

# Study Plan & Exam Mindset

## NHA CPT



Your step-by-step plan to stay focused, calm, and exam-ready.

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## How to Use This Planner

This planner is here to walk with you from today until the day you sit for your NHA CPT exam.

- Choose your study plan: 7, 14, or 30 days.
- Open this planner every time you study and follow the day written on the page.
- Use the Weekly Checklist to see your progress instead of trusting your anxiety.
- Come back to the mindset pages whenever you feel tired, behind, or discouraged.

You don't need motivation first.

You start, and motivation follows.

## Your Exam Journey – Read This First

Maybe you haven't studied in years.

Maybe you failed an exam before.

Maybe you are working, raising a family, and trying to do this when you are already exhausted.

None of that means you can't become a certified phlebotomy technician.

It only means your path is different.

This exam is not asking you to be perfect.

It's asking you to:

- show up,
- focus on the right things,
- and keep going when you feel like stopping.

There will be days when you feel strong and days when you feel lost.

Both types of days count as part of your journey.

## Three Mindset Shifts for the NHA CPT

### 1. "I'm not behind. I'm in training."

Every chapter you read, every question you answer, is part of your training. You are not late; you are in progress.

### 2. "Small, honest effort beats big promises."

Saying "I'll study for 4 hours" and doing nothing hurts your confidence.

Sitting down for 20 honest minutes builds it.

### 3. "Anxious and capable can exist together."

Feeling nervous does not mean you are not ready.

You can feel anxious and still read, still answer questions, still move forward.

## Your Promise to Yourself

Copy this, sign it, and keep it where you can see it:

I am allowed to be scared and still try.  
I will not wait to feel “ready” before I start.  
I will use this planner, one small step at a time,  
until I give myself the chance to pass this exam.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **When You Feel Like Quitting – Read This Page, Then Decide**

There will be days when you think: “I can’t do this”, “It’s too much”, or “I’m not smart enough.”  
This page is for those days.

### **If You Feel Overwhelmed**

What your mind says:

“There’s too much to learn. I’ll never remember all of this.”

What is actually true:

You don’t need to remember everything today.

You only need to complete the next 15–20 minutes on your plan.

Do this:

1. Close your eyes and take 5 slow breaths.
2. Look at your plan and circle **one** task: one section, one set of questions.
3. Set a 15-minute timer.
4. When the timer ends, you are allowed to stop — but only after those 15 minutes.

### **If You Feel “Too Stupid”**

What your mind says:

“Everyone else gets it. I’m just not good at this stuff.”

What is actually true:

You are learning something new, in a language full of medical terms, on top of your normal life.  
Struggle is part of learning, not proof you are broken.

Do this:

1. Take one question you got wrong.
2. Read the correct answer and explanation slowly.
3. Write down in your own words: “I missed this because... Next time I will remember that...”
4. Say out loud: “I am training my brain. This is what training looks like.”

### **If You Feel Behind**

What your mind says:

“I should have started earlier. It’s too late now.”

What is actually true:

You can't go back and start sooner.

You can start **today** and still give yourself a real chance.

Do this:

1. Cross out any unrealistic plan that makes you feel guilty.
2. Choose the 7-day or 14-day plan and start at **Day 1**, even if your exam is close.
3. Highlight the most important chapters for your situation (Safety, Venipuncture, Order of Draw, Specimen Handling).
4. Focus on those first. Extra topics come later.

### **3-Minute Reset Before You Quit**

Before you decide to stop for the day, do this small reset:

1. **Breathe** – 10 slow breaths.
2. **Name it** – “Right now I feel \_\_\_\_\_ (tired / scared / angry / bored).”
3. **Choose one action** – Read one page, answer one question, or review one chart.

If you still want to stop after that, stop.

But most of the time, those 3 minutes will be enough to get you moving again.

## **Anti-Procrastination Playbook – For Real Life, Not Perfect Days**

You don't live in a quiet library.

You live in the real world: work shifts, kids, noise, stress, and a phone that never stops.

This page is your plan for those days when everything pushes you to say “I'll do it tomorrow

### **The 5-Minute Rule**

If “study” feels too big, shrink it.

Your rule:

“I will sit down and study for 5 minutes. If I still want to stop after 5 minutes, I can.”

Most of the time, once you start, you will continue.

If you really stop after 5 minutes, you still kept your promise to yourself.

