



Lee Burgess: Welcome to the Bar Exam Toolbox podcast. Today we're talking about creating a bar exam study schedule. 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 Monahan also runs [The Girl's Guide to Law School](#). If you enjoy the show, please leave a review or rating 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 creating a bar exam study schedule. Well, Lee, first off, why would a student even want or need their own study schedule if they bought some commercial bar prep course that just gives them one?

Lee Burgess: Well, it's important to remember that those study schedules are a one-size-fits-all, and many students have lives, families, jobs, or just need something more individualized to their strengths, weaknesses, how they study, how their brain works. It's kind of, I think, silly to think that there could be an out-of-the-box answer that would work for everyone.

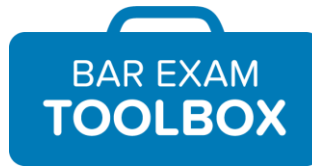
Alison Monahan: Right.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. It's also possible that many of those study schedules are impractical, because they really do assume you're going to study sometimes 12 hours a day.

Alison Monahan: Seven days a week, no breaks.

Lee Burgess: It's just wild what they ask of you, and that is also not practical for a lot of folks, because that's just going to lead to burnout. Most people cannot study effectively that many hours.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. Maybe I'm very lazy, but I figured I could only really focus for four to six hours a day, and that was if I was really trying hard. I remember when I was studying for my first exam, I used a kind of random weird program because that's just how I roll, but I definitely remember putting together my own process of, "Okay, what do I think I need to do to pass this test?" And that involved a lot of drilling on the MBE with a very early computer program, because I knew that then I would get data and I could actually see how I was doing. It involved sitting down for a certain amount of time with certain materials and just learning



certain things and then trying to practice them. I think oftentimes students actually should be supplementing with extra practice.

Lee Burgess:

Right.

Alison Monahan:

And if you've purchased a variety of materials, like say you've got an [AdaptiBar](#) and you've gotten [Themis](#), and you've gotten [SmartBarPrep](#), and you've got the [Critical Pass](#) flashcards and you've got six other things – you've got to figure out how to sort of integrate these things into your schedule and figure out what you're going to do with them. How are you going to use AdaptiBar? It's obviously not in your schedule, probably.

Lee Burgess:

Right, true. And what of all of those tools that you have purchased are really important for you to incorporate? For instance, one big difference from AdaptiBar than, let's say [BARBRI](#), is AdaptiBar uses the real released questions from the [NCBE](#). So, if you are working on a BARBRI schedule, you might say, "Well, should I be doing both their questions or AdaptiBar, or do I pick one to start with first? What's the data I'm going to get back from the practice? What do I think is going to get me closer to my goals?" You need to just think very personally about how you're going to utilize the tools available for you. I also think it's important to remember that we're all not coming to these exams with the same skills. You may have taken a class in law school in which you focused on the performance test. Well, then maybe you shouldn't be spending as much time on the performance test as some study schedules might suggest, because maybe you're already doing a great job. Or maybe you got a high score in your Evidence class, but you never took Wills and Trusts. Well, maybe you have to spend more time studying Wills and Trusts than Evidence. I think you have to remember that we all come to it with a unique set of skills and substantive knowledge, and you need to be thoughtful about that as you look at a study schedule and make changes to make it customized to you.

Alison Monahan:

I definitely agree with that. There's literally no way that your commercial bar prep course could understand what you have studied in law school and what you actually know, so why would you just want to blindly follow it? If you wrote your Law Review note on something related to Contracts and you were a Contracts TA – well, you probably don't need to go watch that video. I mean, come on.

Lee Burgess:

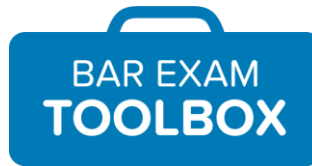
Right.

Alison Monahan:

So, you've got to think about this.



