

NCLEX-RN

# Complete Study Schedule Template

*Your Week-by-Week Roadmap to NCLEX Success*

<b>Duration</b> 8-Week Plan	<b>Questions</b> 1,200+ Practice Qs	<b>Pass Rate</b> 90%+ Goal
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# Introduction & How to Use This Guide

*Your comprehensive roadmap to NCLEX-RN success*

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Congratulations on taking the first step toward your nursing career! This 8-week study schedule has been carefully designed using evidence-based learning strategies to help you master NCLEX-RN content systematically and confidently. Whether you are a new graduate or retaking the exam, this template provides a structured, flexible framework adaptable to your individual needs.

## How to Use This Template

- **Customize the schedule** – adjust daily hours based on your work/life commitments.
- **Track your progress** – use the checklists at the end to mark completed topics.
- **Prioritize weak areas** – spend extra time where your CAT scores are lowest.
- **Simulate exam conditions** – complete timed practice blocks every 3–4 days.
- **Review rationales** – never skip explanations, even for correct answers.

■ **Pro Tip:** Research shows that spaced repetition and active recall outperform passive re-reading by up to 50%. Use flashcards and practice questions daily, not just before the exam.

**NCLEX-RN 2024 Next Generation Format:** The exam now includes up to 135 questions with Next Generation NCLEX (NGN) item types including bow-tie, trend, matrix, and cloze items. This schedule includes dedicated NGN practice sessions each week.

# Assessment: Know Your Baseline

Complete this before starting Week 1

Before diving into content review, assess your current knowledge level. Take a 75-question diagnostic exam and record your scores below. This will help you allocate more time to weaker content areas.

## Diagnostic Score Tracker

CONTENT AREA	NCLEX % WEIGHT	MY SCORE	PRIORITY
Management of Care	15–21%	____%	■ High ■ Med ■ Low
Safety & Infection Control	10–16%	____%	■ High ■ Med ■ Low
Health Promotion & Maintenance	6–12%	____%	■ High ■ Med ■ Low
Psychosocial Integrity	6–12%	____%	■ High ■ Med ■ Low
Basic Care & Comfort	6–12%	____%	■ High ■ Med ■ Low
Pharmacological Therapies	12–18%	____%	■ High ■ Med ■ Low
Reduction of Risk Potential	9–15%	____%	■ High ■ Med ■ Low
Physiological Adaptation	11–17%	____%	■ High ■ Med ■ Low

# 8-Week Master Study Calendar

Overview of your entire study journey

WEEK	THEME	MAIN CONTENT AREAS	PRACTICE Qs	GOAL %
1	Foundations	Safety, Infection Control, Basic Care	75–100	50%
2	Promotion & Pharm	Health Promotion, Pharm Basics, Drug Classes	100–125	55%
3	Med-Surg I	Cardiac, Respiratory, Neurological	125–150	58%
4	Med-Surg II	GI, Renal, Endocrine, Musculoskeletal	125–150	60%
5	MH & OB	Psych Disorders, Maternal Newborn, Postpartum	100–125	62%
6	Peds & Community	Pediatric Care, Community/Public Health	100–125	65%
7	Leadership	Delegation, Management, Ethics, Legal	100–125	68%
8	Final Review	Comprehensive Review + Full Simulations	200+	72%+

■ **Pro Tip:** Aim to increase your practice question pass rate by ~3% each week. If you plateau, spend an extra session reviewing rationales before moving forward.

# Week 1 – Foundations & Safe Care

*Build a solid foundation in patient safety, infection control, and basic nursing care.*

DAY	FOCUS AREA	KEY TOPICS	STUDY HRS
Mon	Safety & Infection	Hand hygiene, PPE, isolation precautions, OSHA	3–4
Tue	Pharmacology Intro	Drug rights, routes, calculations, high-alert meds	3–4
Wed	Basic Care	ADLs, positioning, skin integrity, wound care basics	3–4
Thu	Practice Block	75 SATA + Priority questions; review all rationales	3–4
Fri	Management of Care	Delegation, chain of command, informed consent	3–4
Sat	NGN Practice	Bow-tie items: prioritization scenarios	2–3
Sun	Rest & Light Review	Flashcard review; no new content	1–2

## Week Completion Checklist

■ Standard vs. Transmission-Based Precautions	
■ The 10 Rights of Medication Administration	
■ Maslow's Hierarchy applied to NCLEX prioritization	
■ RACE & PASS fire safety mnemonics	
■ Central line care and CLABSI prevention	
■ Proper hand-off (SBAR) communication technique	

## Week 2 – Health Promotion & Pharmacology Basics

*Master health promotion concepts and key drug classifications tested heavily on NCLEX.*

DAY	FOCUS AREA	KEY TOPICS	STUDY HRS
Mon	Health Promotion	Screening guidelines, immunization schedules, Healthy People	3–4
Tue	Cardiovascular Drugs	ACE inhibitors, beta-blockers, antiarrhythmics, anticoagulants	3–4
Wed	Psych Drugs	Antipsychotics, antidepressants, mood stabilizers, anxiolytics	3–4
Thu	Practice Block	100 pharm-focused questions; analyze wrong answers	3–4
Fri	Respiratory & Pain Meds	Bronchodilators, steroids, opioids, NSAIDs	3–4
Sat	NGN + Pharm Calcs	Dosage calculations, IV drip rates, weight-based dosing	2–3
Sun	Rest & Review	Review drug classes flashcards	1–2

### Week Completion Checklist

■ Top 10 high-alert medications and their antidotes	
■ Black box warnings for common drug classes	
■ Immunization schedule: adult and pediatric	
■ Lithium toxicity signs and therapeutic levels	
■ Digoxin toxicity assessment and management	
■ Anticoagulant reversal agents	

■ **Pro Tip:** After every even week, re-take a 50-question quiz covering the past two weeks. Track your trend — improvement signals readiness; a drop signals the need for extra review.

## Week 3 – Medical-Surgical Nursing (Part I)

*Deeply review cardiac, respiratory, and neurological disorders — highest-yield Med-Surg topics.*

DAY	FOCUS AREA	KEY TOPICS	STUDY HRS
Mon	Cardiac I	MI, angina, heart failure, dysrhythmias, ECG basics	3–4
Wed	Cardiac II	Valve disorders, cardiomyopathy, pericarditis, shock	3–4
Tue	Respiratory I	Pneumonia, COPD, asthma, TB, respiratory failure	3–4
Thu	Practice Block	125 Med-Surg questions; focus on select-all-that-apply	3–4
Fri	Neurology	Stroke, seizures, increased ICP, spinal cord injury, MS	3–4
Sat	NGN Trends	Trend items: vital signs deterioration scenarios	2–3
Sun	Rest	Light review of cardiac/neuro mnemonics	1–2

### Week Completion Checklist

■ MONA protocol for acute MI	
■ Heart failure: left-sided vs. right-sided manifestations	
■ FAST assessment for stroke	
■ Cushing's triad for increased ICP	
■ Ventilator settings and alarm management	
■ Seizure precautions and post-ictal care	

## Week 4 – Medical-Surgical Nursing (Part II)

Complete Med-Surg content covering GI, renal, endocrine, and musculoskeletal systems.

DAY	FOCUS AREA	KEY TOPICS	STUDY HRS
Mon	GI System	GI bleed, Crohn's, colostomy care, liver failure, pancreatitis	3–4
Tue	Renal System	AKI, CKD, dialysis, electrolyte imbalances, UTI	3–4
Wed	Endocrine	Diabetes (DKA/HHS), thyroid disorders, Cushing's, Addison's	3–4
Thu	Practice Block	125 questions; mix of systems	3–4
Fri	Musculoskeletal	Fractures, hip arthroplasty, osteoporosis, traction, cast care	3–4
Sat	Integumentary + Burns	Burn classification, rule of nines, wound healing stages	2–3
Sun	Rest	Electrolyte values review cards	1–2

### Week Completion Checklist

■ DKA vs. HHS: key differences and treatment	
■ Hemodialysis vs. peritoneal dialysis nursing care	
■ Compartment syndrome 6 P's assessment	
■ Rule of nines for burn surface area calculation	
■ Fluid and electrolyte critical values	
■ Post-op hip replacement precautions	

■ **Pro Tip:** After every even week, re-take a 50-question quiz covering the past two weeks. Track your trend — improvement signals readiness; a drop signals the need for extra review.

## Week 5 – Mental Health & Maternal Newborn

Cover psychiatric nursing and obstetric/newborn care — frequently tested and often underestimated.

DAY	FOCUS AREA	KEY TOPICS	STUDY HRS
Mon	Psychiatric Disorders	Schizophrenia, bipolar, depression, anxiety, personality disorders	3–4
Tue	Crisis & Suicide	Therapeutic communication, de-escalation, suicide risk assessment	3–4
Wed	Antepartum	Prenatal visits, complications: preeclampsia, placenta previa, HELLP	3–4
Thu	Practice Block	100 MH + OB questions	3–4
Fri	Intrapartum	Labor stages, fetal monitoring, C-section indications, epidural care	3–4
Sat	Postpartum + Newborn	Postpartum hemorrhage, APGAR, newborn assessment, jaundice	2–3
Sun	Rest	Review therapeutic communication techniques	1–2

### Week Completion Checklist

■ Therapeutic vs. non-therapeutic communication examples	
■ HELLP syndrome vs. preeclampsia vs. eclampsia	
■ APGAR scoring criteria	
■ Suicide safety contract and risk factors	
■ Fetal heart rate decelerations: early, late, variable	
■ Postpartum hemorrhage assessment: BUBBLE-EE	

## Week 6 – Pediatrics & Community Health

*Review pediatric growth and development, common illnesses, and community/public health nursing.*

DAY	FOCUS AREA	KEY TOPICS	STUDY HRS
Mon	Growth & Development	Erikson, Piaget, developmental milestones, immunizations	3–4
Tue	Pediatric Illnesses	RSV, croup, epiglottitis, appendicitis, meningitis in children	3–4
Wed	Pediatric Pharm	Weight-based dosing, pain assessment in children, Clark's rule	3–4
Thu	Practice Block	100 Peds + Community questions	3–4
Fri	Community Health	Epidemiology, reportable diseases, disaster nursing, home health	3–4
Sat	NGN Practice	Matrix items: multi-system pediatric case studies	2–3
Sun	Rest	Milestone chart review	1–2

### Week Completion Checklist

■ Developmental milestones at 3, 6, 12, 18 months	
■ Differences in pediatric airway anatomy	
■ Signs of child abuse: mandatory reporting obligations	
■ Levels of prevention: primary, secondary, tertiary examples	
■ Disaster triage: START triage system basics	
■ Communicable disease reporting requirements	

■ **Pro Tip:** After every even week, re-take a 50-question quiz covering the past two weeks. Track your trend — improvement signals readiness; a drop signals the need for extra review.

# Week 7 – Leadership, Management & Delegation

*Master management concepts, delegation rules, ethics, and legal standards that appear frequently on NCLEX.*

DAY	FOCUS AREA	KEY TOPICS	STUDY HRS
Mon	Delegation	5 Rights of Delegation, RN vs. LPN vs. UAP scope of practice	3–4
Tue	Leadership Styles	Transformational, autocratic, democratic, situational leadership	3–4
Wed	Ethics & Legal	ANA Code of Ethics, advance directives, HIPAA, negligence vs. malpractice	3–4
Thu	Practice Block	100 Leadership + Ethics questions	3–4
Fri	Quality & Safety	QSEN, SBAR, root cause analysis, incident reports, never events	3–4
Sat	NGN Cloze Items	Dropdown/fill-in items on management scenarios	2–3
Sun	Rest	Delegation decision tree review	1–2

## Week Completion Checklist

■ Tasks that cannot be delegated to UAP/LPN	
■ Difference between negligence and malpractice with examples	
■ Advance directives: living will vs. durable power of attorney	
■ QSEN competencies and their definitions	
■ Chain of command: when and how to escalate	
■ HIPAA: what can and cannot be disclosed	

## Week 8 – Final Review & NCLEX Simulation

*Consolidate all content, complete full-length simulations, and build exam-day confidence.*

DAY	FOCUS AREA	KEY TOPICS	STUDY HRS
Mon	Weak Area Blitz	Review lowest-scoring diagnostic content areas intensively	4–5
Tue	Pharm Final Review	High-alert meds, antidotes, critical lab values for drugs	3–4
Wed	Full Simulation I	75-question timed CAT simulation + full rationale review	4–5
Thu	NGN Full Practice	All NGN item types: bow-tie, trend, matrix, cloze	3–4
Fri	Full Simulation II	135-question timed simulation + performance analysis	4–5
Sat	Light Review	Read-through of priority frameworks and key mnemonics only	2
Sun	Exam Eve Prep	Rest, light review, logistics preparation, self-care	1

### Week Completion Checklist

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Completed 2 full-length CAT simulations (75 and 135 Qs)</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Reviewed all NGN item type formats</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ All diagnostic weak areas re-tested above 65%</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Critical values memorized: labs, vitals, drug levels</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Exam location confirmed and travel route planned</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ ID, registration confirmation, and supplies ready</li> </ul>	

■ **Pro Tip:** After every even week, re-take a 50-question quiz covering the past two weeks. Track your trend — improvement signals readiness; a drop signals the need for extra review.

