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Best way to pass the nclex pn exam

You did it! You've graduated nursing school and now you're one step closer to becoming a registered nurse. Now, there's just one small hurdle to overcome before you can officially become a registered nurse: passing the NCLEX-RN. You've studied hard in nursing school and you know your stuff, but that doesn't mean you can't learn some tips and tricks to help pass the NCLEX on your first try. We've put together our top ten tips for passing the NCLEX the first time. 11 Tips to Pass the NCLEX the First Time 1. Understand the NCLEX Format The NCLEX uses a CAT format, or computerized adaptive testing. Meaning that no single exam is identical. During the course of the exam, the computer algorithm produces each new question based on your performance from previous questions. The test bank is comprehensive and includes different question styles and topics of content. How the NCLEX is Graded The test will produce a minimum of 75 questions, and a maximum of 265 questions. A candidate passes the test when the tester has answered enough questions correctly to stay above the pass line with 95% confidence interval. The candidate will fail the test when they do not rise about the pass line with 95% confidence. Think of it this way - there is a horizontal line on an axis and we will call it the "pass line." Anything above it is passing, and anything below it is not passing. You start exactly on the line at question zero, and with each correct and incorrect answer, you get bumped up a notch and down a notch, respectively. With each correct answer, the computer will give progressively harder questions, to determine your peak knowledge. To pass, you must ultimately rise to a point above the pass line that demonstrates competency with marginal doubt. The test can end at any point when this determination is made, between questions 75 - 265, or at the maximum time allowance (6 hours). 2. Don't Self-Evaluate During the Test There's no use trying to self-evaluate while you test. Don't assume that because you got a few "easy" questions in a row that you are below pass level. Just focus on the questions at hand. What seems easy to you, might be challenging to someone else. Every question is as important as the next. This exam is all about endurance. Prepare to sit the full time and then you won't stress in the chance that you need to. 3. Find Ways to Manage Your Test Stress For all of the nervous test-takers out there, don't worry. There are ways to manage your stress. Test anxiety is a real thing, but you made it through nursing school, so just continue to prepare in whatever way worked for you in the past. Even if you don't typically have test anxiety, there is a chance that you will be nervous just from the pressure of such an important test. There are a couple key ways to keep stress at a minimum. First, prepare for the exam seriously but don't make studying your life. It's important to still keep a balance in the weeks and months leading up to the exam. Allot time in your days for exercise, proper sleep, and whatever you do for fun! By keeping a balance, your mind won't build up the test moment to anything bigger than it actually is. Also, when it comes time to actually take the NCLEX, do not study or cram information the day of. Take the morning before the test to calm your mind. Focus on something that helps you stay grounded - cooking a nice breakfast, listening to music, going on a run, whatever works for you. Ultimately, the best way to abate your nerves is to study appropriately. When you feel confident and prepared, the NCLEX doesn't seem all that scary. 4. Know Your NCLEX Study Style We all have slightly different learning styles, and you probably know yours by now. Make sure you tailor your studying to what works for you! If you understand concepts well with visuals, draw out rough sketches of cardiac chambers, color-coded medication classes, etc. If you are an auditory learner, there are plenty of YouTube lectures online and podcasts that cover NCLEX. If you learn best through discussion, be sure to create a study group to talk through concepts together. As a general rule, using mnemonic devices help most students with harder to learn concepts. Don't just reread, rewrite, and copy old notes. Try connecting concepts. Think about what you are learning from a holistic approach and relate it to clinical experiences you had in school. 5. Make a Study Plan Commit to the preparation that the test deserves. Go into studying with a plan, here is an example: Plan days to study. Set a schedule including which days of the week you will study, which days you will take off, and which you will use to take practice exams. Make a goal before each study session. Maybe it's to do x amount of practice questions, or master x specific content topic, but be intentional. Studying without a plan is a waste of your time and won't ultimately help you pass the NCLEX. It's not about the hours you put in, it's about how you use them. This is one exam you can absolutely not cram for - the NCLEX is a holistic test model that aims to test knowledge gained over the course of years, not days. 6. Don't Draw from Past Clinical or Work Experiences Unfortunately, for those of you who have previous experience working in hospitals as nursing techs or aides, the experience can cloud your ability to answer test questions. Even just from what you observed as student nurses in clinicals, it is usually apparent that many topics or clinical skills are different between textbooks and real-life healthcare. The NCLEX is based on proven, researched-based, evidence-based practice. Even if your previous facility does something in a different way that is just as safe or just as correct, do not assume that this applies to the NCLEX. It's important to answer NCLEX questions as if you don't have any real-life constraints as a nurse. Assume you have ample time and resources to perform each answer choice. 7. Hone Your Test-Taking Skills The NCLEX is just as much about knowing how the test is written as it is knowing the right answers. Utilize test-taking strategies to eliminate wrong answers, avoid "extremes" like ALL or NONE answers, and remember to always put patient safety first. With practice, you will notice some themes in answers. Always assess the patient first, calling the doctor right away isn't usually the best first step. Use Airway-Breathing-Circulation approach, etc. Use deductive reasoning even if you have no idea about the concepts behind the topic. If all else fails, rely on that budding feeling that we like to call "nurse intuition." You will no doubt encounter the dreaded select-all-that-apply questions. Use the same, systematic approach to eliminate incorrect answer choices based on knowledge and wording of answers. 8. Invest in Test Prep Resources It is definitely worthwhile to invest in practice exam books or enroll in a classroom review course. Some examples are Kaplan, UWorld, and nursing.com.* Usually, people choose their study material based on reviews, peer references, or personal preference. All exam resource companies produce exceptional guides to prepare you for the NCLEX exam, so spend some time browsing reviews to see which guidebook style fits you best. *Affiliate link. If you decide to use Nursing.com, Nurse.org may receive a commission. >> Related: Top 5 NCLEX Review Courses (With Cost) 9. Go Beyond the Practice Questions Practice exams are absolutely the best and most important way to prepare - HOWEVER - simply taking the practice exam questions is only half of the process. It is just as important to: Look up questions that you answered incorrectly. Practice question banks provide explanations as to why each answer choice is correct or incorrect, as well as outlining the particular content topic it falls under. Jot down notes of which concepts you want to revisit, so with your next study session, you can focus on problem areas. Practice, practice, practice. It is especially useful to take at least 1 or 2 full online mock NCLEX exams so you are used to the experience of computer testing. Go through as much of the question bank as you can before exam day and you will be miles ahead. 10. Prepare for Exam Day Be sure to sleep well the week before the exam. Bring snacks to the center to keep in your locker in case you choose to take a break during the exam. Arrive early to the testing center, prepared with necessary documents for testing. Put gas in your tank the night before. Set a reliable alarm. Bring clothes you can layer in case you tend to get cold. If you try to control your environment as much as possible, it will help you to feel comfortable and prepared for the exam itself. Schedule your exam time with your usual preference for testing. If you are a morning person, schedule a morning test. If you enjoy slow mornings and sleeping in, then schedule an afternoon exam. 11. Believe in Yourself Most importantly, believe in yourself. You deserve to pass and you have already proven your potential as a nurse by graduating nursing school. This is only the final step on your exciting and new journey to being a Registered Nurse - so congratulations! NCLEX FAQs What is the NCLEX? To earn licensure as a Registered Nurse, nursing school graduates must pass the NCLEX-RN (National Council Licensure Examination-Registered Nurse). This standardized, computer-based test is offered year-round in the US and Canada. The state in which you choose to sit for your test determines which nursing board will issue your first active RN license upon passing. How Hard is the NCLEX? With the right preparation, passing the NCLEX is absolutely attainable for every nursing school graduate. That being said, the test should be taken seriously. Earning straight A's or 4.0 GPA in nursing school does not predict success on the NCLEX. How Many Questions Are on the NCLEX? The test will produce a minimum of 75 questions, and a maximum of 265 questions. How Long Should You Study for the NCLEX? To pass the NCLEX, students should plan to spend a minimum of 1-2 months studying. What Do You Do If You Fail the NCLEX? If for whatever reason, the test-taker does not pass, it is possible to retake the NCLEX after a 45 day waiting period. Each exam attempt costs \$200, so it's in the best interest of nursing graduates to make their time and money worthwhile by passing the first time. What Percentage Do You Have to Get on the NCLEX to Pass? There is not a specific number or percentage that you need to answer correctly to pass the NCLEX. The exam's computational algorithm evaluates correct answers within the context of their difficulty and variety of topic knowledge. The adaptive test will determine that you are at a sufficient level to pass in each subject area using a 95% confidence rule, or a decision will be made at the maximum time (6-hour mark) or maximum question allowance (265). What Percentage of Candidates Pass the NCLEX? The National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) shares all exam statistics publicly each year. Based on the results from 2020, the total percentage of first-time test candidates in the US to pass was 86.57%. First-time test takers who earned a Baccalaureate