

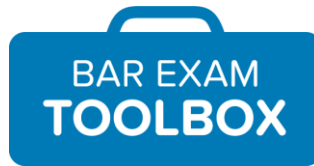


Lee Burgess: Welcome to the Bar Exam Toolbox podcast. Today, we're discussing the importance of variety in your bar exam study routine. Your Bar Exam Toolbox hosts are Alison Monahan and Lee Burgess, that's me. We're here to demystify the bar exam experience, so you can study effectively, stay sane, 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.

Lee Burgess: Welcome back! Developing a good study routine is crucial to passing the bar exam. Routine, in general, is critical to our success, but we should not overlook the importance of creativity within that routine. When it comes to studying for the bar exam, you are going to be challenged in a different way than in law school. The sheer amount of information is going to be different than studying for finals, but also your work product is going to look different as well. Your creative changes don't need to be huge. Just a minor tweak here or there, or [adding a new habit](#) into your overall routine, can be a game-changer when it comes to exam day. Therefore, it is important that while you dive into studying, you learn how to study well for your specific personality, and that includes adding variety to your study routine.

Lee Burgess: It is well proven diversifying your study routine not only improves your brain health, but can increase your understanding, thereby putting you in a better position to pass the bar exam. There may be some subjects that are easier to learn (or re-learn) than others, but what works for one topic may not work for another. For example, it may be easy for you to retain your bar exam study programs' video lectures about Criminal Law and Criminal Procedure, but much more difficult to wrap your brain around the Property Law videos. That's okay! A big part of being successful on the bar exam is knowing what study habits work well for you. As a side note, Bar Exam Toolbox podcast has a few podcasts dedicated to each type of learning style, which is crucial in knowing what type of learner you are. If you didn't figure it out in law school, it's not too late! Studying for the bar exam is a perfect time to learn what kind of student you are and how you best receive information.

Lee Burgess: We know that variety in life engages different parts of your brain, and studying for the bar exam is no different. While it's likely you'll have a set schedule with your bar exam study program, there is going to be room to tailor it to your specific needs and desires. If you end up doing the same thing every single day,



you will likely burn out and not be able to retain as much in the end. Think about it – you wouldn't go to the gym every day and do the same exact workout and expect full body results. You have to vary your exercise routine to work out all of your muscles. The same concept applies to your brain. You cannot be as successful as possible by sitting in the same room and reading outlines for three months and expect to do well on the bar exam. Thus, it is critical that you get creative with your study habits.

Lee Burgess: Creativity helps synthesize information in a different way than regular studying. It also is motivating and meaningful – adding creativity to your study routine will help you get the maximum amount of bar exam information into your brain as much as possible. Some law schools are learning how important this is and are adding various creative elements to classrooms – like role playing, group work, and creative assignments that aren't just answering essays and multiple choice. Elementary schools have taken this lesson to heart – just because you're not a kid doesn't mean you won't benefit from creativity while learning! I was just reading Adam Grant's newest book, [Think Again](#), and he discusses the importance of active learning in the classroom.

Lee Burgess: So, what kind of creativity, or active learning, are we talking about? Let's dive in. First, a great way to incorporate creativity into your routine is to add movement. Listening to a topic-specific podcast while on a walk, or at the gym, or while doing yoga, is a great way to get your brain to connect the dots in a new way. Even a 10-minute walk while listening to a podcast or going over a handful of flashcards can increase your understanding of difficult topics. Second, getting outside is huge. If you can get fresh air while studying, it's likely your focus will improve. Sitting in the backyard or at a park for an hour while reviewing your notes or going through flashcards is a game changer. Something that became popular during the pandemic is using a flat treadmill at a standing desk during your workday. Adding a sit-stand desk or a flat treadmill to your home office space is a great way to add variety to your overall routine – then you have three different physical options to choose from and your brain will stay more engaged.

Lee Burgess: Another great way to get creative with your routine is to incorporate friends and family. It is well established that when you teach a subject to another person, your brain understands that topic more deeply than if you just received the information through a lecture or reading it. Ask a friend to sit down with you for 30 minutes and pick a topic that you can give them a mini lecture on. Pro tip: Ask your friend to ask you questions about the subject you're teaching them. Chances are they will ask you something you haven't thought of, or you'll be able to more confidently understand the topic once you tell them the answer.



Even better if your friend doesn't know much about the law – they may have interesting questions! Don't feel up to lecturing to a friend? How about your dog or cat? Or even a stuffed animal. It really doesn't matter who you teach to; just teach.

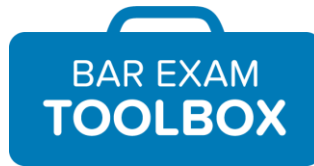
Lee Burgess: A great feature of many bar exam programs is that they offer mobile apps. This can come in great use for you when you inevitably have to step away from your desk to engage with life's activities. Standing in line, waiting at the doctor's office, or even just 10 minutes before bed on your app can chip away at those topics that need reinforcing. However, don't over-value this study time. Studying without focus doesn't necessarily get you the same results as dedicated study time at a quality location. Or think about using the [spaced repetition website](#) we have talked about on this podcast, and can link to in our show notes. Ten minutes of studying can make a big difference over time.

Lee Burgess: You've probably heard a lot about the importance of self-care during the bar exam, and you can add creative study habits in your self-care time too. Think about a way you can do something that takes care of your nervous system (like a hot bath), while listening to a five- or 10-minute podcast about a topic you want to refresh in your brain. Closing your eyes and relaxing your body while you engage with material just through listening can do wonders for your exam day.

Lee Burgess: There is a board game called [Passing the Bar](#), which is actually full of substantive questions. A student I know of made a commitment to play one round of the board game each day, just to keep his mind fresh on the topics. This is a great example of adding creativity and community to your study routine. Play the board game with your family or significant other and have fun while studying! And you don't need this board game to play. Pick any game in your closet and change the rules, so whenever you land on a certain space, you have to answer a certain question from a specific topic. You'd be surprised how this small change can help you remember information you've been struggling with – and it's a great way to incorporate friends or family into your study routine.

Lee Burgess: Another student I know had her husband ask her flashcard questions while she worked in the yard and cleaned the house – anything to engage your mind and body in a different way than just sitting at a desk and staring at a computer screen.

Lee Burgess: Maybe being creative for you is working at different workspaces throughout the week. A simple change of scenery, like working at your dining room table instead of your, office can help your brain recognize new pieces of information



and stay fresh. Staying in the same room, day after day, with the same lighting, smells, sounds, can cause you to feel duller. Maybe there's a coffee shop or an office-share you can go to for a few hours once a week to review your outlines or listen to a lecture. Being in a new environment will stimulate your brain in a way that won't happen if you stay in the same space the entire three months you're studying.

Lee Burgess: This can also be handy for those of you who are working while studying for the bar exam. Not everyone has the luxury of taking three months off to study for the exam, so it's even more crucial that you learn creative ways to incorporate studying into your routine. Thankfully, the Bar Exam Toolbox has lots of subject-specific podcasts for you to listen to on your commute to work, or on your lunch break. Students in the past who have had to work while studying for the bar exam know the importance of adding creativity to their bar exam study routine. You'd be surprised how a variety of listening, teaching, reading, and using kinesthetic techniques to study will greatly improve your understanding of the material.

Lee Burgess: Now, don't be afraid to try something new. Creative strategies can include something silly, like rewriting the lyrics to your favorite song to help you remember the elements for a specific tort. There is lots of research out there that tells us our brains memorize music more easily than just straight up information, so this could be a game changer for you. Or if drawing is your thing, illustrating your flashcards to help you remember them the day of can help too. Who knows – maybe drawing out some of the more difficult concepts can be a stress reliever too!

Lee Burgess: A student I know bought huge Post-it Notes and wrote out her attack plans on each one of them and stuck them to the wall in another room. Randomly, throughout the day, she would go into the other room and read the attack plans out loud, or quiz herself. Just the simple act of going into another room and reading a huge wall of attack sheets helps the student visualize the information for the day of the exam.

Lee Burgess: Bar exam season is the time to study smarter, not harder. It may be the last time you really have to study this hard for a big exam – let's hope – and it's a pain to have to re-do. So, we encourage you to push yourself to your creative limits. Creativity will also add meaning to your day and help motivate you to do well every day. Studying may even be something you look forward to because you know you're going to be using different parts of your brain. And don't forget, what works for you in the beginning may not work the entire season of bar studying. Part of being creative is also being flexible – let yourself be okay



with changing up the routine a month into studying. The closer you get to the exam, the more content there will be to consume, and the more pressure there is on you to do your best. If something doesn't work for you anymore, let it go and find something else.

Lee Burgess: Of course, this podcast does not include the importance of taking breaks, and even a day or two off from studying, which we know is equally as important for your success as studying is. It is simply emphasizing how the most successful students know the value of creativity and are willing to challenge themselves to study in new or different ways. Being willing and able to engage your whole brain while studying will set you up for success when exam day comes.

Lee Burgess: Not all of these study methods will work for everyone, but finding one or two creative ways to bring variety to your routine can increase your understanding and give you a better chance at passing the bar. Knowing yourself and what works for you is a big part of success on the bar exam. Don't be afraid to stop a certain habit if it's not working for you. Dig deep and challenge yourself to study in new ways that help you learn and recall the information. Hopefully, this will be a short season of your life, and you'll be glad you gave it your all!

Lee Burgess: And with that, we are out of 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 have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to reach out to Lee 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!

RESOURCES:

[Private Bar Exam Tutoring](#)

[SeRious](#)

[Think Again, by Adam Grant](#)

[Passing the Bar Board Game](#)

[Podcast Episode 15: How to Study for the Bar If You're an Auditory Learner](#)

[Podcast Episode 16: How to Study for the Bar Exam as a Visual Learner](#)

[Podcast Episode 17: How to Study for the Bar If You're a Kinesthetic Learner](#)

[Podcast Episode 51: Making the Most of Your Bar Exam Practice](#)

[Podcast Episode 191: Quick Tips – Using Spaced Repetition to Memorize](#)



[Podcast Episode 211: Building New Habits While Studying for the Bar Exam](#)
[Learning Styles and the Bar Exam](#)
[Creative Strategies to Help You Study for the Bar](#)