### **Create a Study Trigger**

Pick one daily action you already do and attach your study time to it.

Examples:

- After my first coffee, I study for 20 minutes.
- After I put the kids to bed, I study for 15 minutes.

- After my shift, before I touch my phone, I study.

Write your trigger here:

“Every day, after I \_\_\_\_\_, I will study for \_\_\_\_\_ minutes.”

### **Make It Easy to Start**

Before you finish a study session, prepare the next one:

- Leave your book open at the next chapter or section.
- Keep your planner and pen in the same visible place.
- Write a sticky note: “Next time: Chapter \_\_\_\_, pages –.”

Starting is easier when the decision is already made.

### **Plan for Low-Energy Days**

You will have days when your brain feels like it’s done.  
Those days are still useful.

On low-energy days, your menu is:

- Read only summaries or bolded key points.
- Review charts for order of draw, tube colors, and complications.
- Do 5 very easy questions just to keep the habit alive.

Write this somewhere you will see it:

“Low-energy days are still study days. I just switch to light mode.”

### **End-of-Week Check-In for Your Mind**

Once a week, answer these:

- One thing I’m proud of this week: \_\_\_\_\_
- One thing that was hard: \_\_\_\_\_
- One thing I will do differently next week: \_\_\_\_\_

You are not just learning phlebotomy.

You are learning how to show up for yourself — and that will stay with you long after the exam.

## **7-Day Intensive Study Plan**

Use this plan when you have only one week and can study 2–3 hours per day. You will touch all the main chapters at least once.

### **Day 1 – Exam Overview, Chapter 1 & Chapter 2 (Basics)**

- Read: Introduction – Why This Guide Is Different, How to Use It, What to Expect on the NHA CPT Exam.
- Read: **Chapter 1 – The Role of the Phlebotomist** (duties, ethics, communication, HIPAA, consent).
- Skim: **Chapter 2 – Safety and Compliance** to see the main topics.
- Make a quick list of the chapters you feel weakest in.

## **Day 2 – Chapter 2 – Safety and Compliance**

- Read carefully: PPE and infection prevention.
- Read: OSHA guidelines and handling of hazardous materials.
- Study: Critical situations (blood exposure, common errors).
- Do: Chapter 2 review questions.

## **Day 3 – Chapter 3 – Anatomy and Blood: Just the Essentials**

- Read: Circulatory system and heart (structures, flow, key veins).
- Read: Blood components (serum, plasma, cells).
- Review: “When NOT to draw blood” situations.
- Do: Chapter 3 review questions.

## **Day 4 – Chapter 4 – Venipuncture: The Procedure**

- Read: Step-by-step procedure (preparation, execution, closure).
- Read: “Where, how, and when to draw”.
- Review: Use of butterfly, syringe, and evacuated tube.
- Read: Common errors and what to do if the draw fails.
- Do: Chapter 4 review questions.

## **Day 5 – Chapter 5 + Chapter 6 (Order of Draw & Special Patients)**

- Read: **Chapter 5 – Order of Draw and Additives**
  - Correct order of collection
  - Tube colors and additives
  - Associated tests and visual mnemonics
- Read: **Chapter 6 – Special Collections and Complex Patients**
  - Capillary draws, neonatal screening
  - Pediatric, geriatric, and anxious patients
  - Urine and stool collection overview
- Do: Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 review questions (or as many as you can).

## **Day 6 – Chapter 7 + Chapter 8 (Specimen Handling & POCT)**

- Read: **Chapter 7 – Specimen Handling**
  - Labeling and transport
  - Storage, temperature, and centrifugation
  - Pre-analytical errors and rejected samples
- Read: **Chapter 8 – Point-of-Care Testing & Quality Control Essentials**
  - Common POCT tests
  - Quality requirements and documentation
  - QA vs QC and practical examples
- Do: Chapter 7 and Chapter 8 review questions.

## **Day 7 – Chapter 9 – Full Practice Test & Review**

- Do: **Chapter 9 – Full Practice Test** (100 NHA CPT-style questions).
- Review: All missed questions using the answer explanations.
- Re-check: Any chapters connected to the questions you missed most.

## **End of Week Check-In**

- ☐ I completed all 7 days.
- ☐ I did the full practice test in Chapter 9.
- ☐ I reviewed all chapters at least once.
- ☐ I feel ready to continue with more practice and timed tests.

