

**YOU'VE
GRADUATED,
NOW WHAT?
KICKSTARTING
YOUR NURSING
CAREER.**

Nursing **CE**
by ati



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PASS THE NCLEX EXAM

Study, Study, Study!

Let's face it, the NCLEX Exam has been on your mind since you started nursing school! Now that you have made your way through nursing school, mastering pharmacology, clinicals and so much more, it's time to check the NCLEX Exam off of your to do list.

Most likely, you have been preparing for test day for months. Go ahead and pat yourself on the back! You deserve it. How can you continue the studying until test day? Try these resources.

Ask for advice. Do you have a friend or classmate who has successfully passed the exam? Good! Utilize him or her as a resource - they can provide you with tips, tricks and advice that will ease your mind. We also chatted with a new nurse who passed the NCLEX in just 75 questions. [Here's what she had to say about studying and succeeding.](#)

Attend an NCLEX review. If your school did not provide you with an NCLEX review, no worries! We're sharing a very helpful, and also very free, [mini NCLEX Review with you here.](#)

Familiarize yourself with the exam. The National Council of State Boards of Nursing, also known as NCSBN, is the organization responsible for the exam. Lucky for you, they have created dozens of resources that will help you understand what you're walking into. [Here are a few to get you started.](#)

Timed Test Tips - Say That Five Times Fast!

As a nursing school graduate, you have mastered plenty of subjects, from pharmacology to medical surgical, in a timed testing environment. Now, bring on the NCLEX Exam. To help give you some peace of mind before this final test, we want to share some tips and tricks.

Eat & Sleep Well: Leading up to an exam, it is important to eat well and sleep well. That means those all-nighters packed with caffeine are a big no no. According to ATI's Achieve tutorial, eating well and sleeping well leading up to an exam can actually help to reduce anxiety.

Positivity Is Key: According to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America (ADAA), one of the main causes of test anxiety is the fear of failure. To help counter this, "Remember that your self-worth should not be dependent on or defined by a test grade. Creating a system of rewards and reasonable expectations for studying can help to produce effective studying habits."

Relax Your Body and Mind: So you're in the middle of the exam and then you see it, a question that you really can't recall the answer to. Instead of panicking, the ADAA recommends practicing relaxation techniques by focusing on deep, slow breaths and relaxing your body, one muscle at a time. By doing this, you allow your body and mind to refocus and take on the tricky question.


Last, But Not Least: Test Day Prep

You have answered every last practice question and reviewed every last concept from nursing school, making you NCLEX ready. So what should you do the night before the big test? Relax, and check these items off of your to-do list.

Drive the Route: You're going to want to have every last stressor out of your way. The day before your exam, drive the route to the testing center. While you're at it figure out where to park. This will make your morning commute as smooth as possible.

Don't Forget the Gas: Seriously, gas up your car. Don't forget to set out all necessities, such as your ID and even the clothes that you plan to wear.

Plan a Brain-Powered Breakfast: A healthy breakfast will help you stay energized, alert and ready to take on the NCLEX! Be sure that you pick a meal to set you up for success.



FIND YOUR DREAM JOB

Resume 101

On to the job hunt! First things first, let's clean up that resume. Below are a few FAQs answered by talent acquisition recruiters and nurse managers for new grads. Want to see more? ATI Nursing Education dug into [resume tips and the application process during this Facebook Live interview](#).

How long should my resume be? One or two pages is a-okay. If you have enough relevant experience for two pages, it's okay to make it that long!

Will not having an internship impact my ability to find a job? While internships certainly stand out, there are many other ways that you can make your resume stand out without an internship experience. Think – student athlete, customer service or multitasking jobs such as a bartender or waitress, and highlighting each clinical experience.

How far back should I list jobs on my resume? List any relevant information! However, you should be the most descriptive of your roles from the past five years. Keep in mind, your past experiences in the medical field will still be relevant to the roles today, especially if you are second-career nurse.

How is volunteer experience viewed? That's a good question. Volunteer experience is certainly looked at, and it weighs heavier if it's related to the position you're applying for.

The Interview: How to Prep & Impress

Once your resume impresses your potential employers, it's time for the interview! Again, we teamed up with nurse recruiters to dive into what they're looking for when it comes to a candidate's interview. You can see [our full Facebook Live interview, here](#), and see explore the highlights below.

What should I wear to the interview? Dressing professionally shows that you are prepared and taking the interview process seriously. We recommend ladies wear a suit, dress, or skirt with comfortable shoes. Avoid tight fitting or revealing clothing. Men should wear a suit if they have one or slacks with a button up shirt and tie.

What should I do the day of the interview? Be rested, you want to feel your best on this important day. Arrive a little early in case there is a traffic or parking issue. Review any notes you have made and mentally walk through some interview question responses in your head. Also, have extra copies of your resume available as you will likely meet with a few people during the interview.

What should I do after the interview? As soon as possible after the interview, write down your thoughts. What did you like? What did you not like? Are there questions you still have? Do this for each interview you have so you can compare notes. Also, send a handwritten note or email to the hiring manager.

If I accept a position, what are my next steps? Take the NCLEX as soon as you can after graduation and allow yourself time to get licensed. You can also use this time to continue to research information about the hospital and unit you were hired for. Remember, many hospitals will hire you while you are still in nursing school and prior to you taking the NCLEX.



TRANSITION TO LIFE AS A PROFESSIONAL NURSE

Becoming a nurse doesn't stop when you graduate and take the NCLEX.

Congratulations! You've survived nursing school and passed the NCLEX, so now what do you do? Now is the time for you to focus on your career, start building your credentials and gain some real world experience. Your nursing career won't magically grow without some input from you so get started with these resources.

Make your resume stand out. Your resume is a living document that needs to tell a story about you and your brand. It is important to make sure that it is a flexible, well-designed document that is a powerful and effective representation of you, your brand, and the nursing career you've worked so hard to create. Don't know where to get started? [Here are 4 tips that will help you take your resume to the next level.](#)

Get your feet wet. Your first two years are all about getting your feet wet, continuing to learn, and being a total sponge for new experiences, skills, and knowledge in the field. You can overcome any jitters that you might be having as you embark on your new journey by knowing exactly [what to expect the first 2 years out of nursing school.](#)



MAP OUT YOUR CONTINUING EDUCATION CREDITS

Don't let your nursing license expire!

One of the most important aspects of being a nurse is maintaining your license. In order to renew your nursing license, you have to prove that you are still current with your nursing knowledge and you can do this by completing a certain amount of nursing continuing education (CE) hours before your license renewal deadline.

So, how do you go about doing that?

Know your CE requirements. As soon as you become licensed, it's important to pay attention to your state Board of Nursing continuing education requirements in order to keep your license in good standing. For many nurses, obtaining their CEs is a requirement that is put off until the last minute and they are left rushing to complete their requirements and make sure that their license doesn't expire. In order to help you avoid this last minute rush, we created [a new mobile-friendly website that was designed to offer nurses a comprehensive source to confirm and complete their CE hours fast and efficiently.](#)

Familiarize yourself with CEUs and Contact Hours. You will often hear other nurses and other professionals in the industry refer to completing their continuing education requirements as CEUs or contact hours. We made [this guide on Nursing CEUs vs contact hours for you to help you](#) understand the difference and variation between the two before your deadline arrives.

Take a Free CE Course. You might be feeling overwhelmed with CEs if this is your first licensure renewal period. Don't worry if you are! We're sharing [this free CE course](#) that we created for you so you can experience just how easy it is to complete your CE requirements - you will earn one CE hour too!



RESOURCES FOR NEW NURSES

Gain Real World Experience

Nurses are the backbone of the healthcare industry so it's important for you to stay up-to-date on the latest evidence-based practice guidelines and experience the new developments in various areas of nursing, medicine, and healthcare delivery. As a new nurse, you'll be able to learn a lot of these new concepts and techniques much faster by using these resources.

Seek Out Mentors. One realization that many new nurses face is that they have a whole lot to learn. A great deal of learning happens on the job and if you want to succeed, you're going to want to seek out one of your more experienced colleagues for tips, advice and any real world experience that they are willing to share with you. We asked a nursing career coach more about this and he told us that you want your mentor to be someone who can help you get acclimated to your new environment and someone who inspires you to do more with your nursing career. [Here are his other 10 tips that will help you develop your career.](#)

Ask for advice. We can't stress this one enough - new nurses need to learn from more experienced nurses and learn how they move throughout the world. Don't be afraid to ask a co-worker or even a friend who has been in practice for at least a few years for any tips or advice that can help you navigate your new career. We also chatted with [Michele Steinbeck, a leading nurse in the industry, who gave us some advice that she feels every nurse should keep in mind as they grow in the profession.](#)

Use Your CEs to Explore Job Opportunities. One of the best and easiest ways to explore other job opportunities in nursing is through continuing education. CE courses offer another view into other job opportunities in a variety of ways including courses specifically aimed at exploring roles for nurses as well as understanding the basics of rules and regulations for certain roles such as home health or hospice nursing. Check out what Kathy Quan, award winning nurse author and blogger, [has to say about using your CEs to explore other job opportunities in nursing.](#)



MEET THE AUTHORS

Meet the authors.

This guide was written by ATI Nursing Education and NursingCE.com to help you navigate life beyond nursing school. We are dedicated to both nursing students and nurses alike! Learn a little bit about our authors.

About ATI Nursing Education

ATI Nursing Education is the nation's preeminent e-learning provider, offering programs that are instrumental in improving faculty, student and program outcomes. From succeeding nursing school to passing the NCLEX Exam, we are passionate about helping students accomplish their nursing goals.

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