

Preparing to Prepare:

Creating An Effective Checklist System

Checklists are an easy way to stay organized and reduce stress and anxiety. Consider using the checklists below as a starting point for your own:



[One Month Before Your Bar Review Begins](#)

[First 8 Weeks of Your Bar Review Period](#)

[Last Two Weeks of Your Bar Review Period](#)

[During the Bar Exam](#)

[After the Bar Exam](#)

One Month Before Your Bar Review Starts

- ✓ Develop a written bar prep schedule for each month/week/day. Make sure to include:
 - Time to read your bar review outlines
 - Time to attend your bar review classes
 - Time to master the substantive law
 - Time to practice test questions
 - Goal of 34 MBE Questions each day (one hour to take the practice questions, one hour to review answers and explanations)
 - Goal of 2 MEEs each week
 - Goal of 1 MPT each week
 - ** Note, the concurrent program will include time on Monday for 34 MBE, time on Tuesday for 2 MEEs, and time on Wednesday for 1 MPT
 - Time for sleep, exercise, and relaxation

- ✓ Talk to the people who are important to you – spouse/significant other, children, parents, etc. – and explain to them the importance of passing the bar exam and the study time needed to do so.

*** I will provide some suggestions/pointers on this in a couple of weeks.

- ✓ Do at least one thing you enjoy and that you won't have time to do while you're studying for the bar exam.
- ✓ **Remind yourself why you believe you WILL pass the bar exam and why you WA NT to pass the bar exam.**
- ✓ Take care of as many day-to-day tasks as possible before you start your bar prep schedule – i.e. go to the doctor for a check-up or to treat a specific problem you're having, get an oil change/routine maintenance on your vehicle, shop for your spouse's birthday or anniversary gift if it falls in Jan or Feb, etc.
- ✓ Make logistical arrangements for the actual bar exam – i.e. reserve a hotel room, arrange for transportation, etc.
- ✓ Ensure your technology is good to go. Need maintenance or virus software for your computer? Now's the time. If you need a new laptop, make sure you purchase it and allow enough time to become familiar with it.
- ✓ Plan something to relax/celebrate after the bar exam experience is over.

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First 8 Weeks of Your Bar Review Period

- ✓ Get into a routine right away, including attending class, studying outlines, reviewing material covered in class for reinforcement and doing practice test questions. Remember, shoot for:
 - 34 MBE Questions each day (one hour to take the practice questions, one hour to review answers and explanations)
 - 2 MEEs each week
 - 1 MPT each week
- ✓ Take a scheduled ten-minute break every hour (or whatever makes sense for you – the point is, take a break) and plan for a period of relaxation at the end of every day and every week.
- ✓ **Remind yourself why you believe you WILL pass the bar exam and why you WANT to pass the bar exam.**
- ✓ Identify areas of weakness, write down those areas where you need to focus more time and energy, and ask for help if you need it.
- ✓ Monitor your personal wellness and affairs and promptly address anything that looks like a problem. For example, are you coming down with a cold? Make sure you have sufficient meds on tap and make a doctor's appointment for next week in case it doesn't get better. Is your car making a funny noise? Get it checked out so you don't have to deal with a breakdown the week before the bar. Is your laptop freezing up? Have our IT folks take a look so you don't have a total crash the week before the bar or during the bar exam.
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Last Two Weeks of Your Bar Review Period

- ✓ Confirm that you know where your exam will be administered, how you'll get there, and where you'll part. Have some plans for how you'll get to the testing site if there's ice/snow.
- ✓ Confirm your hotel reservations.
- ✓ Pack what you'll need to take with you to the bar exam (e.g. exam admission ticket, photo ID, pens, pencils, tissues, ear plugs).
- ✓ Plan what you'll eat (go out to lunch, pack a lunch, eat lunch provided by the Bowen Office of Student Affairs if available.)
- ✓ Plan to take layers of clothing so you can adjust if the exam room temperature is uncomfortable.
- ✓ Test your memory of every subject as often as possible and re-study areas of law you've struggled with or cannot recall. Ask for help if you need it!
- ✓ Do mixed-subject MBE questions each day.
- ✓ Take care of yourself so you feel fresh for the bar exam. Continue to take a ten minute break each hour, and some time to decompress at the end of each day and week. Try to get some exercise each day – even if it's just a walk around the block (or MacArthur Park).
- ✓ Start getting on a good sleep routine so you're used to going to bed and waking up at a time that will allow adequate rest for the night before the bar exam and will ensure you don't oversleep.
- ✓ Do your studying primarily during the same hours you'll be taking the exam so you'll feel comfortable on the exam days.
- ✓ Plan how you'll manage your stress on your exam days (I'll provide more info for this in the next couple weeks).
- ✓ Plan how you'll celebrate the end of your hard work after the bar exam is over.
- ✓ **Remind yourself why you believe you WILL pass the bar exam and why you WANT to pass the bar exam.**
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During the Bar Exam

- ✓ Get plenty of sleep the night before each day of the bar exam.
- ✓ Arrive early, but be prepared to wait – bring with you short outlines or refreshers in case you have extra time before the exam begins.
- ✓ Be smart about talking to other students about the exam or comparing notes. If it will cause you additional stress, don't do it! Sharing the common experience and your feelings may make you feel better, but you also risk feeding off each other's nerves or getting alarmed if your notes/understanding differs from another student's and you started to doubt yourself.
- ✓ Stay focused, use stress management strategies (again, I'll give you some suggestions on this in the next few weeks), and remain confident and optimistic.
- ✓ Execute your plan (hopefully developed before the day of the bar exam) for what you will do if you get "stuck" or get writer's block.
- ✓ Listen to and follow the exam administrators' instructions.
- ✓ Use your time wisely – as you've planned and prepared to do.
- ✓ Force yourself to forget each question after you write each answer. Treat each question, as well as each day, as an opportunity to do well.
- ✓ **Remind yourself why you believe you WILL pass the bar exam and why you WANT to pass the bar exam.**
- ✓ Use your lunch time to refresh/reset. After each day, don't spend time ruminating on what occurred during that day. Focus on getting ready for the next day.
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After the Bar Exam

- ✓ Don't be surprised if you feel a little weird or let down after the bar exam is over. Give yourself a chance to reflect on the experience (don't dwell on it, but reflect) before jumping back into the mix.
- ✓ Spend quality time with the important folks you weren't able to prioritize during the exam prep period.
- ✓ Take action on the plans you made to relax and celebrate!