- Lee Burgess: And I think that that's the thing, especially with the videos that we like to highlight for people, is you have to ask yourself, "Is that the best use of my time? If I got an academic award in Contracts, and the Contracts video is nine hours...", which is not outside the realm of possibility. I can't remember how many days I spent on Contracts, but it's probably two to three. What could you do in nine hours? Reviewing an outline from that bar provider, or from somebody like SmartBarPrep, or doing Contracts questions in heavily-tested areas of the law. You really need to think about how you're spending your time, how you're putting these kinds of deposits in the bank for your bar prep, how you are going to get to your goal. Well, nine hours of passive listening may not get you anywhere, if you are already pretty good at Contracts.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, I'm pretty sure you could use at least half of those nine hours to study something you've never seen before, and you would probably be giving yourself a lot more chance of passing than spending it on something you're already an expert in.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah. Or if you spent nine hours doing Contracts practice exams, you would also be even more of an expert in bar contracts than if you spend nine hours just doing exams and giving yourself feedback.
- Alison Monahan: Well, and also you can split it between your exam writing and your MBE questions. And great, now you're becoming an expert on the MBE, which is what you need to be to pass the test.
- Lee Burgess: Yep, exactly. So you have to be thoughtful about this. And I think a lot of times people get to this point mid-point in their bar prep, when they start realizing that it's not really working. This happened to me when I took my big commercial bar program around the 4th of July, I kind of scratched my head and was like, "I don't actually think I've learned anything. I think I've been working a lot and studying a lot, but I think I'm just stressed out and not at all prepared for this test." I think it's better if you can start thinking about that stuff at the beginning of your prep and evaluating things in the beginning of your bar prep cycle, so you don't get to that, what we call the "July freakout", where almost everybody stops and says, "Uh-oh, I am so willfully unprepared for this test."
- Alison Monahan: Yeah. It's hard because people think, "I'll just sign up for this, they'll tell me what to do, I'll pass", and that works for a number of people, but it doesn't work for everyone. I knew going into this, I was not a person who really learned that well from audio lectures, so I just decided I wasn't going to pay for a course that primarily gave me audio lectures. I just needed the information, I needed the outlines, and I needed the MBE questions and things, but I didn't need the



lectures because I knew I wasn't going to watch them. So I think just thinking through, you know from law school what worked for you before, and if it wasn't what you've signed up for, then you've got to figure something else out or you're not going to pass.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, exactly. Alright, so if folks want to go rogue and create their own schedules or edit their own schedules, I think it is important to think about the information you need to start modifying a schedule or creating your own. So, if you're starting from scratch, you're not using a provider, you are studying on your own, you definitely need to make sure you understand what bar exam subjects are on the test and what type of questions are on the exam. And again, the UBE is different from California, which is different from Florida. Make sure you understand what exam you are taking and what those individual requirements are, and where they might test state-specific laws. For instance, in California, they only test state-specific law on the essays, and even within the essays, they don't test state-specific criminal law. They only test certain subjects that are state-specific. Now, not surprising, those show up a lot, so it's important to know them, but you need to really understand the mechanics of the test so you can make sure that you're preparing for all the different parts of it.

Alison Monahan: One thing that may seem obvious is you never really pay attention to what's on the MBE; often those are also on the essays. There are just certain topics that are more critical to know than other topics, and so you should probably be spending more time doing Evidence or Contracts or Torts or something than you're spending on, say, Secured Transactions.

Lee Burgess: True.

Alison Monahan: If you're taking the UBE. Okay, that may show up and you need to know it, but there's going to be at most one essay. This other stuff can show up all over the place.

Lee Burgess: That's a very good point. So then you want to look at all the materials you have access to. So, do you have access to lectures? Are you purchasing outlines? Do you have access to guided practice questions, like our [Writing of the Week program](#) and our [Practice of the Week workshops](#), which focus on essays, performance tests, and MBE questions. You really want to make sure that you understand where your practice is coming from and how you're going to learn how to execute different parts of the test. And you need to take full practice exams, at least half-day practice exams, so where are you going to get those questions if you aren't signing up for a large commercial course? We have our



[Brainy Bar Bank tool](#), which is a bank of questions from California and the UBE that people can pull questions from to create practice exams. But you just need to know where all these materials are going to come from as you build out your study plan.

Alison Monahan: Right, because everyone needs the basic information, and that can be gotten from a variety of sources, but you need to figure out, "Okay, these are my fundamental places that I'm going to get my information from, and then this is where I'm going to get my practice material from." Then you can start figuring out how to fit all of that into your schedule. And a lot of this really comes down to time; people need to be realistic about this. We work with a lot of people, and that's one of the biggest pain points, is just figuring out how much time you really have to study. And you might say, "Oh, I've got X number of hours per day." Okay, well, are there any events in there that you need to attend? Is someone having a wedding? Are there holidays in there? Are you working? Do you have family obligations? All of these things play in, because it's better to be realistic upfront and come up with some type of schedule that you can be realistic about keeping to, versus being overly optimistic and then immediately falling behind, and then trying to figure out what you're going to jettison. And that's just a very stressful place to be.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, it really is. Yeah, being realistic, and then building in a little cushion. Because the other thing that I think people don't plan for, especially for the winter exam, is getting sick. I don't want anyone to get sick. And this is not even just about COVID sick. People get the flu during the winter exams. So get your flu shot. But it's also just important to make sure that you're not cutting it so close that you can't get derailed by something happening. If you get sick, you need to take time off and get better, you don't want to be telling yourself that you need to push through, which is just typically going to make you sicker, and then you're not going to be able to function at your best come the exam days.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. I had a nightmare scenario where I was supposed to be studying while I was working for California, when I took that as my second bar exam. And of course I was working in BigLaw, I hadn't really studied. And they gave me three weeks off and I literally was so sick the first week that I could not get out of bed. And that was not a great place to be.

Lee Burgess: No. I mean, it happens, and you've just got to make sure that you have a little bit of cushion. I think if anything, COVID times have taught us that we can only my plan so much, because the world just keeps changing on a dime. But it is a good lesson. You want to come up with this bar study plan, but you want to build in some flexibility because stuff's still going to happen.



Alison Monahan: Yeah, absolutely. Well, speaking of time, how much time does someone actually need to devote for this?

Lee Burgess: So generally, we say you need about 400 hours to study for the bar. Now, this can go up or down depending on certain factors, like do you get time and a half? If you do get time and a half as an accommodation, you're going to need more time to study because your practice exams are going to take longer. You may also depend on your academic history. Did you really struggle with these bar classes? There are lots of reasons why you might need more time. Or maybe if you're a repeat taker and you were within five points of passing, you just need a refresher and you want to buckle down for three weeks and try and get it done. That's a different type of study that can be worked for some people. But generally, the 400-hour rule is kind of what we adhere to, and that means studying for about 10 weeks at 40 hours a week, which is a full-time job, but is significantly less than some bar providers say that you need to study. Because we really think it's about 400 high quality hours, not 400 passive, kind of half-looking at social media, half-working hours.

Alison Monahan: Right. If you're going to study for 400 hours, you can't just be checking the boxes here. You need to be writing basically every day, probably, doing questions from the MBE every day. It has to be very active. It can't just be passive consumption of information, because that's going to take a lot longer to get you to a point of passing.

Lee Burgess: Yeah.

Alison Monahan: If you ever get there.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, it's so true. So it is really important to be thoughtful about where you are, and then build out the time. So if you're working and studying and you're only going to be able to study for 20 hours a week, then think about how you're going to find 400 hours, unless you think you're in that kind of category of people who can study much less. I think for folks who are working and studying, finding the number of hours to study is the greatest challenge, and also finding the hours that you can study where your brain isn't completely fried from work is also a challenge. So you have to be thoughtful about where those hours are coming from, the hours of 4:00 AM to 6:00 AM, which sometimes people will tell me they're going to study, for most people, aren't going to be great hours. For me, I'm worthless before 7:00, and my kids get me up really early. There's no way. There are morning people that can do that, but you have to be really



honest about yourself if you're going to be able to be productive in some of these hours.

Alison Monahan: Right. And I think if you're thinking about how to structure, say, a part-time work, because oftentimes people maybe can take some time off. And I think if there's a possibility of taking a full day a week, maybe like a Monday, so then you get basically Saturday, Sunday, Monday that you can study – something like that can be really much more effective than, say, working in the morning and then taking part of the afternoon off on a daily basis or semi-daily basis. Because you've really got to have that time to turn your brain on to bar study, and so you're going to need some really solid blocks of time.

Lee Burgess: Yeah.

Alison Monahan: And if you can carve out one day a week, I think that's a great part-time schedule; better than trying to do a few hours every day.

Lee Burgess: And that's why it's so great to think about it as how many hours a week, because if you take a Friday off or a Monday off from work and you get a good solid eight hours of studying done that day – well, that's much better than the two hours here, one hour at lunch. It's going to be very different, but you can see how you can trade some of that time for these longer blocks that are going to be much more effective.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, it's just going to be easier to focus. If you know that every Friday you're studying for the bar, then your brain kind of tunes into that and it's like, "Okay, I've got to be really productive on this particular day." Whereas if it's like, "Oh, I'm going to study between 6:00 and 8:00, after I eat dinner" – it's just really hard to do that consistently and be effective.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. A lot of this is just about being really realistic. And it sounds really easy to do, but everyone wants to be overly optimistic about what they can actually pull off. It's okay, you just have to make a plan and then noodle on it, and come back to it and ask yourself if you're really being honest with yourself about what you can invest.

Alison Monahan: Right. And I do think this is a place to be tracking your time. Once you've committed to a plan, actually put it in a calendar and then see, "Am I getting done what I thought I was going to be getting done in those hours? Is this quality study time? Am I even doing the hours?" And if after a week or two, you look at it and you're like, "Hmm, okay, I've done 70% of the time I thought, and



maybe only about 50% of it has been not productive" – okay, you've got to re-evaluate.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. One last thing on personal family stuff that you might have going on, like somebody getting married or family holidays – I am not of the camp that you should skip everything for the bar. You may need to make some personal sacrifices, you may not be able to have the social calendar that you would hope to have. But if you start skipping a lot of things, it almost gives the test more power than it already has. You could plan around going away for a wedding weekend. Now, maybe you can't come back so hung over that you cannot study for three or four days, but you can still go have that experience and make those memories, as long as you've planned for it. So it really is this balance of being thoughtful and thinking about it in these number of quality hours. So, you could start a little early and take some time off. Now, if you're just planning a random vacation, I probably wouldn't plan that in the middle of your bar prep, but you don't want to miss these kinds of milestones because I think that it ends up hurting you in the end.

Alison Monahan: I think that's definitely possible. Like we said, it's a balance. If it's a two-week wedding in the south of France – okay, maybe you can't go for that whole time. I think what you cannot do and should not do is be like, "Oh, I'm going to go to this, but I'm going to keep studying in those..." "You're not going to do that, come on.

Lee Burgess: No, and I think that's right. Just be like, "I'm going to take two or three days off, have a blast, and then come back and get my act back together."

Alison Monahan: Yeah, exactly. I feel like don't set yourself up for failure by being unrealistic.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. So Alison, what do we think should be... From a task perspective, what are the tasks that should be on an ideal steady schedule?

Alison Monahan: Well, obviously, you have to do some degree of substantive review, and that can be however you learn. If you learn from a lecture, maybe that's effective. Oftentimes, to be honest, I think studying from written material is probably more productive for most people, but you're going to have to learn some of this material. And I think you do want to have a short outline of some type, whether it's SmartBarPrep or [Lean Sheets](#), or there are probably some other ones out there floating around that I'm not thinking of. But you want to have something that actually just condenses the law for you, and then you can always go to these other materials if you need more information. But I feel like what happens a lot of the time is people get really caught up in trying to learn every single



thing in the substantive review piece, and then they tell us, "Oh, I can't do practice because I don't know enough law." How many times have we heard that?

Lee Burgess: Oh yes. Like once a week, at least. Or once a day.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, or once a day, practically. I hear it a lot.

Lee Burgess: During the bar season, yeah. At this point in the bar season, once a day.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. So it's like, "I can't do practice because I need to learn more material." It's like, "Okay, you do not need to, a) learn more material probably. You probably already know a decent amount of material. You know something well enough that you could do a practice question." So I think that's the other thing that really has to be on your schedule, is actually doing practice. So, something like the Brainy Bar Bank can give you essays and performance tests, our Writing of the Week is designed to counteract this idea that you can't do something because you don't know the law. Great, we'll tell you the law; now go write the question. So I think you have to call yourself out on this, because part of the practice is, that's how you learn the law. You don't know what you are going to miss until you do a practice question and you miss an issue. The next time you see a similar issue, you're probably not going to miss it. So a lot of this is just pattern recognition in the end, and the more questions you do, the more you start to see those patterns. I think you also need time in your schedule to review the practice questions, this is where people sometimes fall apart. So, you do the questions... I think that happens a lot with the MBE too. People do the questions, maybe they look at the ones they missed, and then they move on with their day. But taking the time to really review what you're not getting correct, I think is so critical.

Lee Burgess: Also for the MBE, you also have to make sure that you're getting them right for the right reasons. I think more and more people just say, "Oh well, if I got it right, I don't have to worry about it." But you might be getting it right because you guessed and you just happened to guess right. That doesn't really give me confidence for you going into the test, because that doesn't mean that you knew the law or really knew what you were doing if it was a 50/50 shot and you just picked the right one. So I think you also need to just study the questions. They can only get so creative about the types of fact patterns they use on this test, and so the more you study the questions, the more you are going to be ready for whatever ones show up on the actual exam.



Alison Monahan: Yeah, and one thing we've had people do if they're really struggling with the MBE, is kind of take a step back from just doing a lot of questions and checking that box, and actually use these as a teaching tool. So do them open book, take as much time as you need, but that means that you need to actually look up the law if you don't know exactly what rule is being tested. You need to walk through that hypo – what is the issue, what is the rule? Go look it up. Once you have the rule in front of you, you should be able to figure out what the answer is supposed to look like, and then find that answer choice. So slowing down and using these as a teaching tool can actually be really effective, but you've got to have time in your schedule for that.

Lee Burgess: That's right, which is why you guys start early, make sure you have enough hours, so you can slow down and do that sort of very focused practice. I think with the practice exams, in the beginning, maybe you're not doing as much time-pressured practice because you are still learning, you're looking things up, that's fine. But I think you can also get way overly indulgent with this and start spending...

Alison Monahan: Definitely.

Lee Burgess: Three hours on a question, or a 30-minute MEE takes you two hours, and then you feel good about yourself because you wrote this amazing answer in two hours. You have 30 minutes on that test to do it. I mean, a two-hour answer doesn't really teach you anything. So I think that you want to start with saying, "Okay, well, if I have to look up the law, maybe I spend 45 minutes on a 30-minute question." And then as you get closer and closer to the exam, you're like, "Now I can go 40 minutes, and 35 minutes, and then 30 minutes", because you do have to kind of whittle it down to really get comfortable writing the best possible answer you can under timed conditions. So there is a balance between learning from the questions and then doing the actual practice.

Alison Monahan: Definitely. And I think this should all be in your schedule. There should be days in your schedule at a certain point where you commit to, "I am not doing this open book anymore".

Lee Burgess: Right.

Alison Monahan: There needs to be a day in your schedule where you commit to like, "Okay, after today, I only have 35 minutes on each MEE question. After today, a couple of weeks later, I only have 30 minutes." You have to be getting closer and closer to the reality of it, and I think putting that in upfront, because otherwise it's really easy just to slide into, "Oh, I just need another few days of open book. Oh, I just



need another few days before I can do it timed." And then you're the end and you're still not doing them.

- Lee Burgess: Yeah, I think that that's true. I also think sometimes people kind of cut corners and don't do half-day practice exams. I think this is a huge mistake, because fatigue is something that we really see. You have to have stamina to do this test; it's not an easy thing to do. And when we get scores, when people haven't done a lot of timed practice in these half-day chunks at least, you can see how at the end of each session, the scores will start to dip from fatigue. It's like you can see it on the score sheet. So, also building into your schedule, "When am I going to do a half-day practice of MBEs? When am I going to do a half-day practice of essays? When am I going to do the half-day practice of PTs?" Whatever your test looks like, building that out and making sure that you're comfortable with that. Also remembering that during that practice time, you often can't drink water, have water at your desk, you can't have snacks. You want to start recreating the conditions in which you take the test, because that can be another issue for folks. If you're really used to having water at your desk or eating nuts all day, and then you take that stuff away, it can make it a lot harder to focus.
- Alison Monahan: Definitely. And again, if you're getting accommodations, you need to make sure you're doing the test as you're actually going to be taking it.
- Lee Burgess: Right. So, what about kind of putting this all together? We haven't really talked about the performance test, so we should talk a little bit about that. We really think you need to at least be doing one performance test a week, because this is the easiest part of the test to pick up easy points, because you don't need to know any law. So please, please, please, don't ignore the poor PT. People do it, they get bad scores and they pull their writing score down and it's just heartbreaking. It makes me so sad.
- Alison Monahan: It's really frustrating when we scores where it's like, "But for your terrible performance on the performance test, you would have passed this test." And hmmm, that is just not ideal.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah.
- Alison Monahan: I think it can be challenging, but the more you do, the more of them you see, the more comfortable you get. So, yeah, I agree. At least one of those a week. When you're thinking about kind of structuring your subjects, if you think about repetition and seeing things again and again, you probably want to rotate through the subjects at least twice, maybe even three times, so that you're not



spending one week on Contracts, one week on Torts. A) you're probably going to run out of time on some of those at the end and not cover them at all, which is a disaster, so better that you spend two days on Contracts, two days on Torts, and one day on Wills and Trusts, and then at least you've seen them all. If you get to the end, it's not like, "Oh, I've never seen a Wills question, I've never studied this." That's a disaster.

Lee Burgess:

That's why we always talk about in our programs focusing on the heavily tested areas of the law, because you were mentioning earlier, Alison, how you can get so caught up in just trying to learn all these legal facts, all the law that could possibly be tested. Instead, if you come at it as this idea of minimum competency, which is, "I need to know all of the heavily law cold, and then I'm going to learn all of these nuances" – that is going to be a much better way to study. And then every time that you hit the subject, you're going to see more and more of that heavily tested law and you're going to have the bandwidth to pull in those nuances, which is great. That is better than, "I'm trying to learn absolutely everything I can about Torts in four hours." Well, that's just not practical and we're not asking you to do that. The thing is, that's not even what's going to be the difference maker between passing and failing the test.

Alison Monahan:

Right, exactly. It's like if you can't do a competent negligence analysis on the basics and a question on that comes up, you've got problems. But some tiny little detail about this, that or the other, you're probably not going to need that. So yeah, basically as you're rotating through the subjects, you can think about doing a full practice exam after each round of subjects. And I think that's going to show you where you're at, after maybe say that it's been three weeks of study, and then you've gone through each subject, you don't know everything, but then you do a test and you kind of see where you're at. And then you go back into it and you review the things that you didn't know. That type of cycle is going to help with the spaced repetitions, and just getting this stuff more in your brain.

Lee Burgess:

Yeah. So once you have got the study schedule, it is important that you're kind of making sure that you're staying on track and that you are tracking your progress, evaluating, and pivoting if necessary. So we have already talked about it, but we have to keep saying it because it's so important, that you have to be realistic about your time, needs, and commitments outside of studying for the bar, so you're not surprised. I often will hear from people who are working, it's like, "Well, I have this job and I had a trial come up." And it's like, "Didn't you know about the trial? Trials usually... You have a lot of warning. Why are you saying for the bar while you're in trial prep? That's practically impossible."



