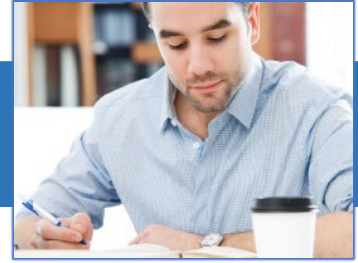


# Mike Holt's Electrical Exam Study Tips



Preparing for your electrical exam means more than just knowing Code, calculations, and electrical fundamentals; it also means being prepared for the anxiety and stress of studying and test-taking. The following suggestions are designed to help make the studying process as stress-free and productive as possible.



## Mentally Prepare Yourself and Your Family

- **Identify your goals.** One of the ways to keep yourself motivated is to figure out why you are taking the exam. When you keep your goals in mind it makes it easier to stay disciplined when studying for your exam.
- **Stay positive.** The way you talk to yourself has a huge influence on how you approach studying. If you stay positive and view the process as a good one, it makes it much easier to stay on task. Say positive affirmations like – “I’ve got this,” “I can do this,” and “It will all make sense in the end.”
- **Visualize success.** Imagine how passing your exam will feel, and how it will change your life. See yourself passing and holding the passing grade in your hand. This is how professional athletes prepare for competition, and studying for an exam is very similar.
- **Focus on your successes.** Focus on how much you have already accomplished and not on your fears or worries about the outcome.
- **Manage the stress of studying for an exam.** Some ideas to de-stress include a walk with family or a pet, listening to music, exercising, spending time with family, praying, meditating, or sitting down with a favorite book during a break.
- **Communicate with your family.** Studying is hard work and it will take you time and will impact your entire family. Communicate to them how passing this exam can change all of your lives and explain to them the specifics of why you need to study and when you need to study. If you do a good job of including them in the process it will be easier for them to understand the changes that will affect the family dynamics. Remind them that this is a short-term commitment that will have life-time benefits.



## Take Care of Your Health

- **Eyes.** Visit the eye doctor to make sure that your eyes are healthy and confirm that you don’t need glasses. You will be doing a lot of reading and you don’t want to strain your eyes by not having the proper glasses if needed.
- **Sleep.** Make sure you get plenty of rest at night – this gives your body (and mind) time to recharge. Most adults need 7 – 9 hours a night to be well rested. This may not be possible but great sleep habits will be important to help you retain the information you have learned.
- **Exercise.** Try to add at least 10 minutes of physical activity every day to feel more energized.
- **Eat well.** Fuel your body with a diet low in fats, sugars, salt, and avoid excessive red meats, which can make you feel drained and run-down. Instead, try foods that provide a slow, steady release of energy, like fish, blueberries, nuts, yogurt, and seeds.





## **Research the Exam Details & Select the Right Study Material**

- **Review state requirements and identify what you will be tested on.**
  - Check with your Local or State Examining Board to get as much information as possible, as each exam is different. To find out the requirements for your state visit [www.mikeholt.com/statelicense](http://www.mikeholt.com/statelicense).
  - Review the Candidate Booklet.
    - Which Edition of the NEC is the exam based on?
    - Is the exam open-book?
    - If yes – can you use your own copy? What kind of markings can you use? What kind of notes or highlighting, if any, are you allowed to take in the exam room?
    - What items can you have while taking the exam? This includes both professional items, like reference books, extra tools such as calculators and pencils, and personal items, like a watch, bottle of water, or jacket.
    - What reference books will be used on the exam?
    - What types of questions will you be asked, and how many of each type?
- **Identify your strengths and weaknesses.** What works for someone else may not be as effective for you!
  - Every person has a different work and educational background. Your study program should be based on what you already know and your experience with taking exams. Some questions you should ask yourself:
    - How strong am I in Code, Electrical Calculations, Fundamentals?
    - Am I a visual learner or can I learn well directly from a book?
    - Am I a good test-taker?
  - Take a simulated or practice exam so you are comfortable with the layout, time constraints, types of questions, and information you are tested on.
    - Time yourself while taking it and treat it as if this is the actual exam.
    - Taking a practice exam to gauge your strengths and weaknesses will help you determine where to focus your studies.



## **Make a Plan**

- **Schedule study time and other commitments.**
  - Know the date of your exam, and work backwards to create a study schedule that fits your needs. Give yourself enough time to study! One of the biggest reasons people fail their exams is that they simply didn't give themselves enough structured study time.
  - Put your study times into your calendar and try to plan it for the same time each and every week.
  - Study at the times where you can be the most productive, whether that is in the morning when you first start the day, or at night, when the stresses of the day are behind you and handled. You know when you are most able to absorb new material and should plan your study schedule accordingly.
  - Make sure you also schedule time for more than just studying. Factor in time around your work and study for rest, meals, and time with family. By setting aside time to spend with your family it will be easier for them to support you if they know what to expect.
  - Sticking to a routine each week and pacing yourself will help avoid cramming at the last minute.