Degree averaged a 90% pass rate. How Do You Find Out If You Passed the NCLEX? As stated on the NCSBN website, "If your board of nursing participates in the 'Quick Results Service' you can receive your unofficial results 2 business days after the exam for \$7.95. Official results are ONLY available through your board of nursing/regulatory body and will be sent to you by mail and/or posted on their website. If you did not pass, you will receive a Candidate Performance Report which shows individualized performance by content area so you can better prepare for your next NCLEX attempt." What do you need to know when preparing for your NCLEX-PN? How can you pass the first time? What's the best way to study? Is there a study guide? Are there any special tips?Relax! We have a few answers to these questions. Let's get you started on the last step to your nursing license and new career!Is it hard to pass the NCLEX-PN?Let's start with the very good news: The 2020 first-time pass rate for LPN/LVN candidates who are educated in the United States is 85.32%. In 2019, it was 85.63% That means that that of the 48,234 candidates who sat for NCLEX-PN, 41,303 passed.How difficult is the NCLEX-PN?The NCLEX-PN is challenging—it's supposed to be. The purpose is to determine if you're capable of providing safe and effective care for clients who are trusting you with their lives. Just as you expect to receive excellent medical care, passing the NCLEX-PN is proof that you are able to give the same level of care.If you attended an accredited school for your LPN/LVN education, passed your classes, and did well in your clinical rotations, you already have a solid foundation. Your knowledge and experience will provide most of what you need to understand the content of NCLEX.You will still need to become familiar with how to read and understand NCLEX questions, and then apply everything you've learned to answer them correctly. This is where your own discipline and effort are important. It's going to be up to you to study and prepare for your examination. Fortunately, there are plenty of resources, including Nurse Plus,Who is responsible for writing the NCLEX-PN?The National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) is the organization that designs the NCLEX-PN and NCLEX-RN. The exam questions (called "test items") are based on two factors:An analysis of the activities that an LPN/LVN perform frequently and that are identified as also important for entry-level nurses to know and understand, to ensure client safety.The results of a knowledge, skills and abilities (KSA) survey. The primary purpose of the KSA study is to identify the knowledge needed by a newly-licensed LPN/LVN in order to provide safe and effective care.As a future licensed nurse, you're expected to do more than just memorize facts for your NCLEX-PN. While you will be asked about details such as vital signs and laboratory values, the questions are likely to apply them to a client's diagnosis or situation. More good news: You've probably already been doing this throughout your nursing education!NCSBN uses Bloom's Taxonomy to write NCLEX test items: "Since the practice of nursing requires application of knowledge, skills and abilities, the majority of items are written at the application or higher levels of cognitive ability, which requires more complex thought processing." (Read this Nurse Plus article to learn more about Bloom's taxonomy and to see examples of questions you may encounter on your NCLEX.)What's the best place to start studying for my NCLEX-PN?We recommend that you begin by downloading the NCSBN Test Plan for the NCLEX-PN. The test plan is effective April 1, 2020 through March 31, 2023. It is the road map for your studies.The Test Plan outlines each of the four Client Need categories, tells how much content from each category (or subcategory) will be on the examination, and lists both the related LPN/LVN activities and content. There is no way to know the exact questions you will be asked, but the Test Plan will help you focus on possible subject matter.Here are the Client Need categories and subcategories for the NCLEX-PN:Client Needs: CategoriesPercentage of Test ItemsSafe and Effective Care EnvironmentCoordinated CareSafety and Infection ControlHealth Promotion and Maintenance6-12%Psychosocial Integrity9-15%Physiological IntegrityBasic Care and ComfortPharmacological TherapiesReduction of Risk and PotentialPhysiological AdaptationCan you give me an example of what to do with the Test Plan?Absolutely! Let's look at Health Promotion and Maintenance. It's the smallest of the Client Needs, but will still be about 10% of your NCLEX, so it's important to answer those test items correctly.NCSBN defines Health Promotion and Maintenance: "The LPN/LVN provides nursing care for clients that incorporate knowledge of expected stages of growth and development, and prevention and/or early detection of health problems." Now we know that this section is about caring for clients throughout their lifespan. We also know that it involves helping clients prevent illness or at least detect problems as soon as possible.Next, there is the list of activities that an LPN/LVN should be able to perform. Go down this list and see if there is anything that you're not familiar with or that you know you need to study more:Provide care that meets the needs of the newborn less than 1 month old through the infant or toddler client through 2 yearsProvide care that meets the needs of the preschool, school age and adolescent client ages 3 through 17 yearsProvide care that meets the needs of the adult client ages 18 through 64 yearsProvide care that meets the needs of the adult client ages 65 and overAssist with fetal heart monitoring for the antepartum clientAssist with monitoring a client in laborMonitor recovery of stable postpartum clientCollect data for health history (e.g., client medical history, family medical history)Collect baseline physical data (e.g., skin integrity, height and weight)Identify barriers to communicationIdentify barriers to learningCompare client to developmental milestonesAssist client with expected life transition (e.g., attachment to newborn, parenting, retirement)Identify clients in need of immunizations (required and voluntary) Participate in health screening or health promotion programsProvide information for prevention of high-risk behaviors (e.g., substance abuse, sexual practices, smoking cessation)Identify community resources for clientsFinally, there are several pages of content that you may find on your NCLEX. These aren't the actual test items, but they are indications of what they may be about. Here is a sample of what you'll find:Data Collection TechniquesCollect data for health history (e.g., client medical history, family medical history)Collect baseline physical data (e.g., skin integrity, height and weight)Prepare client for physical examination (e.g., reinforce explanation of procedure, provide privacy and comfort)Document findings according to agency/facility policies/proceduresReport client physical examination results to health care providerWith this information from every Client Need category and subcategory, you now have both a Study Guide and a checklist to make your own personal Study Plan.How can Nurse Plus help me?Glad you asked! While we can't do the actual studying for you, we can help you get familiar with NCLEX questions, the test format, and ways to reinforce your learning:Practice tests: You can take them as often as you like. Each time, the questions and the options are randomly shuffled, so you aren't repeating the tests in the same order. Many of the test items include the current terminology that's used on NCLEX, so you'll get accustomed to how the wording will look on the exam.Instant feedback: If you answer a test item correctly, you automatically advance to the next one. If you choose an incorrect option, we provide an explanation so you can get the information you need. If you're not certain about which option to select, we also can give you a hint—sometimes, that's all you need.SATA Questions: Select-All-That-Apply (SATA) questions are among the most difficult you'll encounter on NCLEX. We had requests to include them, and we have! There are six SATA practice tests, and more to come. Take them again and again, so you can understand the reasoning behind the questions.Flashcards: One of the oldest and best proven ways to learn is by using flashcards. Instead of the math tables from your elementary education, we have hundreds of medical terms, facts, and concepts for you to review. Go through them and keep track of which ones require your attention.NCLEX Simulator: Using the same Computer Adaptive Testing (CAT) system you'll have on your test day, take this "final exam" at least three times. Each time, there will be new questions; just like the real NCLEX, you will receive a minimum of 85 questions, all the way up to the maximum of 205 questions. And, just like the real NCLEX, the exam is timed. This is one of the best ways to prepare for your Test Day.Adult Learning Principles: Adults learn differently from children and we have applied scientific standards to create our responsive, interactive website that will help you reach your goal of becoming a licensed professional nurse. We know you're motivated, but busy, so we make it easy for you to navigate the website and find what you want.I want to study more! Can I take the NCLEX-RN practice tests?A: Of course! In fact, we hope you do. You already know that there is a lot of overlap in the RN and LPN/LVN education programs. Both have courses in common, including infection, safety, client care, and psychosocial issues. Nurse Plus allows you to access ALL the practice tests, so you're free to take RN practice tests, too.The big differences are that RN programs have more focus on management/supervision and pharmacological therapies. Because RNs have more responsibilities, they receive more training in Analysis and Evaluation concepts. They also learn about parenteral and high-risk medications.Here's a suggestion: Choose one of the Client Needs tabs in the NCLEX-RN section. There's a description of what is covered in each practice test. Give it a try! If you come across a question that is clearly meant for an RN, such as calculating an IV drip rate, simply take a guess. That's how you can advance to the next question. You won't get 100% on the practice test, but you will get lots of good practice on content that can be included on your NCLEX.Any last-minute advice?We can't stress this enough: the more you study and practice, the more comfortable and confident you'll be on the day you sit for your NCLEX-PN.Look for other ways to review, too. If you're a visual learner, go to YouTube and find video lectures or demonstrations about what you still need to know. If you like to read and take notes, find a print book filled with questions; the major textbook publishers (Lippincott, Mosby, Saunders, etc.) each sell books filled with questions and answers. If you do best in a group, organize some classmates and get together regularly. Online meetings are easy and convenient to do. No matter what your style, stick to a schedule!

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