



Alison Monahan: Welcome back to the Law School Toolbox podcast. Today, we've got our top five last minute exam tips for you. Your Law School Toolbox hosts are Alison Monahan, that's me, and Lee Burgess. We're here to demystify the law school and early legal career experience so that you will be the best law student and lawyer you can be.

Together, we're the co-creators of the [Law School Toolbox](#), the [Bar Exam Toolbox](#), and the career related website [CareerDicta](#). I also run [The Girl's Guide to Law School](#). If you enjoy the show, please leave a review or rating on your favorite listening app. And if you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out to us. You can always reach us via the [contact form](#) on LawSchoolToolBox.com, and we would love to hear from you. With that, let's get started.

Lee Burgess: Welcome back to the Law School Toolbox podcast. Today, we've got our top five last minute exam tips for you. But before we dive in, we have to take a moment to celebrate, because awhile back...

Alison Monahan: It's a milestone.

Lee Burgess: Awhile back... It's got to be way over this number now, but we hit our millionth download.

Alison Monahan: Which is pretty crazy.

Lee Burgess: Which happened overnight. It was kind of a crazy moment. We got up in the morning, we were going to try and catch it. We had people in different time zones. And we missed it.

Alison Monahan: Missed it.

Lee Burgess: But a million downloads. So thanks for listening. That's pretty cool.

Alison Monahan: Thank you, everyone.

Lee Burgess: I know. I don't know who our millionth download was, but we really appreciate it. It was kind of an exciting milestone. It made me feel very legitimate.

Alison Monahan: I know. I was like, "Who would have thought? That's a lot of man hours."

Lee Burgess: Back in the day, I did not think we would have a million downloads.

Alison Monahan: No, that's pretty crazy.

Lee Burgess: Yeah.



- Alison Monahan: So, thank you for listening!
- Lee Burgess: Thanks for listening! Alright, well, now let's get into our top five last minute exam tips. So, this shouldn't be a shock if you've listened to some of those other podcasts episodes we've done, but you've got to practice, guys. You've got to practice, practice, practice. If you have to go back to studying and you don't have time to listen to the rest of this episode, at least listen to this part, where we tell you to practice. Don't show up to the exam doing any part of it for the first time.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, and this could apply to multiple choice questions, essay questions, short answer questions, whatever type of questions you're going to have. The only exception is a take home – you can't really replicate that. But you can still do the essays.
- Lee Burgess: That's true, but often times even take homes, they'll give you kind of a past exam to at least see what you're going to expect.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, and I think that is so key. You want to know what to expect, you want to practice doing this. Earlier today, we recorded a podcast about the bar exam and how it's so important to write out those answers, because it's a different process. Writing an answer, particularly under time conditions, versus just kind of thinking about the answer or identifying some issues. Those are important steps, but that's not the same thing as actually committing to paper in a logical and coherent way what you're talking about.
- Lee Burgess: Yep. And I think what we hear over and over and over again when students call us for advice is, all the reasons why they don't have to practice, or they aren't ready to practice, or they can't practice. So, our top reasons that we hear are, "I don't have my outlines done", "I don't have enough practice materials", "I don't know the law yet", et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.
- Alison Monahan: Well, that's kind of the point of practicing, is that it actually forces you to understand what it is that you don't know and in what areas you are woefully unprepared.
- Lee Burgess: Mm-hmm. And I think one of the things that we see the longer we do this is really about active learning and engaging in the material. Often times I think what happens when you don't have the outlines, or you don't have the practice materials, or you haven't, quote, unquote "studied the law", which can mean so many different things to different people – what you really need to be doing is struggling with the material and applying law to facts, because that's what's on your exam. That is active learning, and that is actually going to make this stuff stick in your brain. Just reading an outline, even typing from your... My favorite, like, "Oh, I'm just making this outline from my notes. Oh, it's fantastic. I'm using



fonts and colors and it's 27 to 50 pages long." That is not adhering anything to your memory.