# 14-Day Standard Study Plan

Use this plan when you have about two weeks and can study 45–60 minutes per day.

DAY	MAIN TOPIC (WITH CHAPTER)	PRACTICE (Y/N)
DAY 1	Introduction + <b>Chapter 1 – The Role of the Phlebotomist</b> (overview)	<input type="checkbox"/>
DAY 2	<b>Chapter 1 – The Role of the Phlebotomist</b> (ethics, communication, HIPAA, consent)	<input type="checkbox"/>
DAY 3	<b>Chapter 2 – Safety and Compliance</b> (PPE and infection prevention)	<input type="checkbox"/>
DAY 4	<b>Chapter 2 – Safety and Compliance</b> (OSHA guidelines, hazardous materials, blood exposure)	<input type="checkbox"/>
DAY 5	<b>Chapter 3 – Anatomy and Blood</b> (circulatory system, key veins, blood components)	<input type="checkbox"/>
DAY 6	<b>Chapter 3 – Anatomy and Blood</b> (“When NOT to draw blood”) + review questions	<input type="checkbox"/>
DAY 7	<b>Chapter 4 – Venipuncture: The Procedure</b> (step-by-step procedure)	<input type="checkbox"/>
DAY 8	<b>Chapter 4 – Venipuncture</b> (where, how, and when to draw; devices and common errors) + review questions	<input type="checkbox"/>
DAY 9	<b>Chapter 5 – Order of Draw and Additives</b> (order of collection, tube colors, additives)	<input type="checkbox"/>
DAY 10	<b>Chapter 5 – Order of Draw and Additives</b> (associated tests, common mistakes and how to avoid them) + review questions	<input type="checkbox"/>
DAY 11	<b>Chapter 6 – Special Collections and Complex Patients</b> (capillary draws, neonatal screening, special patients)	<input type="checkbox"/>
DAY 12	<b>Chapter 7 – Specimen Handling</b> (labeling, transport, storage, centrifugation)	<input type="checkbox"/>
DAY 13	<b>Chapter 8 – POCT &amp; Quality Control Essentials</b> (common POCT tests, QA vs QC, practical examples) + selected review questions	<input type="checkbox"/>
DAY 14	<b>Chapter 9 – Full Practice Test</b> (do at least half under light timing)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Aim for 45–60 minutes per day. Check the Practice box every time you answer questions or take a test.

## 30-Day Gradual Study Plan – Days 1–15

Use this plan if you prefer shorter sessions (20–30 minutes) or if you are balancing work, family, and study.

DAY	MAIN TOPIC (WITH CHAPTER)	PRACTICE (Y/N)
DAY 1	Introduction + <b>Chapter 1 – The Role of the Phlebotomist</b> (overview)	<input type="checkbox"/>
DAY 2	<b>Chapter 1 – The Role of the Phlebotomist</b> (duties and responsibilities)	<input type="checkbox"/>
DAY 3	<b>Chapter 1 – The Role of the Phlebotomist</b> (ethics and professional behavior)	<input type="checkbox"/>
DAY 4	<b>Chapter 1 – The Role of the Phlebotomist</b> (patient communication, HIPAA, consent types)	<input type="checkbox"/>
DAY 5	<b>Chapter 2 – Safety and Compliance</b> (PPE and infection prevention)	<input type="checkbox"/>
DAY 6	<b>Chapter 2 – Safety and Compliance</b> (OSHA guidelines, handling hazardous materials)	<input type="checkbox"/>
DAY 7	<b>Chapter 2 – Safety and Compliance</b> (critical situations, blood exposure, common errors) + review questions	<input type="checkbox"/>
DAY 8	<b>Chapter 3 – Anatomy and Blood</b> (circulatory system and heart)	<input type="checkbox"/>
DAY 9	<b>Chapter 3 – Anatomy and Blood</b> (key veins and blood components)	<input type="checkbox"/>
DAY 10	<b>Chapter 3 – Anatomy and Blood</b> (“When NOT to draw blood”) + review questions	<input type="checkbox"/>
DAY 11	<b>Chapter 4 – Venipuncture: The Procedure</b> (step-by-step procedure)	<input type="checkbox"/>
DAY 12	<b>Chapter 4 – Venipuncture</b> (where, how, and when to draw)	<input type="checkbox"/>
DAY 13	<b>Chapter 4 – Venipuncture</b> (butterfly, syringe, evacuated tube)	<input type="checkbox"/>
DAY 14	<b>Chapter 4 – Venipuncture</b> (common errors and what to do if the draw fails) + review questions	<input type="checkbox"/>
DAY 15	Mixed review of Chapters 1–4 (key points) + 10–15 mixed practice questions	<input type="checkbox"/>



