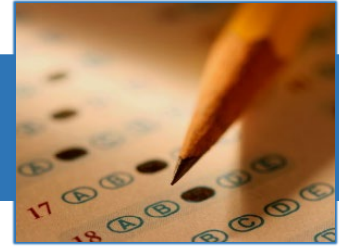


Mike Holt's Tips for Passing your Exam



You've done the preparation: read books and materials, watched videos, studied, and hopefully even did a practice exam or two. Now comes the second part: taking and passing your exam. Here are some helpful tips to ace your exam:



The Week Before the Exam:

- **Checklist.** Create a checklist of everything you need to do before the exam and bring to the exam.
- **Back-up.** Make sure you have a back-up calculator, batteries and any other supplies so that you are prepared. If you use glasses to read, bring an extra pair of these as well. If you are taking a paper exam have 6 sharpened #2 pencils with erasers.



The Night Before the Exam:

- **Pack.** Make sure everything is ready and packed the night before. Go through your supplies list one more time and have your clothes already selected and laid out.
- **Confidence.** You have already done your work, so while there is nothing wrong with a quick refresher, don't try to cram the night before. Feel confident and calm. Create some positive affirmations, such as "I am prepared for this test, and I will do well!"
- **Directions.** Review directions to the testing facility. Know where the exam is going to take place and how long it will take to get there. The last thing you need is to get lost on your way to the testing facility. NOTE: If the facility is more than an hour away from your home you may want to consider getting a hotel near the testing facility.
- **Sleep.** You have done what you can, and now is the time to get a good night's rest. Get to sleep early so you can get to the exam well-rested.



The Day of the Exam:

- **Healthy Breakfast.** Have a healthy, high-protein breakfast like eggs, yogurt, whole grain cereal with milk, or oatmeal with milk.
- **Drinks and Snacks.** Get a water bottle, insulated mug, and energy snacks ready if you are permitted to bring them into the exam.
- **Reference Books.** Take all your reference books with you. If you are unsure if you are permitted to use a particular book in the exam, bring it and let the proctors tell you what you can and can't use.
- **Get there early.** Know where the exam will be held and leave early so you can **arrive early**.
 - This gives you time to find a comfortable seat, organize your test taking materials, review your NEC book, and use the restroom (for privacy and accuracy, some testing centers do not allow restroom breaks during the examination).



- **I.D. & Supplies.** Bring your identification, confirmation papers from the licensing board, and any additional information and supplies you may need to be successful.
- **Take a quick walk to get centered.** If time permits, one of the best ways to harness your energy is to take a quick walk to reduce the overflow of nerves. If you don't have time for a walk, try a few stretches before you head out the door.
- **Music.** Listen to music that relaxes you while you are driving to your exam.
- **Be positive.** Don't engage in negative talk with others beforehand (for example, "I'm so nervous – I don't know if I studied enough," or "You seem so much more prepared than me, I'm not ready!"). Instead, focus on your positive affirmations.



5 Success Strategies for Your Exam

1. **Get centered.**

It is normal to be a little bit nervous as you sit for the exam. The key is to control that energy, so it can help you with your exam. Here are a few techniques:

- **Breathing technique.** Breathe in slowly for a count of 4 seconds, then breathe out slowly for a count of four. Repeat. Imagine that there is a balloon in your stomach and you are trying to fill it. As you breathe in, watch your stomach rise and as you breathe out, watch it deflate. This will help reduce any last-minute stress as you sit for your exam.
- **Single-Muscle Relaxation.** If you find that you carry your tension in your muscles (clenching your jaw, tensing your shoulders), purposefully tense and then relax that group. Repeat every few minutes, and the rest of your muscles will automatically relax, too.
- **Prayer.** For many people, prayer is exactly what is needed to mentally prepare for the stress of an upcoming exam. They find that prayer provides comfort when it is needed the most, and some studies have shown a correlation between prayer and stress relief.

2. **Understanding the question.**

- **Read.** Make sure you fully and carefully read and understand each word of the question. What are they really looking for in the question?
- **Review Answers.** Read all the answers before selecting the first one that looks correct.
- **Circle important words.** Remember that one word can change the entire meaning, so underline or circle any key words that stand out.
- **Move on if confused.** If you find that a question is difficult, skip it and come back to it later if this is possible in your test format.
 - If you are stuck on a question, you will likely spend more time dwelling on it, and then worry about completing on time, setting off a chain reaction.
 - Make sure you mark the questions you are coming back to, so you don't miss them.
- **Guessing.** When you don't know the answer, eliminate those answers that are completely wrong through the process of elimination. Never leave a question unanswered – not answering a question is guaranteed to be wrong, but your best guess could be correct.



3. Check your work.

- **Review.** Before completing your exam go through all questions to make sure that you have understood and answered correctly and filled in all blanks.
- **Bubble sheets.** In written exams, make sure if using a bubble sheet that you fully and completely fill in the circle for your answer.
- **Second guessing.** Be careful when changing answers. Your first answer is best in most cases, and if you aren't certain, stick with that choice. On written exams, be sure to completely erase to change your answers if necessary and erase any stray pencil marks from the answer sheet.

4. A good strategy to take your exam is by “passing” over it several times:

- **Pass 1:** Answer the questions that you know and can answer within 30 seconds, with or without your reference book. If it takes longer than 30 seconds, go on to the next. Chances are, you'll come across the answer while finding another one.
- **Pass 2:** Go back to the beginning of the exam, and do the same as before, but allow more time for each question. A good timeframe is double the amount of the first pass, so allow 60 seconds this time through.
- **Pass 3:** Spend your remaining time on each question equally. If you still haven't answered, make an educated guess, you don't want to leave questions unanswered on your exam, by eliminating several options you increase your chance of getting it right even if you don't know the exact answer.
- **Pass 4:** Use the last 30 minutes of the exam for review. Reread each question and ensure that they are answered correctly (or with your educated guess). Make sure your answers were transferred correctly for paper exams, and make sure all answers are saved (if applicable) for computer exams. With any remaining time, see if you can find an answer for those that you guessed on. Remember though that your first answer is usually the correct one.

5. A note about rounding answers: You should always round your answers to the same number of places as the exam's answers.

- Example: If an exam has multiple choice options of: **(a) 2.10 (b) 2.20 (c) 2.30 (d) none of these**, and your calculation comes out to 2.16; don't choose the answer (d) none of these. The correct answer is (b) 2.20, because the answers in this case are rounded off to the nearest tenth.
- Example: It can be rounded to tens, such as: **(a) 50 (b) 60 (c) 70 (d) none of these**. For this group, an answer such as 67 will be (c) 70, while an answer of 63 will be (b) 60. The general rule is to check the question's choice of answers and then round off your answer to match it.



Final Thoughts on Taking a Test

- Walk in with confidence, know that you have done your best to get ready for this exam. If you pass the first time, GREAT! If you don't pass this time ask if you can review your exam so that you can see what you need to work on and come into the exam confident for the next time.
- We are here to help you in every way that we can. If you need anything, please call us at 888.632.2633.
- Good luck and God Bless, please let us know when you pass! We love to hear good news stories, email us at info@mikeholt.com.