Alison Monahan: No, no. And that actually gets into number two, which is, you really have to put this material together for yourself at this point.

Lee Burgess: Yeah.

Alison Monahan: This makes people uncomfortable – it might mean less attention paid to class and more attention paid to study. We're not saying you should stop going to class. We're not even saying you should stop doing the reading for class. What we're saying is that cannot continue to be your primary focus at this point in this semester, or you're probably going to fail your exams, or at least do fairly poorly on them.

Lee Burgess: Yep. You've got to start seeing the end game here. And if you, again, don't know what the end game looks like, you need to talk to your professors, you need to get past exams. You need to understand what the end game is, because it's time to start preparing for the end game.

Alison Monahan: Right. And I think a lot of people... I mean, I remember my first semester. I definitely hadn't even looked at a sample exam until fairly late in the semester because I just thought, "Oh yeah, I'm going to class. I've been doing okay if I get cold called. I'm keeping up with the reading. I'm cool."

Lee Burgess: Yeah.

Alison Monahan: And then you look at this exam and you think, "Wow, huh."

Lee Burgess: Not cool.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, "I'm not sure I'd really know how to approach this." Particularly in certain classes where the professors were very big picture and they were talking about policy. My CivPro professor kind of said on day one, "Ah, the rules, I don't find them so interesting. You should read those on your own. There are other things we're going to talk about." And then you look at a sample answer or a sample exam from that class and it's like, "So-and-so is a person who is crossing state lines and has a car accident." And you're like, "Whoa, whoa, whoa, wait. This is like something out of a Torts 101 supplement." Or CivPro, whatever. Anyway, it doesn't matter.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, I think that was... They were crossing state lines.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, they were crossing state lines. But it was all sort of the same. A lot of these schools, your professor is very theoretical and they are very interested in



their policy discussions, but then their exams are very straightforward kind of fact patterns. If you're not expecting that and what you've been doing hasn't really prepared you for that, that can be a little disconcerting.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. And really understanding these legal concepts is how they relate to the real world. It's like, just knowing the rules for dragging a defendant back into a jurisdiction in Civil Procedure is different than understanding why we do that, what's the policy behind it.

Alison Monahan: I don't even think I understood until I kind of sat down and put this stuff together that there actually were certain things you had to comply with in order to have jurisdiction over someone. And there's a constitutional requirement, and you have to check this box and you have to check this other box. And those boxes were not apparent to me when we were just discussing this in class.

Lee Burgess: Right. And let's take another example that most 1Ls have studied, which is torts. You're doing negligence and you've got the basic structure for negligence of duty, breach, causation, damages, and under duty. You've got the standard of care. And then you've got all these alternative standard of cares, right? It's like standard of care for minor, standard of care for a bar owner, standard of care for a medical doctor. And yeah, you can just memorize them, but what you really need to understand is why.

Alison Monahan: That "Why?".

Lee Burgess: Why does a bar owner have maybe a different standard of care than a good Samaritan?

Alison Monahan: Or with the land owner stuff – like why do we have these different levels of liability for different types trespassers for a land owner? That kind of thing.

Lee Burgess: Right.

Alison Monahan: Maybe you have a higher duty to somebody that you've invited onto your property, versus somebody you don't even know who's there, who's trespassing. Maybe that makes sense. But you kind of need to think about all this stuff, not just be like, "Oh, there are like X number of duties, here's what they are." Nobody's going to ask you to list them out. They're going to ask you to use them.

Lee Burgess: Right. And so, the method of getting comfortable with this material is that you probably want to find some commercial supplements to help with the big picture, if you don't have the big picture yet. And that's going to help you kind of fill in some of the details. Some of our favorites – [Examples & Explanations](#) are always really good. Some people like more outline based supplements. Maybe



your professor has some preferred supplements. You can go to your academic support office and see what they recommend for different professors. But you probably are going to need some sort of a supplement to help you out.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, and I feel like if you do have the Examples & Explanations, you might also need this commercial outline, because those are different things. You kind of have to think, "What are my problem areas right now?" If you're just like, "I have no idea how the pieces of CivPro fit together and I can't do anything" – then you probably want to go to your Examples & Explanations, which is really good. The CivPro and the Torts both are very good. And that's going to walk you through using these rules and understanding them. And then you still have to kind of make sense of it in a way that you can use on the exam. So that's where I would go to a commercial outline and be like, "Okay, here's my big picture structure."

Lee Burgess: Mm-hmm.

Alison Monahan: So just think about, "What do I need here?" We're going to talk about this later, but kind of, "Where am I in this process and where do I need to find to help me with it in the limited time that I have available?"

Lee Burgess: Yep. And then once you are kind of into this material, then it's on you to use whatever techniques to organize the material and make it your own that you want. So some people work really well with linear outlines, some people work really well with flow charts, some people work well with flashcards. But I would argue...

Alison Monahan: That's typically not advisable.

Lee Burgess: Be very careful with flashcards. Some people are auditory learners. We have had students who memorize themselves reading the outline, and then... I'm sorry, not memorize. They record themselves reading an outline and they listen to it in the car or on their commute to school. And that's one way that they learn. Or they lecture to their stuffed animals or their dog. You can get creative here, but it's got to mean something to you.

Alison Monahan: And I think too, again, you've got to think about where you are in the process. So, are you trying to memorize – literally memorize the material? Then okay, some flashcards are maybe not the worst idea.

Lee Burgess: Right.

Alison Monahan: But you can't jump to that step until you understand it. So something like flashcards are typically not going to help you understand the material. They might help you memorize it. Something like a flow chart or a linear outline or



diagramming – those are the things that are going to let you understand that material. But then maybe you don't memorize a flow chart.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. It's so true. And there's only so many hours in a day, so you're going to have to decide where this time comes from. So, this is the time where the deep work... In your study schedule, you need to start really carving out time where you're doing the studying.

Alison Monahan: Routinely.

Lee Burgess: Routinely. Not like once a week.

Alison Monahan: Or like an hour a week.

Lee Burgess: Or an hour a week. Yeah. You're going to have to have some solid chunks where you're doing this sort of studying, so you're going to have to really look at your time and see if it's time to step back from doing some extra work to prepare for class. Or maybe you're doing the reading, but you're not also reading the supplements or whatever you need to do. One of the things I do want to plug though is often times professors test on some of the stuff that was covered at the end of the semester.

Alison Monahan: Mm-hmm. Yep, because that's why they're covering it.

Lee Burgess: Right. I think in Torts this often happens if the last thing they teach is products liability.

Alison Monahan: Oh, that's so disproportionately likely to show up.

Lee Burgess: It's so disproportionately likely to show up, and it's hard. Actually, products is pretty complicated stuff.

Alison Monahan: It's probably the most complicated topic. It's generally crammed into the last couple of days. Frequently shows up. People aren't paying attention in class. They're not really focused. Yeah, so you have to be careful on that. Or the worst is if a class has been canceled and they do a makeup session, and you decide not to go to it. Do not do that.

Lee Burgess: Yeah.

Alison Monahan: If they're bothering to hold a makeup session, that is really likely to show up.

Lee Burgess: The other time that this comes up is in constitutional law. The First Amendment is often the last thing that they teach. And the First Amendment, also super murky, not particularly easy or linear.



- Alison Monahan: Super fun to test.
- Lee Burgess: Super fun to test, because you can write really creative fact patterns and people mess up the law all the time.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah. So you've got to curve somehow. So, if you're a professor and you're thinking, "How am I going to curve this exam?" – like, "Oh, I'm going to do the more complicated information that we cover in a rush at the very end."
- Lee Burgess: Exactly.
- Alison Monahan: You definitely want to go to class. You want to be prepared, but maybe you're not spending extra time briefing at this point in the semester. You should already be able to read a case, hopefully at this point have some factual recall. And I think professors get that people may be a little less prepared for the cold calls the last like week or so.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah. We also have a great [podcast called Avoiding Exam Disasters](#) that we'll link to in the show notes.
- Alison Monahan: This is if you're really flailing, if you're like, "I haven't done anything."
- Lee Burgess: And it's time to triage. That'll stop the bleeding. Yeah, exactly. Alright, the next thing you want to think about is just getting whatever help you need. It's time to ask for help.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah. This is the time to call in the troops.
- Lee Burgess: Mm-hmm, yeah. You already mentioned makeup classes, but also, if your professor's going to take time to hold a review session, you should go.
- Alison Monahan: You should go and you should take notes and you should pay attention carefully to if they let people ask questions and certain questions they don't seem particularly interested in, and then other questions they do seem very interested in. Sometimes people really telegraph unintentionally or intentionally what they're kind of thinking about maybe putting on the exam.
- Lee Burgess: And sometimes they're writing it around the time of these review sessions.
- Alison Monahan: Right, they haven't necessarily finished it that far in advance.
- Lee Burgess: I know. I had a professor who I was her TA as well. She's actually the new Dean of my law school, but she used to write her fact patterns. She was really into celebrity news, but she also used to write it just about stuff that happened in her life. So I remember one of my Contracts... I had her for two semesters in



Contracts, and one of them she was moving. And so, her whole fact pattern was this crazy scenario all about moving. It was really funny.

Alison Monahan: That is funny. Yeah, so find out what's going on in your professor's life.

Lee Burgess: What they like. Yeah. You never know.

Alison Monahan: But that review session, a) you can hopefully get some of your questions answered. You can also go to office hours, although these tend to be a little bit jammed up this time of year. But again, use that 10 minutes that you get to go to fact. Don't just go in and be kind of like, "Hey, what's up?" Be like, "I was working on this practice problem and I don't understand this part of it. Could you help me walk through it?"

Lee Burgess: Exactly. You also want to utilize classmates in a smart way. If you don't have a study group initially, I think you can still get together with some friends and be thoughtful. You guys can compare [outlines](#) or [attack plans](#). You can give feedback to each other on practice exams, although remember that you're just another law student giving feedback to another law student.

Alison Monahan: Better than nothing.

Lee Burgess: Better than nothing. But I think it can be helpful to work together to a point, as long as the work that you're doing is actually moving you forward.

Alison Monahan: Right. And I think if you do have a study group, this is when they tend to go a little crazy, like, "We're going to spend 14 hours a day crammed together in this room in the library." But you have to make sure you're using that time effectively and you have to make sure that you and everybody else is actually practicing on your own, because unfortunately there's not a group test usually.

Lee Burgess: It would've been so cool.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. I mean, very occasionally, some kooky professor will do something like that. But typically speaking, you're going to be on your own. And I think there can be a false sense of security in a study group if you read and brainstorm and answer and you all think, "Oh yeah, that was great." But each one of you was only going to get 40% of that answer. So, you've got to make sure that you are doing, again, your personal work and making sure you're prepared.

Lee Burgess: Yeah.

Alison Monahan: But if you don't have a study group, then you can just ask a couple of people, maybe different people in each class, like, "Hey, do you want to work on this



practice problem together? Let's do it and then we can compare our notes." Stuff like that can actually be very effective.

- Lee Burgess: Yeah. And I think sometimes people are like, "This is a great time for me to go knock on the door of academic support." But it may not be a good time to knock. You can try, but...
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, good luck.
- Lee Burgess: Good luck, because there are a lot of people in there who may have been going to academic support throughout the entire semester. So, I think this is a time where if you're really struggling and you need some extra resources, this can be where hiring a tutor, which is what our team does, can be very effective, because we can jump in in those final days and help you triage your workload and explain concepts that you're still struggling with.
- Alison Monahan: Force you to practice.
- Lee Burgess: Force you to practice, give you feedback on that practice and help clean up your writing, so hopefully you're a bit better prepared for exam. I think sometimes people get really overwhelmed by those final weeks of the semester and think that a lot of work can't actually get done. But even a week is a really long time.
- Alison Monahan: It's a really long time.
- Lee Burgess: In exam world.
- Alison Monahan: I remember my second semester as a 1L. I was in pretty bad shape going a few weeks into – maybe say two to three weeks out from exams. I had had kind of a disastrous semester. I'd been clinically depressed at the beginning of it. I hadn't really been going to class. I kind of turned it around, started dragging myself out of bed and going to class, but it was not a great scenario. And I did at some point sit down a few weeks from exams and go, "Okay, how am I going to start to salvage this? What do I need to do?" I employed my [circles method](#), which I'm a big fan of. We can link to that blog post. And I remember being in the library like 12 to 14 hours a day for two weeks straight, and just day after day, triaging classes. And it wasn't my best semester ever, but it also wasn't a disaster. And so, you kind of have that moment of, "Okay, I've got a few weeks left. This is not going well. Do I just kind of throw my hands up and say, 'Oopsie'?" Or do you really try to focus and do what you can, understanding it might not be your absolute best work? That's a totally personal choice.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah, yeah. A lot of stuff can happen in those last few weeks if you're thoughtful about it. But you don't want to throw up your hands. You want to make a plan and stick to it.



- Alison Monahan: Yeah. I remember once I even tutored someone and taught them literally all of CivPro in like two days, which I would not normally do, but she was nice and there were extenuating circumstances and I was like, "Well, I was a CivPro TA, so I really can actually do this." And to be fair, she actually did pretty well on the exam. So that was two days of extra work.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah. Let's tie this back into our number four, which is, you've really got to get a realistic understanding of where you're at at this point, and not be delusional or assume it's just all going to work out because you're a smart person, which I think sometimes people at least subconsciously think – like, "I procrastinated through my undergrad, I managed to pull it out at the last minute. I'm a smart person. I've done this before. I'll do it before." But law school's not really quite like that.
- Lee Burgess: No. I mean, everyone in the room is pretty smart.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah.
- Lee Burgess: Which is part of the problem.
- Alison Monahan: And some of them have been working.
- Lee Burgess: Right, some of them have been studying and working all semester. And you've got to put in the heavy lifting. So you can be smart about how you're going to use the finite amount of time you have left, but you should be using it at studying those professor's old exams, taking them, getting other practice exams if that professor isn't providing them. You need to understand what the end game is, and prepare for that end game.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, exactly. You can almost deconstruct certain exams. If I've seen five exams from a certain professor... Which frankly, a lot of them have way more exams than that on file if they've been teaching for awhile. You can kind of start to see like they tend to give three questions. One of them is more policy focused, one of them is this, one of them is that. They typically address these types of questions. I mean, you can't recreate the wheel.
- Lee Burgess: Right.
- Alison Monahan: If you're giving like a CivPro exam, you're probably going to talk about jurisdiction. If you're giving a Torts exam, it's probably going to cover negligence.



- Lee Burgess: I remember one semester of CivPro was like every exam, every single year was about class actions, because that was a chunk of the class. You couldn't not test on class actions, so study that.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah. You can actually kind of deconstruct patterns on a lot of these. Obviously they could do something totally kooky, but most people aren't that creative. They're probably going to keep to this trend that they've done before.
- Lee Burgess: And they're going to get the curve either way. I think that sometimes people forget that professors don't want to grade super wacky exams, because it's going to be a mess.
- Alison Monahan: They're all going to be bad. They're all going to be terrible.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah, and they don't want to try and curve that. That is misery.
- Alison Monahan: How do you give this person an A? Because they did slightly better on your terrible exam?
- Lee Burgess: Yeah.
- Alison Monahan: They want to have something where some of the people are going to go in and knock this one out of the park. Other people are going to kind of muddle through and be in the middle. And then a few people are going to be a total disaster.
- Lee Burgess: Right. And there's your curve.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, exactly. Done.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah, exactly.
- Alison Monahan: So you can see a lot. So I think if you are not quite sure where you're at, you really have to get real about this.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah.
- Alison Monahan: And again, go listen to our podcast on exam disasters if you're like, "I'm kind of a disaster", because there are things you can do.
- Lee Burgess: Mm-hmm. Yeah, one of our tutors, I think she's really the triage master. I feel like every year we're like, "I know who to send you to."
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, "Oh, you're a mess."



- Lee Burgess: "Oh, you're a mess. But she can fix that."
- Alison Monahan: "You've got four days? Alright."
- Lee Burgess: "You've got four days? We've got somebody who can clean up your mess in four days." I mean, it's not as good as working through the whole semester, but I think with some perspective you can fix things. But you have to be willing.
- Alison Monahan: And particularly if you have open book exams.
- Lee Burgess: Oh yeah.
- Alison Monahan: I mean, that was what saved me my second semester is, I had all open book exams. If you go into an open book exam with a solid attack plan, some resources if you need to look stuff up, and then you carefully read the question, you really think about it, you go through all the processes – you can actually do respectively well.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah, for sure. Alright, let's go to our last tip, which is, know the law in detail and precisely, and not in broad strokes. So here comes every... I've told this story on other podcasts, but it's my favorite holiday story, which is Lee's trip home for Thanksgiving when I was a 1L. Sitting at Mom and Dad's kitchen table, and my mom came over and was like, "What are you studying?" And I was like, "My Torts exam, it's my first exam." And she was like, "Why don't you tell me the rule for XYZ?" And I started kind of pontificating about the broad strokes of a rule. And then she got very serious and was like, "That's not how you do this."
- Alison Monahan: Lucky Lee. She had a mother...
- Lee Burgess: Lucky me. I did, who was like, "Let me tell you, it needs to be done. You have to be able to spat out this rule with the exact language, in this way." And I just kind of had this "A-ha" moment, where I was like, "Oh."
- Alison Monahan: Like, "Oh, that's not how I've been studying."
- Lee Burgess: And to be honest...
- Alison Monahan: "And we are in late November."
- Lee Burgess: Right. And I had not done practice exams at that point. I had just been outlining and doing everything that they told me I was supposed to be doing at school. I had not been applying that law to the facts and seeing if I could execute the question. So then I had some triaging to do.



- Alison Monahan: Yeah. I feel like everyone does, in their first semester particularly. But it is what it is. If you haven't done this before, there's no reason that you would necessarily understand that.
- Lee Burgess: Yep.
- Alison Monahan: But that's why I think if nothing else, take a practice exam today.
- Lee Burgess: Mm-hmm.
- Alison Monahan: Go get one, read it, take it. If you are completely flailing on it, then there's work to be done.
- Lee Burgess: Yep. Alright, any bonus tips?
- Alison Monahan: Yeah. One more thing on the law in detail thing.
- Lee Burgess: Oh yeah.
- Alison Monahan: That applies to open book and closed book exams.
- Lee Burgess: True.
- Alison Monahan: So, if it's a closed book exam, you're going to have to memorize it. But sometimes I think with open book exams, people have this idea, like, "Oh, I have this 100-page outline, I'll bring in all my textbooks. I'll just put an index and look stuff up." And it's like, you don't have time to be looking up the structure of the law. You need to, again, kind of be able to spit this out of your brain. And whatever, you can reference something if you need to. But ideally, you need the basic law pretty much in your head, because otherwise you're not going to be able to identify issues.
- Lee Burgess: Right.
- Alison Monahan: So I think open book exams can provide this false sense of security of like, "Yeah. I mean, you know, I have a pretty good idea of the basic understanding. I can talk about policy. And then if I have to talk about intentional torts, I'll just look up the rules on assault and battery." You don't have time for that.
- Lee Burgess: Right. Absolutely not.
- Alison Monahan: So anyway, yeah. On to our bonus materials. I think for me the bonus overarching thing here is, you've got to have a plan, and then keeping yourself well enough to take the exam.



- Lee Burgess: I know, which is hard. These winter time exams too are tough because the cold and flu season is upon us.
- Alison Monahan: And if you're not sleeping... I tried to be responsible as a 1L and I blocked out my eight to nine hours a day when I was studying, and I was going to sleep. And that was great, except that I would lay awake in bed for four hours every night with things running through my head, literally unable to fall asleep. And I did that every night for about three weeks.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah, not a great...
- Alison Monahan: And at the end of that, I was completely crazy.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah.
- Alison Monahan: So, that's not great.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah. So you need to have a plan for that. You need to be not just eating pizza and eating crummy food, because if you get the flu or get sick...
- Alison Monahan: Or the caffeine, and be over-caffeinated.
- Lee Burgess: Oh yeah, watch your over-caffeination, because uppers and downers, man. You've got to balance them out and you can only have so much caffeine during the day. It has to be well timed or you're up in the middle of the night. And so you have to really be thoughtful about how you're treating your body. And then when you are getting closer to exams, you also have to be careful with caffeine because if you over-caffeinate before an exam, once the adrenaline kicks in, it can make you feel really, really crazy and jittery.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, and I think people who have test anxiety really have to be careful with your caffeination, because if you're already in an anxiety spiral and then you're also really caffeinated, and what are you eating and what are you bringing? All of these things. I think we have a whole episode or at least a [blog post on what we brought to our exams](#). We had different strategies on. But all of these things you don't think about. I even had an iPad playlist. I had my exam playlist to get me psyched up for the exam. And I would literally go in, as long as they would let me have my headphones in, I would have my headphones in and be listening to like Beyoncé. And it just made me happier than sitting there being like, "Oh my God, we're starting the exam. Oh my God!"
- Lee Burgess: Mm-hmm.
- Alison Monahan: Dial in your routine and kind of think about, "What are ways I can make this less horrible for myself?"



- Lee Burgess: Yep.
- Alison Monahan: I was also studying in different libraries, not the law library. Any of these things. No one cares where you study.
- Lee Burgess: No.
- Alison Monahan: You can study wherever you want. If the law library is making you miserable, go to a different library.
- Lee Burgess: Mm-hmm, yeah. You've got to do whatever you've got to do to get through this.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah. I even knew people who literally moved off campus and stayed with friends or a loved one or something, just to get out of that bubble of stress and anxiety and craziness. And I think there's absolutely value in that.
- Lee Burgess: Yep. Yeah, you've just got to play your own game. Stay in your own lane, don't get distracted. And maybe the other final, final word – we've got a couple of final words on this – is to not get caught up in the crazy.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah. I think the more you can do to make this experience less horrible for yourself, whether that is you commit to going to a yoga class a few days a week, or you commit to taking a bath, or even just a nice hot shower to wind down before bed, or I don't know. I made myself something like homemade nut and oat milk the other day that now I'm like, "Oh, I'm going to have a nice, warm nut oak milk thing at night to calm myself down."
- Lee Burgess: Yeah.
- Alison Monahan: All these things. They might sound crazy, but there's just no reason to amp yourself up more than you need to be when there are strategies you can employ. And they're different for everyone. Take a walk. Whatever.
- Lee Burgess: I always had a show to binge-watch.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, exactly.
- Lee Burgess: That wasn't stressful.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah. Something for your downtime because your brain is just going to be going, going, going, and you have to find some way to turn that off. Because otherwise, trust me, you're not going to sleep.
- Lee Burgess: That's true.



Alison Monahan: So, if insomnia is an issue, you might want to go right now to your doctor and try to get some Ambien or something, because that was literally what got me through exams after that. I'm not saying it's the healthiest thing, but you've got to do what works.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. Alright, well, if you enjoyed this episode of the Law School 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 myself or Alison at lee@lawschooltoolbox.com or alison@lawschooltoolbox.com. Or you can always contact us via our website [contact form](#) at LawSchoolToolbox.com. Thanks for listening, and we'll talk soon!

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