## 30-Day Gradual Study Plan – Days 16–30

DAY	MAIN TOPIC (WITH CHAPTER)	PRACTICE (Y/N)
DAY 16	<b>Chapter 5 – Order of Draw and Additives</b> (correct order of collection)	<input type="checkbox"/>
DAY 17	<b>Chapter 5 – Order of Draw and Additives</b> (tube colors and additives)	<input type="checkbox"/>
DAY 18	<b>Chapter 5 – Order of Draw and Additives</b> (associated tests and visual mnemonics)	<input type="checkbox"/>
DAY 19	<b>Chapter 5 – Order of Draw and Additives</b> (common mistakes and how to avoid them) + review questions	<input type="checkbox"/>
DAY 20	<b>Chapter 6 – Special Collections and Complex Patients</b> (capillary draws and neonatal screening)	<input type="checkbox"/>
DAY 21	<b>Chapter 6 – Special Collections and Complex Patients</b> (pediatric, geriatric, and anxious patients)	<input type="checkbox"/>
DAY 22	<b>Chapter 6 – Special Collections and Complex Patients</b> (urine and stool collection overview) + review questions	<input type="checkbox"/>
DAY 23	<b>Chapter 7 – Specimen Handling</b> (labeling and transport)	<input type="checkbox"/>
DAY 24	<b>Chapter 7 – Specimen Handling</b> (storage, temperature, and centrifugation)	<input type="checkbox"/>
DAY 25	<b>Chapter 7 – Specimen Handling</b> (pre-analytical errors and rejected samples) + review questions	<input type="checkbox"/>
DAY 26	<b>Chapter 8 – POCT &amp; Quality Control Essentials</b> (common POCT tests overview)	<input type="checkbox"/>
DAY 27	<b>Chapter 8 – POCT &amp; Quality Control Essentials</b> (quality requirements, documentation, QA vs QC)	<input type="checkbox"/>
DAY 28	<b>Chapter 8 – POCT &amp; Quality Control Essentials</b> (practical QA/QC examples) + review questions	<input type="checkbox"/>
DAY 29	<b>Chapter 9 – Full Practice Test</b> (do as many questions as you can)	<input type="checkbox"/>
DAY 30	Review your missed questions from Chapter 9 + quick review of any weak chapters	<input type="checkbox"/>

# Weekly Study & Review Checklist

Week of: \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ I studied at least **3 days** this week.
- ☐ I answered at least \_\_\_\_\_ practice questions.
- ☐ I reviewed **one weak chapter or topic**.
- ☐ I did **at least one mini-quiz with a timer**.
- ☐ I spent **5 minutes** reviewing key charts (order of draw, tubes, complications).

## My 3 Priorities This Week

1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 

## Anti-Anxiety Toolkit – NHA CPT

Use this page whenever your stress rises. Follow these mini-steps before studying, the night before the exam, and on exam day.

### Before Studying

- Breathe in through your nose for 4 seconds and out for 6 seconds, for 1–2 minutes.
- Put your phone on Do Not Disturb or leave it in another room.
- Write one clear goal for this session (for example: “Finish Chapter 3 review questions”).
- Keep water nearby and a small, light snack if needed.

### Night Before the Exam

- No cramming: do a light review of charts and key points only.
- Pack your bag:
  - Valid ID
  - Authorization / confirmation email
  - Directions to the test center
- Set **two alarms** and confirm your transport.
- Choose comfortable clothes for the exam.
- Do five minutes of slow breathing or stretching before bed.

### Exam Day

- Arrive **20–30 minutes early**.
- Eat a light snack and drink some water (not too much).
- Use the bathroom before the exam starts.
- At your station, take **three slow breaths** before you begin.
- Read each question calmly and focus on key words.
- If you freeze, mark the question, move on, and come back later.
- Repeat to yourself: **“I’ve prepared. I can take this one question at a time.”**

## Notes & Reflection

Use this page to reflect on your progress and adjust your plan.

## What still feels difficult?

## What went better than I expected?

Additional notes: