



- Lee Burgess: Welcome to the Bar Exam Toolbox podcast. Today, we're chatting about the benefits of slow burn bar prep. Your Bar Exam Toolbox hosts are Alison Monahan and Lee Burgess, that's me. We are 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 [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 the advantages of doing a more slow burn style of bar prep. Well, most typically, students graduate from law school and prepare for the bar in a very focused way over 8 to 10 weeks. This is a super intense style of preparation, and frankly, it doesn't really work for everyone. Lee, what are some of the downsides here?
- Lee Burgess: Well, I think the biggest downside is just it's a lot of stress and anxiety.
- Alison Monahan: It is.
- Lee Burgess: It's a really challenging period of time. I think there're only going to be a handful of people that you talk to ever who are like, "I enjoyed bar prep!"
- Alison Monahan: I literally never heard anyone say that.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah. Most of us did not enjoy it at all.
- Alison Monahan: No.
- Lee Burgess: It's also hard because you have a ton of material to learn and also very little time to do it – usually only two to three days per topic. And this includes topics you didn't take in law school. So, think about an entire semester of material in two to three days, if you're lucky. That's a lot.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, definitely, particularly some of these classes, if you think about something like Evidence, it's like, how in the world could you possibly learn that? But I definitely remember sitting down with my schedule and being like, "Alright, Community Property. I have two days to get up to speed on this topic. Wills and Trust, same thing." It's just not a lot of time. And so, I think people try to study so many hours per day, and a lot of these schedules have so many hours a day



of study time they're expected, but you really honestly can't focus and learn for more than... For most people, probably I would say four-ish hours a day, where you have that really focused time. So, if your study schedule has you doing 12-hour days, you just have to be realistic that you're not actually going to be internalizing very much for some of that time.

Lee Burgess:

I think that's true. And when you think about the focus during the day, that's why we advocate that the balance between review and [memorization](#) and [practice](#) is so critical, because just straight up memorization, like reading an outline, internalizing information – yeah, there are only so many hours a day your brain can do that, for most of us. You might be able to do more active learning tasks outside of that core maybe four hours, where you're the most productive, but some of these study schedules are absolutely insane of what they think that you can accomplish during a day. And you can accomplish it, but you're going to be a mess and you're not going to be performing very well, which is also going to lead to more stress, which is going to make it harder to study. I mean, it's such a vicious cycle.

Alison Monahan:

It is a vicious cycle because you get burned out, which is super common, and people start having problems sleeping because they're so stressed out and because they're trying to put all this information into their brain all day long with no breaks. And then things like memorization often start way too late in this process. So suddenly you're weeks from the exam and you're supposed to start memorizing all this stuff, and then you focus only on the memorization, and then practice kind of falls by the wayside. And so, all of these things just kind of build on themselves and compound until people show up to the test and they're just like this ball of broken down stress anxiety, like, "Oh my God, I don't even know my name." And I think that's why a lot of people struggle.

Lee Burgess:

Yeah, I think that that's true. And if you are someone who's getting [extra time](#) for the exam due to maybe a learning difference, or there are a variety of reasons why individuals may qualify for extra time – it's interesting, but the bar prep companies don't really talk about that if you get extra time to level the playing field in an exam situation, that you probably need extra time to study competitively in the same situation. That's not a criticism of anyone who needs that extra time; that's just being practical. Your practice is going to take longer because you're doing it under different timed conditions, and your study schedule probably doesn't account for that. And so, you're doing a much larger amount of work in the same amount of time than the person who's taking the exam in the standard time next to you. And that is a huge challenge.



