

The National Registry Test Prep Guide



Of all of the worries that I hear from medic students about licensure process, taking the National Registry test is by far the most common. It is odd that the *style* of the test causes more anxiety than the actual content but unfortunately that's the nature of the game here in the US. In this quick and dirty guide, I'm going to cover three basic topics: how the National Registry is structured, how to formulate a study schedule, and how to become a master tester.

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How the National Registry is Structured

The Pass / Fail System

As most of you know, the National Registry is an adaptive test that gets progressively harder as you do better and progressively easier as you do worse. The test is looking for you to maintain a level of difficulty that is above a certain threshold rather than a minimum percentage of correct answers. In fact, one can theoretically pass the National Registry by with a percentage score that would be failing in a traditional class! Because of this, it is difficult to gauge how you're doing mid test. If you've been killing it, you will be getting insanely hard questions and may feel like you were unprepared. Conversely, if you've been answering everything incorrectly, you will get very easy questions which may lead you to believe that you came in overly prepared.

As you can see in the image to the left, your progress is represented by the line that is straddling the "pass" and "fail" region. As you answer questions correctly your line moves towards the pass region and as you get questions wrong you will be pushed into the fail zone. Your goal as the student is to get your line into the passing zone and, at the very least, straddle that line. Unfortunately, the information as to where those zones lie is proprietary information. Understanding the basic structure of the test is extremely useful, though.

Question Format

The question format of this test is fairly standard. You will have a question which can range from scenarios to basic knowledge to EKG interpretation that will be accompanied by four choices. The choices will generally have two obviously wrong answers and two answers that are very close. You may not go back to questions and you may not skip questions.

Test length

As if the changing difficulty of the test isn't stressful enough, the number of questions you get is unpredictable. Some people will get 70 and some will get 150. Generally, the test will cut you off when it "decides" that it has enough information about you to judge your competency. That is to say, if you consistently do very well (or very poorly for that matter) then you will get cut

off early. If you straddle the "passing line" then you will get a very long test. In some cases, though, students will be selected on a random basis to take the entire test regardless of their performance. It is assumed that these are calibration tests that are used to keep the content relevant. As with most things, there is always an exception to the rule so don't get hung up on your test length. Like I said, it is pretty unpredictable.

How to Formulate a Study Schedule

The key to doing well in any testing situation is proper time management and adequate preparation.

Like any successful financial investment portfolio, diversity is the key to success in passing your test. MedicTests.com uses a combination of 3 learning environments to maximize your retention of the material.

1. The NREMT Review and Study Section of MedicTests.com. Hundreds of detailed EMS topics written in plain English and organized by section.
2. The Online NREMT Exam center. Over 4000 bloom-verified NREMT questions for each provider level, uniquely created to simulate the exact question types and topics of the National Registry Exam. These are organized by category and are bite sized 25-questions tests complete with question feedback, explanations and rationales, and score tracking!
3. The **National Registry Simulator™** software was designed to recreate the testing pattern and experience of the actual National Registry Exam. It is recommended that you do this twice a week, when you have about 2 hours to go through the entire program. Its primary function is to build your test endurance and to get you used to NOT KNOWING WHERE YOU STAND, in the middle of a test, and it gives you the opportunity to practice focusing on ONE question at a time, independently of how you feel you are doing on the exam. Test endurance is a very hard thing to build. Your mind will want to GET IT OVER WITH AND JUST HOPE! You have to fight the desire to have it over with, and focus on the desire to answer this ONE NEXT QUESTION correctly.

After you obtain your tools you will be ready to formulate a schedule. As you will notice, creating a study schedule is not unlike a workout or training schedule. Medic Tests suggests that you begin preparation **90 days** prior to

your test day. In the interest of saving space, I will outline a 30 day plan. This can be easily extended to a 90 day plan.

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Monday	MT Study Center	MT Study Center	MT Study Center	National Registry Simulator
Tuesday	MT Practice Tests	MT Practice Tests	MT Practice Tests	MT Individual Practice
Wednesday	Group Study / Flashcards	Group Study / Flashcards	Group Study / Flashcards	Group Study / Flashcards
Thursday	MT Practice Tests	MT Practice Tests	MT Practice Tests	MT Practice Tests
Friday	Rest	Mentor meeting	MT Practice Tests	National Registry Simulator
Saturday	National Registry Simulator	National Registry Simulator	National Registry Simulator	Rest
Sunday	Rest	Rest	Rest	Test Day

You will notice that this plan has three major characteristics:

1. Consistency
2. Variety
3. Rest days

How to Become a Master Tester

Ultimately, the only way to become a great tester is to test often. Like anything else, practice makes perfect. Aside from keeping a consistent testing schedule (see above), here are some tips that you can employ during your test.

- **Take your time!** As the old EMS adage goes "When on scene, walk. When you feel the urge to run, walk slower." Getting carried away will stress you out and ultimately cause you to fail. There is no

previous question, there is no next question, there is only the present question.

- **Identify the oddballs.** More often than not, there will be two ridiculous questions and two plausible questions. Identifying the ridiculous will increase your chances by 100%!
- **Write things down.** Pearson VUE is required to give you a dry erase board and a marker. Use it to sketch ideas, write down concepts, and do math. Sometimes seeing your thoughts can help.
- **Learn to accept defeat.** Now, don't misunderstand me... I'm not saying give up at the slightest hint of difficulty. I'm saying if you're absolutely sure that you do not know the answer then **Identify the oddballs**, make an educated guess and move on. If you stress and stress and stress over a question then you are going to psych yourself out.

For more test tips, check out the [Top 5 Tips for the NREMT Written Exam](#)

Here are our top 5 Tips for the day of your NREMT Written Exam

1. Change the way you read the questions!

Read the LAST line of the question first, then all 4 answers, and then go back and read the entire test item. This helps you to determine EXACTLY what the question is asking and gives you the potential REAL answers ahead of time, so when you go through the stem, you know what you're looking for.

2. Think Simply. The NREMT is not trying to trick you.

First, let me say: always choose the best answer. Do not just pick the simplest answer because people say "BLS before ALS." There is ONE best answer and 3 distractors. Don't automatically assume that the one that looks the most complex is the correct answer. One of the most common mistakes is picking a more complicated answer than is appropriate.

3. ONE QUESTION! Think of ONE QUESTION!

Don't look at it as 100 questions, look at it as 1 question you answer 100 times. ONLY focus on the question in front of you. Don't worry about how well you're doing or what types of questions you're getting. ONLY remember that you got some right, you got some wrong, and the ONE question in front of you may be the one that decides whether you pass or fail. Get THIS ONE question right... over and over. If you get tired, or you're starting to get insecure about how you're doing: I want you to remember to let all of that crap go, and mentally start over by focusing all your attention on answering THIS ONE NEXT QUESTION CORRECTLY with all of your mind.

4. Know your BLS or ACLS algorithms!

What makes you crazy during the test are the questions that ask, "What do you do first?" Those questions are just trying to see if you can recognize which emergency issue is of higher priority. They will make you CRAZY if you don't have the BLS or ACLS algorithm down. If you know the steps in order, you will not have a stroke during the test. Do you have any idea how many questions on the registry will ask you whether you should give oxygen first, start compressions first, or attach AED/Defibrillator?

5. Mindset is everything! Go in there to take its heart!

Get your head in the right place before you go in! As we say in our advice for new paramedic students: This IS a pressure test, but this is a pressure job. So, change your mindset. Don't cram like you're scared. Your mind will forget the cram and remember the scared! Don't go in hoping for an easy test; go in wanting to destroy a hard one! Take a break in your car before you go in and completely clear your mind. Remind yourself of the effort you put into this. You've put hours into your NREMT test prep. You have built your test endurance and prepared with our National Registry Simulator™. You have been through COUNTLESS hours of lectures, clinicals, and skill sessions in school. You have worked **very hard** and **you have earned this**. You are

perfectly prepared for what you're about to do, and the entire universe has aligned on this day to watch as you slay this dragon. **This is your hero moment. Act like it.**

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