a delay in sending out whatever passcode you need to log in to the individual exams. Things are going to be slower than they think, just logistically. And so, one of the things that I think everybody needs to be prepared for is, how are you going to stay calm while those things happen?



Alison Monahan: Right. Oh, on that note, can I add one more pitch for something to do during the break that I was thinking about?

Lee Burgess: Yes.

Alison Monahan: I believe it might be useful if you had either some sort of... Depending on how you're feeling at the end of a section, do you feel amped up, do you need to relax – have a couple of yoga poses ready to go. Do you feel really tired? Do you need to get more energy? Do some jumping jacks. Have your plan for what you're going to do physically, because you've got that 10 minutes, and that's actually great to re-center yourself and get ready to come back physically into that next session.

Lee Burgess: That's true. I could see a lot of power in a down dog or a child's pose to calm your nervous system, or rolling around on your back calms your nervous system. That's why babies roll around in child's pose all the time.

Alison Monahan: Yes, some happy baby poses.

Lee Burgess: Happy baby pose, yeah. But yeah, that's a really good idea.

Alison Monahan: But I do think preparing some breathing exercises for if you're sitting in the room and the passcode is not coming and you're about to go through the roof. Like okay, what are you going to do? Like five deep breaths, maybe press your finger together, whatever it is.

Lee Burgess: Yeah.

Alison Monahan: Because I think things are going to happen.

Lee Burgess: I just think that it's not going to go smoothly.

Alison Monahan: It's not going to go perfectly.

Lee Burgess: No. So I think you should just go in knowing that there are going to be some bumps in the road. We have some mindfulness meditations that we use with our bar students that I think some of these types of things could be really useful. For one of them, they've actually found that petting or caressing your own hand is relaxing. That's what you do to other people, that kind of touch, but it can even make you feel more calm. So, trying out things like if you're going to do deep breathing, you're going to stroke your hand and be like, "It's going to be okay. I'm just taking this break. They're going to get it together. I am calm. I am



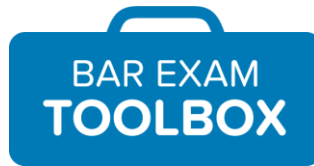
confident I can do this." Whatever you need to do, I think practicing that is a good idea. So you can be like, "Here's the moment where I call on whatever I've been practicing", whether it be tactical breathing, whatever it might be – something you can do sitting without moving if the recording is already on. But to keep yourself centered, because spinning out of control is just going to hurt you. It doesn't hurt anybody else.

Alison Monahan: Right, yeah. I think the more prepared you are for the possibility that there could be problems and that you have some sort of solution tool kit ready to go, I think is going to make your experience better if and when something does happen. And if not, fantastic. You didn't need that.

Lee Burgess: Alright. The last thing I wanted to do is to go a little bit off-topic and speak to people who are planning to sit for the next MPRE, because I do know that a lot of people who are sitting for the October exam are going to try and sit for an MPRE soon. These are in-person tests, and we have heard from people who have taken the test that it is not the smoothest of systems, let's just say that. If you are very COVID-conservative, there can be lots of things that might make you feel uncomfortable, or you're going to need to wear a mask while you're taking the test, this and that and whatnot. So, if you're sitting for the MPRE and you're going to take it at a testing center, which is your only option, I think you do need to go through a similar checklist of understanding what that testing center situation is going to be like. Make sure you practice wearing a mask, especially if you have glasses fogging issues or anything like that, you want to make sure that all of that's resolved. But just so you know, it doesn't mean that you will not be successful. We've heard of plenty of people being successful on the MPRE, but it's just different. You just, again, need to really understand what's going to happen so you're not surprised in the moment. I just have to keep telling people about that, because I feel like people aren't concerned enough about knowing what's going to happen in the exam center.

Alison Monahan: Right. Well, put that aside for now. Put that into your memory bank. After the actual bar exam, you can worry about the MPRE. But yeah, I think right now, we're all basically one day at a time. So, focus on getting through the virtual bar, hope for the best, have your strategies ready to go, get your snacks, and hopefully, all goes well and you can be licensed and move on. And this will all one day be a story for your memoir.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. I mean, guys, this is hard. It's scary. It's a scary time. If you've taken the exam before, this is going to feel weird, it's going to feel anxiety-provoking. That's okay. This is totally normal, this is an unprecedented situation. So, you've just got to figure out how to make it through, get in the best mental space you



can. One of the other things that came out of our working group this week was this idea that it's important to constantly stop and think about what you're doing. When you feel the panic, when you feel like you're kind of spinning, just take a breath. Stop and think, regroup, come back together. You can get through this. Plenty of people are going to pass this bar exam, so you can get through it.

Alison Monahan: Exactly. Just do what you can to get yourself into that group so that you don't have to deal with it again in February.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. Alright, well, any final thoughts, Alison? Or have we pretty much...

Alison Monahan: I think at this point, I would say good luck. You can definitely do this. Just stay calm, stay focused, do your best and roll with the punches. And hopefully, it works out.

Lee Burgess: Yep. It'll be a very interesting bar story to share 20 years from now.

Alison Monahan: Exactly.

Lee Burgess: Alright. I want to take a second 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. 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 exam. If you enjoyed this episode of the Bar Exam Toolbox podcast, please take a second to leave a review or 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:**

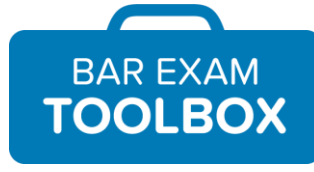
[Bar Exam Latest News: COVID-19](#)

[National Conference of Bar Examiners](#)

[October 2020 California Bar Examination](#)

[Podcast Episode 99: Tips for Taking an Online Bar Exam](#)





[Strategies for Taking an Online Bar Exam Without Scratch Paper](#)