- Alison Monahan: Right, it just stands to reason. If you're getting 1.5 time to take the test, you're probably going to need 1.5 time to study for the test.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah, and you're going to have to practice 1.5 time on all of your practice questions. That's just going to take longer.
- Alison Monahan: Right. And I think the reason you're getting extra time is because things take longer for you to do reading and processing and that kind of stuff. So yeah, you just have to be kind of cognizant of that and not think like, "Oh, I'll just sign up for this eight-week crash course like everybody else, and then I'll be fine." It's like, the schedule's already insane. It's going to be doubly insane for you.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah. So now that we've talked about all the downsides, what do you think are some of the alternatives if people are concerned about this 8 to 10 week crunch?
- Alison Monahan: Well, I think you have to look at which category you're in. Are you a [first-time taker](#), are you someone who's [retaking the exam](#)? And one of the things that I think is often overlooked for first-time takers is that you can actually start doing a lot of bar prep in law school and kind of spread this out. It might be that your school's offering something that you can take to get you up to speed on certain things, but almost in a way, some of this is when we talk about what classes to take. If you take a lot of bar classes, you're actually spreading out essentially your prep. So that is actually a pretty good strategy for a slow burn approach, is to take more bar classes. Particularly, people should take Evidence, but some of these classes that you might be debating between is like, if you've spent a semester on it versus two days, that's going to be a lot less pressure, because you already know a lot of that material.
- Lee Burgess: Yes. I think a lot of students sometimes take some of those bar prep classes, but don't really try very hard because they are 3Ls. I mean, I taught some of these classes.
- Alison Monahan: You're talking about the ones that kind of specifically focused on the bar.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah, they might be on one piece of the exam or they might be a true class. It's almost a mini bar prep that you can get credit for. One, you should take that class if it's offered at your school, but second, you should try. I would have students not paying attention and I'm like, "I get it, you're a 3L, but you have this really big test coming soon and I am helping you prep for it right now. Just stay with me." It was only like a two-hour class. So, that is study time. If you pay attention, it counts as study time and you're just knocking it out early. It all



compounds on each other. It's like deposits in the bank – every time you do something to prepare for the exam, even if it's early on, it's like a deposit in the bank account of studying. And all of that will add up, even if it's just a few hours a week.

Alison Monahan: Right. For example, a lot of schools do classes on the performance test, and of course, I'm sure a lot of students blow that off and like, "Oh, this is so ridiculous. I can't believe I'm having to deal with this while I'm in school. I'll just deal with it in bar prep." It's like, why don't you just get up to speed on that part of the test beforehand and not worry about it when you're trying to memorize a bunch of other stuff?

Lee Burgess: Yeah. It's great to basically be able to knock that part of the exam out and not really have to worry about it when you're studying 13 or however many subjects you want to count, because there are all these different ways you can count the subjects, depending on your bar. It really is nice to say, "Wow, I already feel like I can ace the performance test, and now I don't have to worry about that while I'm trying to balance studying for all those other complicated issues."

Alison Monahan: Right. So, when you see a bunch of stuff come up on your schedule, you're like, "Oh, I can either take that time off or I can use that time for something else. Win!" But you only get that if you actually do the work and put in the effort and make a serious attempt to do this when it's coming early, which I think for whatever reason, people seem to get really annoyed about.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. Now, what about people who are retaking the exam, or are working and studying?

Alison Monahan: Yes.

Lee Burgess: Is starting early going to be a good idea for them?

Alison Monahan: Oh yes, I think it might be. The problem with having to retake the exam is oftentimes, people do have a job and they had expected to have passed and they didn't pass, so now bar study has to fit into the rest of your life. And oftentimes there's not all that much time left over already. So, I think you've got to do quite a bit longer timeframe here, and this is just a practical numbers game, if nothing else. But I think even if people can take time off – say you find out four to five months ahead of the next exam that you failed and you have a job, and you're like, "Oh, okay, I'm going to take off a month or two, so I'll just wait to study then" – I don't think that's a great plan. What do you think?



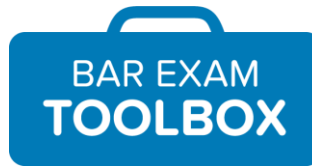
Lee Burgess: Yeah, I don't think it is. Also, because a lot of stuff can happen. I think that typically people who are working and studying or people who are retaking it, we talk to a lot of people who are also juggling family responsibilities. Maybe they're taking care of elder parents, maybe they're taking care of small children, maybe they're getting married, they have a lot of stuff happening in life. And if you say, "Oh, it'll be fine, because I can just count on studying later", and then life gets in the way. And I like a good insurance policy. I feel like, again, going back to this depositing in the bank, if you are constantly investing in this goal, then if something derails you, then you're not going to be sunk. And I don't want anyone to feel like one turn of events is going to sink their whole bar prep, because a lot of things can rely on passing the bar.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. I remember when I was taking California as my second bar, I was working at a firm and they gave me three weeks off and I'm like, "Oh yeah, I can probably manage in that time." What I did not plan on happening was that I was literally so sick the first week of the three weeks, that I could not get out of bed. So, I lost basically a third of the dedicated study time that I had planned on having. That was extremely stressful because you just don't know what's going to happen in that timeframe. So, I think spreading it out, giving yourself, even if you're studying 10 hours a week, a few weeks, a few months out, and then you're gradually ramping it up. It's almost like training for some sort of physical event – you're going to get more efficient and better as you go along, but you've got to start.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, I think that that's very true. Now, what are some practical tips for people who do want to study further out on this longer time period?