- **Organize your study area.**

- Set up a private study location that is quiet with good lighting.
- All your work material should be in one place, so you don't waste time setting up each time. Find space in your home to keep your reference books, supplies and study materials.
- Keep your tools organized, so it is easier to learn, and you don't risk misplacing important parts of your study program.
- Keep organized folders for notes, exams and answer keys, and miscellaneous items – if you are allowed to use resources during your exam, it will be quick and easy for you to find what you need.
- If possible, always have an extra copy of your book(s) with you, or keep your essential study book on hand, so you can study anytime, anywhere! Be creative!



## **Successful Study Tips**

- **Really get to know your Code book and other reference books.**

- Tab your code book for quick reference. Need tabs? Visit [www.mikeholt.com/tabs](http://www.mikeholt.com/tabs).
  - The quicker you can find information during a timed exam, the easier the exam will be. One of the best ways to pass your exam is to be completely confident with your NEC book, and this only happens with practice.
- If your State Board allows it, highlight important details in your Code book.

- Stay hydrated and satisfied. Drink water and have a light snack if you haven't recently eaten.

- **Eliminate distractions.** Turn off your phone and let your family know that you are in official "study mode."

- **When using your textbook focus on the following:**

- Review the headings before reading, so that your brain knows ahead of time what material you are mastering.
- Continually ask yourself questions while reading through the content. This helps you stay focused, retain more information, and learn where specific topics are in your materials.
- Pay attention to the graphics, they support the learning, and in many cases will explain the specific topic you are learning.
- Work through the practice questions. Research tells us that testing improves learning and the ability for your brain to retrieve the information later. So those questions not only help you determine if you have mastered a concept, but they also help you learn it.

- **Making marks in books.** Remember that any marks you make in your books should be in accordance with the rules of your Exam Board.

- **Take a break.** Every person is different, but plan to take a 5- to 10-minute break every 30 – 50 minutes so you can stay focused and productive during your study time. Try moving around during your break, or just get up and stretch instead of checking your phone or messages.

- **Use music.** If listening to music helps you study, make sure it is low and instrumental.

- **Rest your eyes.** Be sure to look up from studying occasionally. Our eyes are designed for survival, and the combination of small text with close-up, continuous reading puts a large amount of strain on your eyes.

- **Study with others.** You are more likely to study if you have a friend to be your "accountability partner."

- Students who study together perform above average because they try different approaches and discuss ideas and solutions. So, if possible, set up an occasional study session with others preparing for their exam.



- **Take advantage of your natural learning style.** There are 3 styles of learning, and to figure out yours, you can take a short survey such as this one: <http://www.educationplanner.org/students/self-assessments/learning-styles.shtml>
  - **Auditory:** If you are an auditory learner it is important for you to hear the material. Watch videos, read out loud sections from your textbook that may be difficult for you to understand, study with someone else and talk about the material. Remember to work in a quiet area so that noise is not distracting to you.
  - **Visual:** Since you learn better seeing pictures and visual stimuli, here are some strategies to maximize your learning: If you aren't taking a class, watch a video so you can see the instructor interact with the images and content, create your own pictures to work through difficult concepts, color code your notes, work with flash cards, and take notes or create outlines to memorize the material.
  - **Tactile:** A tactile learner is a "hands-on" person who prefers to touch, build, or physically interact with what they are learning, taking them apart and putting them back together. As a tactile learner, hands-on activities like grouping flashcards with similar ideas, physically highlighting your textbook, or finding ways to create a physical connection with the content will be the best way for you to learn.
- **If you are in a class, speak up!** There are valuable ideas to be shared in the classroom setting, and there is nothing wrong with asking for clarification or more explanation. Others may have the same questions that you do!
- **Don't get overwhelmed.** Often students make studying harder because they get intimidated by the work ahead. Take it step by step and understand that with time and practice the material will start to make sense. Break up your studying into manageable sections. This way you can conquer the content section by section.
- **Time yourself while taking tests.** Ultimately timing is an element of your exam, so the more you can practice that, the faster you will work through your questions on exam day and the less stressful the timing element will be for you mentally.

Ready to get started in selecting the right study program for you? Visit [www.MikeHolt.com/examprep](http://www.MikeHolt.com/examprep) or call 888.632.2633. We are here to help you and have been helping other electrical professionals pass industry exams for over 40 years.