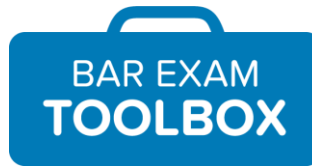
Alison Monahan: Right. Or when that came up, why did you not decide, "Okay, this exam is not happening given that I'm in trial, so I'm going to have to push it to the next one"? Just push it. It's much better to take it when you're ready.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, exactly. So you just want to be really realistic. And you can use the technology to keep yourself organized, to keep track of any study schedule that you're making, tools like [Trello](#), [Asana](#), whatever a to-do app that you like to use. You could use a Google calendar, you could use all sorts of different things, but I think the key is that you want to make sure you're tracking what you're getting done, but also holding yourself accountable. And sometimes you need other people outside of just technology to hold yourself accountable. So you may want to report, have a study buddy or friends or family that you kind of talk to about your progress. Sometimes this can be a lonely process if you're doing it by yourself, and it can be hard to stay on task.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. And this is where I would always do the [Circles method](#) to really force myself to see what I am actually getting done. We can link to a post about that, but one of my favorite time management techniques and things, and it really is all about accountability and it also can make you feel better because you can look back at all the stuff, everything you've checked off is basically a deposit in the bank of passing the bar. So you can go back and be like, "Okay, I have been working through this, I have been doing this." So, I think it can help with stress levels too. If you want to purchase templates, we have those, you can get them through our self-study programs, it is what we design them for. But you've got to focus on really what's working for you and what you know doesn't work for you. And I think if we go back to what we were talking about at the beginning, I just really encourage people not to just accept a template that someone else has done for them, and say, "Okay, this is what I need to do." Because nobody knows what you need to do as well as you do.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, I agree, and I think that's really the key. If you are in the process of working through a large commercial program, just take a beat and just ask yourself, "How is it going? Do I need to make any changes? Do I need to customize this more for me?" It's not like you can't pivot at any point in the process, but you want to pivot and make changes as early as possible, so you can get the benefit of that extra time that you're not going to be doing certain activities that aren't getting you closer to your goal, because then you can take that time and allocate it to active learning activities and then get closer to passing.

Alison Monahan: That should be our slogan.



Lee Burgess: I know.

Alison Monahan: Pivot to active.

Lee Burgess: Pivot to active. There we go, a new slogan. Alright, well, any final thoughts for bar studiers as they think about customizing their study schedules?

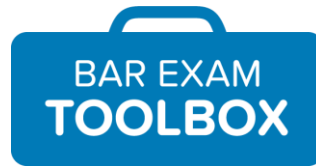
Alison Monahan: I would just say I would like to empower people to feel that they are able to do this and that they probably should do this, because I think there can be a lot of passive thoughts around just, "Oh, I'm not qualified to say what I should do to pass this test." And I just really don't think that's true. I think you're the best person who's qualified to say what you need to do, and you should feel empowered to do that.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, I think that's very true. I think one other thing to keep in mind is you need to take care of your whole person. So in that study schedule, make sure you're getting sleep, you are eating well, you are doing some sort of movement for your body, and you are connecting with your community and doing things with friends or family that make you feel good, because that stuff outside of your study schedule is also critical to making sure that you can show up to invest in the hours that you have.

Alison Monahan: Very true.

Lee Burgess: Alright, well, with that, we are out of time. I want to take a second to remind you to check out our [blog](#) 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 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 or alison@barexamtoolbox.com. Or you can always contact us via our website [contact form](#) at BarExamToolbox.com. Thanks for listening, good luck with your study schedules, and we'll talk soon!

RESOURCES:



[Practice of the Week \(POW\) MBE Workshop](#)

[Writing of the Week \(WOW\) Bar Essay Workshop](#)

[The Brainy Bar Bank: Streamlining Bar Study](#)

[AdaptiBar](#)

[Themis Bar Review](#)

[SmartBarPrep](#)

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[Lean Sheets](#)

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[Trello](#)

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[Podcast Episode 38: Planning Your Bar Exam Study Day](#)

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