Alison Monahan: Well, one of the things I think we end up talking with people a lot, and I know you've talked to a lot of people, is really when in the day are you going to fit this in?

Lee Burgess: Yeah. I talk to a lot of people who tell me a lot of really lofty goals about when they're going to study. I hear all of it. I hear, "I get up at 4:30, and then I work out until 5:30, and then I shower and I'm studying for the bar by 6:00. And then it's 7:00, I'm feeding my kids." And I'm like, "That sounds really committed. Is that practical? Can you keep up with that schedule?" I'm sure there are people who can, but a lot of us cannot, and so that's a [burnout](#) danger. So, it's really important when you think about finding these hours to study, is, can you find them where you're actually functioning? I don't know, my daughter got up at 5:30 this morning, I don't know how people do anything at 5:30. I was like, "It's a good thing that I can just push buttons on my coffee maker" – that's all I have the capacity to do at 5:30. So, 5:30 is not a magical study time for me; I wouldn't



be able to get anything done. I cannot retain information at 5:30, that's just not going to happen.

Alison Monahan: No, I'm definitely not a morning person. In fact, if I get up before 9:00 or something, I'm just like, "Ah." I mean, I had to get up for something like 6:30 last week, and I was literally messed for the entire day, I was not functioning. So I think depending, maybe somebody could do it super early. The other time that I think is tempting, and also potentially problematic is people are like, "Well, I'm going to work a full day and then I'm going to start studying, and I'm going to do 6:00 to 11:00 every night." And that may be the time that you need to study, but I don't think studying 6:00 to 11:00 every single night after work is particularly realistic.

Lee Burgess: No, I don't think it is either. If you're going to do that for three to four months, which is how long people study part-time sometimes, it is a long time to keep those hours. It's just a really long time.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I just think you have to be realistic about burnout and also focus. And so, I would rather have somebody study three days a week consistently and take those other two days off and actually revitalize themselves and be a human being, than try to study five days a week, because I just don't think... Particularly if you're doing weekends, when are you taking a break, when is your brain relaxing? So, maybe you can schedule it so that your work days are a little bit lighter, three days a week, and then you study on top of that, and then you pack more meetings into those other two days. Just by being realistic about your ability to focus on material, I think you can probably study fewer hours, but get more done.

Lee Burgess: I think that's true. Another schedule I've seen for working and studying folks is sometimes you can work with your job to do 40 hours a week in four days, and then have one day a week that you just focus on bar prep. I've seen that for longer steady periods also be helpful, because you get your best brain to do your studying instead of those late night hours or the squeezed in hours at lunch, which typically aren't very effective. So, it depends on the job – some jobs, it's not a practical solution, but you never know. That's another benefit of thinking about this early, is you can kind of go to your job and see what they can do. I've actually heard of a lot of jobs being really flexible and helpful; you just have to give them warning so everybody can plan around it.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. And I think having that three-day weekend can be really helpful because that can give you a lot of focus time and also some time to take time off. Sometimes people's jobs will even let them study in the morning and come to



work in the afternoon, or vice versa. So I think people tend – not all jobs, but I think most bosses and jobs tend to understand. They're like, "Okay, this is important and we're going to have to figure out a way to work around this if you're actually going to be able to pass." So, just kind of thinking about when are you most likely to be fresh and how is this going to work, I think is great. I think you also, when you're scheduling this, you want to build in quite a lot of time to do catch up. We do this in our schedules – we give people time in the week where it's like a pretty large block, like a three, four-hour type of thing, to do catch up work. And it's like if you're caught up, then great, take time off, really do something else. But if you don't build in that time to catch up, I think studying over the longer timeframe can just make you feel like you're constantly falling behind.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, which isn't a good mental place to be.

Alison Monahan: No.

Lee Burgess: You just feel like a failure every day that you try and do this. It's just not going to work good.

Alison Monahan: It's not going to end well.

Lee Burgess: No. For first-time takers, if you're trying to pull out some time to do some studying during the semester, this is a great opportunity to look at your schedule and say, "Okay, I don't have class on Fridays. Maybe Friday morning is my bar prep time." Or you just kind of block it out, just like you would block out any other block of deep work. I think that's especially effective if you're going to work on, let's say, the performance test. The performance test takes 90 minutes to take, and then maybe you would need 90 minutes to review it and to study it.

