

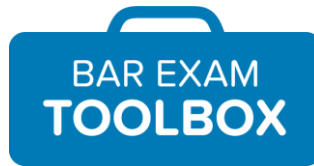
Lee Burgess: Welcome back to the Bar Exam Toolbox podcast. As part of our "Quick Tips" series, today we're embarking on a journey filled with insights, strategies, and support for those tackling the bar exam with ADHD. Your Bar Exam Toolbox hosts are Alison Monahan and Lee Burgess, that's me. We're here 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! This is Lee from the Bar Exam Toolbox. If you've recently received an ADHD diagnosis as an adult, you might be feeling daunted by the prospect of conquering the intense bar exam prep process, the sheer volume of material, the intense focus required, and the strict time constraints can seem overwhelming. But fear not, because with the right game plan and a strong support network, you can not only navigate this challenge, but also excel. It's all about understanding how your ADHD brain operates and tailoring your study strategies accordingly.

Lee Burgess: Before we dive in, keep in mind that this is not medical or therapeutic advice. If you have an ADHD diagnosis or suspect that you may have it, please seek the appropriate medical care, if needed. A good therapist or doctor can tailor specific strategies to help you thrive in all areas of life, not just the bar exam.

Lee Burgess: And now back to our topic. First, if you've been diagnosed with ADHD as an adult, it's essential to take time to research and reflect on what this means for you. Don't view it as a detriment; instead, see it as a different cognitive processing style – one that comes with a unique set of strengths. People with ADHD often exhibit remarkable creativity, allowing them to approach problems from unconventional angles and find innovative solutions. They possess the ability to hyper focus intensely on tasks they find engaging, making them capable of deep dives into complex subjects. Their out-of-the-box thinking can lead to breakthrough insights and creative solutions. Additionally, individuals with ADHD tend to have high energy levels, enabling them to persevere through challenging study sessions. They are often highly adaptable to dynamic environments, which can be a valuable trait in high pressure exam situations.

Lee Burgess: Moreover, many people with ADHD have heightened intuition and empathy, which can enhance their ability to connect with others and understand complex



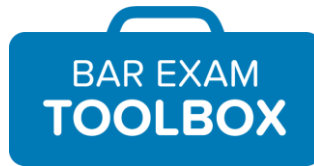
legal issues. They also have a genuine passion for learning and a proven track record of overcoming challenges, showcasing their resilience. Embracing these strengths can empower you to approach bar exam preparation with confidence and a positive mindset.

Lee Burgess: That said, let's be honest about the very real challenges that ADHD can present in high pressure academic settings like the bar exam. Individuals with ADHD often face substantial difficulties when it comes to sustaining extended focus and concentration during the rigorous bar exam preparation process. Distractions become a constant battle, and even the best intentions can be derailed by a passing thought or a simple noise. The bar exam, with its massive volume of study material, strict time constraints, and complex questions, can intensify these challenges. It demands not only comprehensive knowledge, but also the ability to maintain unwavering focus for extended periods. For someone with ADHD, the exam's demands can feel magnified, making tailored strategies and support critical for success.

Lee Burgess: Time management can be a significant hurdle. People with ADHD may chronically underestimate how long tasks will take, leading to frequent last-minute rushes. Procrastination and forgetfulness can be constant companions, making it easy to put off assignments or misplace study materials. So, accepting that bar prep will require tailored strategies is crucial. A one-size-fits-all approach may not be optimal. Let's delve into specific methods, but before we do, let's discuss creating a supportive environment.

Lee Burgess: Creating an optimal environment is the foundation of your success. Start by building a rock-solid daily routine and a robust support network. Consistency, organization, and accountability will become your most valuable assets. Establish a consistent daily routine with designated study blocks to provide stability. Determine your peak concentration hours and reserve them for the most demanding review sessions, like memorization and practice questions. Don't forget to schedule breaks to recharge your mental batteries. Consistency is key, and working with your peak concentration hours will help you maintain the necessary stamina required to get through long tedious lists. Some days will demand of you multiple essays. Others will require you to answer up to 200 multiple choice questions on narrow areas of the law. You will quickly discover which of these tasks are the most fatiguing for you. Take note of this and do your best to tailor your study schedule to your likely energy levels.

Lee Burgess: Use organizational tools like calendars, reminder apps, and checklists to plan tasks, set deadlines, and stay on track. Break larger goals into smaller manageable chunks to prevent feeling overwhelmed. Set reminders leading up



deadlines to combat procrastination. It can be helpful to break things down into the smallest tasks, and being able to check off small tasks can help you build momentum by increasing your confidence. Remember, the bar exam is not one big assignment; it is hundreds of very small ones.

Lee Burgess: Optimize your physical study environment to minimize distractions. Eliminate visual clutter and reduce distracting noise. Experiment with seating options, lighting, and ambient sounds to discover what fuels your focus best. Some find nature sounds or ambient music help drown out distractions. Get this established well before you plan to start studying. It is all too easy to fall into a trap of tweaking things around your living quarters until they are just so, at the expense of spending time focusing on the real work.

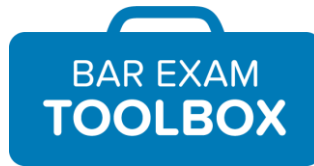
Lee Burgess: Form a support network of friends, family, and study partners who understand your neurodivergent needs. Clearly communicate your needs, whether it's accountability for staying on schedule or moral support. Establish systems to prevent isolation and promote collaboration, stay in touch with these people and let them know how you are doing. Consider working with a tutor or an ADHD coach who can help devise personalized strategies and keep you on track. They can motivate you through challenges and provide an objective resource for strengthening your weaknesses.

Lee Burgess: Since concentration spans may be short, avoid passive reading or listening for long periods. Instead, engage actively with the material, using multisensory techniques. Use visual tools like color coding, charts, graphs, and annotations to reinforce retention. Turn concepts into physical movements or hands-on applications. Teaching topics out loud to others can simplify and solidify your knowledge.

Lee Burgess: Leverage technology tools as well. Apps like [Forest](#) or [Freedom](#) can block distracting websites and apps to help maintain focus during study sessions. Flashcard apps like [Anki](#) allow you to review content frequently and track your progress.

Lee Burgess: Break larger tasks down into smaller steps to prevent procrastination. Set alarms to switch topics or take breaks. Utilize the [Pomodoro method](#) with short, focused time intervals followed by brief rests. Listen to focus-boosting audio like binaural beats or natural sounds. Ambient noise such as rain or crackling fires can prevent distractions and enhance focus.

Lee Burgess: Even with the best of intentions, sustaining focus with ADHD can be challenging. It's essential to be proactive about maintaining alertness and channeling excess



energy productively. Schedule intense focus sessions during your peak concentration hours, when you're feeling refreshed. Take regular movement and eye breaks every 20 to 30 minutes to recharge mentally. Stretching or gazing out a window can boost blood flow and clear the mind. Snack strategically to balance energy levels, avoiding excessive carbs and sugars that lead to crashes. Stay hydrated and opt for healthy proteins and complex carbs for lasting fuel.

Lee Burgess: When you feel the mental fatigue setting in, take a guided meditation or breathing break to reset your focus. Then, resume studying recharged. Yoga poses can also boost circulation and clear the mind.

Lee Burgess: Some people with ADHD use fidget toys like spinners or modeling clay to occupy restless hands during long study hours. Also consider using a standing desk or a stability ball to allow for subtle movement and maintain alertness.

Lee Burgess: Balancing bar prep and self-care is crucial for both performance and mental health. Don't let these aspects fall by the wayside. Prioritize consistent sleep of seven to nine hours nightly to support peak cognitive function. Lack of sleep can exacerbate ADHD related challenges like distractibility, so establish a consistent bedtime and limit electronics before sleep. Nourish your body with a balanced diet, rich in proteins, complex carbs, vegetables, and healthy fats. Stay hydrated and avoid heavily processed foods and excess sugar, as they can cause energy crashes.

Lee Burgess: Make time for hobbies, socializing, and fun outlets to relieve stress. Spend time outdoors, engage in regular exercise, or take yoga classes to boost your mind. Consider journaling to promote mindfulness and self-reflection.

Lee Burgess: Prepping for the bar exam with ADHD may present unique challenges, but it is undoubtedly achievable by implementing personalized planning strategies. Utilizing tailored study methods, employing focus-enhancing tools, and prioritizing self-care, you have the power to excel on the bar exam. Believe in yourself and embrace this journey of growth. You've got this!

Lee Burgess: It is also incredibly important to file for accommodations, if needed, as part of your bar exam preparation. Remember, accommodations level the playing field, and you should not feel bad or discouraged by needing to apply for them. But the process for filing can be lengthy, and even at times frustrating. Make sure that you work on accommodations as soon as possible in your given jurisdiction. I'm going to link to some other podcasts on [accommodations](#) that you might find helpful.



Lee Burgess: If you have any questions about studying for the bar exam, please feel free to reach out to us via the Bar Exam Toolbox website. And always remember, you have the skills and abilities to conquer the bar exam, even with ADHD. Stay focused, stay motivated, and you'll achieve your goals.

Lee Burgess: And with that, we are out of time! 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 and rating on your favorite listening app. We'd really appreciate it. And be sure to subscribe so you don't miss anything. If you're still in law school, you might also like to check out our popular [Law School Toolbox podcast](#) as well. If you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to reach out to myself or Alison at [lee@barexamtoolbox.com](mailto:lee@barexamtoolbox.com) or [alison@barexamtoolbox.com](mailto:alison@barexamtoolbox.com). Or you can always contact us via our website [contact form](#) at BarExamToolbox.com. Thanks for listening, and we'll talk soon!

#### **RESOURCES:**

[Private Bar Exam Tutoring](#)

[Forest app](#)

[Freedom app](#)

[Anki app](#)

[Pomodoro Technique](#)

[Podcast Episode 60: Applying for Accommodations on the Bar Exam \(w/Elizabeth Knox\)](#)

[Bar Study Tips for Students with ADHD](#)

[Navigating the Bar Exam with ADHD: Embracing Neurodivergence for Success](#)

[Technology, Structure, and Community Help You Stay Focused During Bar Prep](#)