Alison Monahan: Right.

Lee Burgess: So, let's say it's like a three-hour block, to really work the question. A three-hour block on a day you don't have class should be doable to find. That's not a 10-hour block; it's a three-hour block.

Alison Monahan: Basically, you can wake up, have breakfast, sit down, do the performance test and then review it. And then by lunch time, you're ready to go and do other things.



- Lee Burgess: Exactly. And I think that one of the mistakes people make is they're like, "Well, what could I do in three hours?" And you can actually do quite a bit in three hours, to start to chip away at this problem.
- Alison Monahan: Definitely. Three hours is a good chunk of time; you can get a lot done on a lot of different things. And I think when you're thinking about planning your schedule, it can also be helpful to think about rotating through topics and rotating through activities and things like that, so you're not constantly doing the same thing, which probably can get really boring. Because if you are studying over a longer timeframe, you can use the techniques of [spaced repetition](#) and things like that, where maybe you do a day or two on a certain topic and you use some practice and you review it. And then you switch and then you come back to it a few weeks later. That's actually going to help all of this stuff stay in your brain better.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah, exactly. So, you need this time. We have to touch things multiple times for it to move into our longer-term memory. And because of the amount of material that the bar tests, you can't all have it in your short-term memory. It doesn't work. I don't think most people's short-term memories have enough space. The file cabinets are full. Like, you just can't do it.
- Alison Monahan: Right. And as you're studying, particularly if it's a longer timeframe, you want to think about, "How am I going to capture some of this information for myself so that I can go back and review it quickly later?"
- Lee Burgess: True.
- Alison Monahan: So you want to have some sort of condensed outline or study aid or something that when you look at, you sit down in the morning, it's like, "Alright, today we're doing Contracts. What do I know about Contracts?" You look at this couple of pages and you're like, "Oh, right. Now I know a lot about Contracts. I can start to do something with that material."
- Lee Burgess: Yeah. One of the tricks I used to do when I would do studying in that spaced repetition way, where I would leave something for a while and come back to it – at the end of my study day, I would make a to-do list of the things that I wanted to pick up as soon as I sat down the next time. So maybe it was, go back over these few concepts that you're struggling with, or review this and re-do this practice question. It can really make it much more efficient when you sit down to see where you want to get things started, versus sitting down and being like, "Contracts. Yeah, what was I reviewing?" It just is a nice way to kind of give



yourself a bit of a kick to get started if you've already developed your plan the last time that you reviewed that material.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. You could even go ahead and pick out the next question you're going to work on, or at least the next topic you want to work on, and then you use something like the [Brainy Bar Bank](#) to be like, "Oh, right, I wanted to do a question on whatever, parol evidence." Ah, everyone's favorite. So that you're not using that executive brain power of like, "Oh, what was I going to work on?" It's just like, "Oh, right. I need to pull a parol evidence question and get started on that." Boom, done!

Lee Burgess: Exactly. And I had a boss who was incredibly good at doing things like this when I was in my early 20s. She was – well, she is – I'm sure she's still actually doing the same work we did back in the day together, but she would never leave for the day without all of her stuff organized on her desk and a very clear to-do list for the next day. It was her jam. And I've really started to see how starting your day without playing catchup is a very efficient way to move things along. So, it is a lesson that I've tried to take with me to other things, and I think studying is one of those things, where you can remind yourself exactly where you stopped or what you need to do next. I'm even doing that with... I make these photo albums of my family every year, and it's a long project. It takes a long time to compile all this stuff. I was working on it yesterday, and I have a note at the top that's like, "When you pick this up, this is the date that you stopped, this is the next thing you need to do." Because sometimes it'll be a week or so till I come back and I'm like, "What was I looking at? What was I pulling photos of?" I mean, you just can't remember that stuff; you have to write it down.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, definitely. I think finding some way to track where you are and how things are going and what you need to be working on – whatever works for you, whether it's piece of paper or notes or a Trello board. You can think of a lot of different approaches, but you want something to try to cut down on that executive overhead, particularly because you are doing this over a longer timeframe and you may be doing it along with other things. There is going to be more of the stop and start, and you want to make sure that you're using your time efficiently, which means not sitting there spinning your wheels for 20 minutes every day being like, "Wait, what was I supposed to be doing? I don't know." You want a clear schedule. And it can be malleable, but you want to have that in place and think of ways to make it easy to pick up where you left off.



Lee Burgess: Yeah. And I think set up kind of reflection points for yourself every week – probably every week, maybe every two weeks. Take a bit of time to say, "How's it going?"

Alison Monahan: Right, "Where am I?"

Lee Burgess: "Am I getting anything from what I'm doing? Did I not reach my goals this week?" You want to have these moments of reflection, sometimes you have to re-commit. It can be very hard to have these abstract projects that go on for a very long time. So, checking in with yourself, evaluating how it's going, being honest with yourself, and then pivoting as necessary will help you from wasting a lot of time down the road.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. And definitely if you have missed time that you'd scheduled, you've got to kind of triage on that: "Okay, what might be able to be dropped? What would I be able to do more efficiently?" Because I think there can be a mental game, obviously, here too, of like you need to not get in that category of like, "Oh, I fell behind." It's kind of like when you fall off your diet – you're suddenly like, "Oh my gosh, I had one hamburger, so now I'm going to have 14 hamburgers plus a bunch of ice cream." It's like, "Okay, yeah, for whatever reason something happened this week and I didn't do everything I wanted to do, but let's figure out how to get back on track." I think that sort of meta-level focus is something you're going to have to do throughout the process.

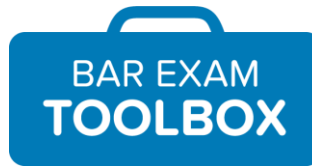
Lee Burgess: Another thing that I've been thinking about recently is making sure that you're developing the stamina to do this sort of studying as well. I think that in the beginning, studying some of this material can be really exhausting.

Alison Monahan: Oh, for sure.

Lee Burgess: Whether or not you're still in law school or outside of law school. But the more you do it, there'll be a point where you just have a much higher tolerance for it, because you've got stamina, you're not getting as fatigued. I just started playing tennis again, and it's taken five, six weeks for it not to hurt the next day. I was kind of like, "Am I just too old to pick up new things, because it really hurts?" But it's just you don't realize that you sometimes need quite a long time to build up the stamina to do hard things.

Alison Monahan: Oh, yeah.

Lee Burgess: And I think we don't really talk about that with bar prep. In the beginning, it's going to seem much harder to sit down and focus for long periods of time. But if



you think about how the exam is laid out, you have to be able to start focusing in three-hour blocks or longer, if you get extended time. And the easiest way to get better at that is to practice it. So, even in this slow burn prep, you can do a slower increase on how long you study and with what focus. But you do need to give yourself enough time to build up that stamina. It's going to be easier as you get closer to the test.

Alison Monahan: Definitely. Well, before we wrap up, let's talk about what are some things that you can do that are good things to do early. We've already talked about the performance test – there's nothing to memorize for that. The more of them you see of different types, probably the less likely you are to get freaked out if there's something weird that shows up. So I think that's always a great option for starting early.

Lee Burgess: And I want to add to that though, that I think this is one place that our [Writing of the Week program](#) can be very helpful for folks who want to start studying for the performance test but aren't sure where to start, because we walk you through videos that talk about all the different types of performance tests that you're going to see and help you do some facilitative practice. It can be a nice way to start if you're just not sure where to start.

Alison Monahan: True, yeah. It's more effective than just picking up a test and doing it.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. So, if you're saying, "Well, that's great, Lee and Alison. I don't know where to start" – that's somewhere you can look at. We can link to that in the show notes.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, very simple. Very good idea. The other place I think starting early is never going to hurt you is with the MBE, because so much of that is just seeing the questions and the repetition of the questions, that really just the earlier you start and the more you do, probably the better off you're going to be. And I think people have sometimes an unrealistic idea of, people who failed might come and be like, "I did so many MBE questions. I did a thousand questions." It's like, "That's not enough."

Lee Burgess: Right, I know. That's so true. It sounds like a lot, and we don't want to discredit that that's a lot of questions.

Alison Monahan: But that's like half of what you need to be doing, basically, based on the data.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, it takes a lot of time to do all of that. Most people don't also recognize that a lot of the MBE providers that do MBE only prep, give you access to their



materials pretty much as soon as the bar ends. So, let's say you're going to sit for the July exam, that they usually turn on your access March 1st, around March 1st. But most people, one, don't know that, or two, don't sign up that early. But that means you have all of March, all of April, and a chunk of May before you get going on your full bar prep. That's three months. You don't even have to do that many questions each week to have that be a huge deposit in that study bank account.

Alison Monahan: And if you did even 10 questions a day, which is not that big of a deal, that would be a lot of questions that you had done. You might have already done a thousand by that point.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, 50 questions a week. Really, there are a lot of options.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, so I think that's a great place to start. Before we wrap up, did you see any pitfalls to this slow burn approach?

Lee Burgess: Well, you certainly need a degree of intensity to get things done and be able to manage your own workload, because this does take an awful lot of focus. So that is something that you want to kind of keep on top of. You've got to be a self-starter and you have to manage this process.

Alison Monahan: Right. And I think sometimes people think, "Oh, I'll start early. I'll do one hour of MBE questions at lunch when I'm working for a while." And that's not nothing, but at the same time, I think you need some bigger chunks to actually get stuff done. So, if you're only doing five hours a week over a year, I think that's probably less effective than doing maybe 10 hours a week, even over six months or something like that.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, I think that that's true.

Alison Monahan: I think there's a limit, basically, beyond which doing it more is probably not going to help.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. How long do you want the bar to be a huge part of your life? It's just really hard.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, sometimes people are like, "Oh, I'm planning for two years out." And it's like, "Really? I don't know. That seems like a very long time to study for one exam."



- Lee Burgess: It does, it does, yeah. So, you definitely want to be conscious of what you're biting off and make sure that it's not going to lead to its own type of burnout. You don't want the slow burn to lead to burnout.
- Alison Monahan: Exactly. And there may be exceptions, like someone who's [foreign-trained lawyers](#), never seen any of this stuff before – okay, that's going to take more time. But for somebody who has a JD, if they're going to study for two years for some reason, I just feel like that's probably dragging this out longer than it needs to happen.
- Lee Burgess: I think so too. I also think that it's easy to put things off later because you have so much time, so that's just always a huge danger. You're saying, "I don't need to do it today because I could do it tomorrow. I could do it next week. I have 12 weeks. There's so much time." But to make this plan really work for you, you have to be doing those deposits, and if you just aren't doing them, that's going to be a huge problem.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah. I think it's the consistency that we're looking for here, and so every day that you blow off doing anything is just one day that you're not getting any closer to this goal.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah, I 100% agree. Well, we're wrapping up our time together. What are your final thoughts on this topic, Alison?
- Alison Monahan: Well, I think you just want to be thoughtful about what's probably going to work best for you and also your time availability, and realize that there are advantages of doing this kind of more as a marathon than a sprint. And even if it's kind of the less standard way to go about it, I think there are a lot of argument in favor.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah. I really think that it's a lost opportunity to not do a little bit of prep. I mean, there're going to be classes you didn't take... There're just so many options for things that you can do to just lighten your load over the summer or over the winter, whenever you're doing this prep. And I think that starting early is almost like an insurance policy too, if something complicated happens in your life. We've had students have all sorts of crazy stuff happen, right?
- Alison Monahan: Oh, yeah.
- Lee Burgess: I've had appendicitis, car accidents, and moving and this and that, and family emergencies. We can't even come up with... The list is so long, that the more



you do early, the less likely you are to be derailed by something kind of wild that could happen in your life too.

Alison Monahan: And in addition to being sick in bed, the house next to me also burned down and almost burned down my house. These were unpredictable things, but I probably could have started studying earlier.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, but one other thing we should mention is that people talk a lot about... People as in people who chat about the bar exam, which is us, basically. We talk to you about the bar.

Alison Monahan: It's a very small set of the world.

Lee Burgess: It's a very, very small set. And our team. But we talk about the bars from 2020 when they delayed the bar exam, and that pass rates really went up, especially at a lot of schools who had struggled with their pass rates in the past. And then pass rates went back down after that. And I think for a lot of people, they ended up being forced into a slow burn approach, because they kept changing the date of the exam, which was torturous in its own way, so I'm definitely not advocating that the bar do that again. It was unprecedented times. But taking an October exam instead of a July exam made a huge difference for a lot of people. And so, I think that's an important lesson that people should consider, that it was much easier for many people to take the bar because they studied for a longer period of time, so maybe you should try to it too.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. And the other thing on that is, if you're studying for a longer period of time and things aren't going well, you actually have more time to get help, because we had people coming to us like in September and things like that, where they're like, "I don't think this is going well." And we're like, "Great, you still have some time. We can help you with that."

Lee Burgess: Yeah. Alright, well, with that, I think we're out of time. I want to take a second to remind you to check out our [blog](https://www.BarExamToolbox.com/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 help you study for the UBE or California bar exam. And hey, those are customized, you can start them any time. You can do early bar prep with us. Happens all the time. 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 are 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 or 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!

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