# Daily Study Session Blueprint

Use this structure for every 4-hour study block

TIME BLOCK	DURATION	ACTIVITY	METHOD
Warm-Up	15 min	Review yesterday's wrong answers + rationales	Active recall
Content Block 1	60 min	Read assigned content chapter / watch video lecture	Note-taking
Break	10 min	Walk, stretch, hydrate — no screens	Physical reset
Practice Questions	60 min	25–50 questions on today's topic with timed conditions	Test simulation
Rationale Review	30 min	Review ALL answers (correct + incorrect) with explanations	Deep analysis
Break	10 min	Snack, brief mindfulness, fresh air	Mental reset
Content Block 2	45 min	Second content topic or reinforcement of morning topic	Mind mapping
Flashcard Drill	20 min	Anki / physical cards: 30–50 cards on today's content	Spaced repetition
Session Wrap-Up	10 min	Write 3 key takeaways; update progress tracker	Reflection

■ **Pro Tip:** The Pomodoro Technique (25 min work / 5 min break) works well for NCLEX prep. For longer content blocks, try 50/10 intervals to maintain deep focus.

# Question Bank Strategy Guide

*How to study smarter with practice questions*

Practice questions are the single most important study tool for NCLEX success. However, how you use them matters as much as how many you complete. Follow these evidence-based strategies to maximize your question bank sessions.

## ✓ Do questions in study mode first

For new topics, use untimed, study mode to learn the content through rationales.

## ✓ Switch to timed mode by Week 3

Simulate real NCLEX conditions — 1 minute per question maximum.

## ✓ Never skip rationales

Read every rationale, even for correct answers. Understanding why matters.

## ✓ Analyze your weak areas

Most QBanks have analytics. Review by category, not just total score.

## ✓ Aim for 5,000+ practice Qs total

Volume matters — candidates who do 3,000+ questions pass at higher rates.

## ✓ Use NCLEX-style question banks only

Recommended: UWorld, Kaplan, NCSBN, ATI, Lippincott, Hurst Review.

## Weekly Question Target Tracker

WEEK	TARGET Qs	ACTUAL Qs	% CORRECT	NOTES
Week 1	75–100	_____	____%	
Week 2	100–125	_____	____%	
Week 3	125–150	_____	____%	
Week 4	125–150	_____	____%	
Week 5	100–125	_____	____%	
Week 6	100–125	_____	____%	
Week 7	100–125	_____	____%	
Week 8	200+	_____	____%	

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# Test-Taking Strategies

*Master these frameworks to tackle any NCLEX question*

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## The Nursing Process (ADPIE)

- Always complete Assessment before intervening.
- Planning comes before Implementation — know your expected outcome.
- Evaluation questions ask: 'Did it work?' — look for expected outcomes.

## Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

- Physiological needs (airway, breathing, circulation) come FIRST.
- Safety comes second — fall precautions, infection control.
- Psychosocial needs last — unless nothing physiological is at risk.

## ABCs – Airway, Breathing, Circulation

- Airway is always the priority — even before breathing.
- If airway is intact, assess breathing effectiveness.
- Circulation assessment includes hemorrhage and shock signs.

## SATA (Select All That Apply) Tips

- Treat each option as a True/False statement independently.
- If unsure, ask: 'Is this always appropriate for this diagnosis?'
- Avoid choosing only the 'safest-looking' options — be thorough.

## Priority Setting Frameworks

- Unstable patient > Stable patient
- Acute change in condition > Chronic stable condition
- Assessment question types: 'What would you do FIRST?' = assess first.

**Remember the 'Least Invasive First' Rule:** When in doubt about which intervention to choose, pick the least invasive option first — reposition before medicating, educate before referring, assess before treating. This mirrors safe nursing practice.

# Self-Care & Wellness Schedule

*Preventing burnout is part of your study plan*

NCLEX preparation is a marathon, not a sprint. Research consistently shows that students who incorporate regular rest, exercise, and social connection perform significantly better on high-stakes exams. Build these non-negotiables into your weekly schedule.

WELLNESS AREA	DAILY MINIMUM	RECOMMENDATIONS
Sleep	7–9 hours	Consistent sleep schedule; avoid all-nighters during prep
Exercise	30 minutes	Walking, yoga, or cardio — reduces cortisol and improves memory
Nutrition	3 balanced meals	Limit caffeine after 2 PM; prioritize brain foods (omega-3, B vitamins)
Social Connection	30+ min/day	Phone call, meal with a friend/family — prevent isolation
Mindfulness/Breaks	10 min/day	Box breathing, meditation apps, or journaling
Screen Break	1 hour before bed	No screens before sleep — improves sleep quality significantly

■ **Pro Tip:** Schedule your official exam date **BEFORE** you start studying. A fixed deadline dramatically increases follow-through and focus. Most candidates benefit from a target of 6–10 weeks of dedicated preparation.

# Progress Tracker & Master Checklists

Track your readiness across all 8 NCLEX content areas

## Overall Readiness Dashboard

Rate your confidence in each content area on a scale of 1–5 at the start of each week. Aim for all areas at 4–5 by the end of Week 8.

CONTENT AREA	WK 1	WK 2	WK 4	WK 6	WK 8
Management of Care	___/5	___/5	___/5	___/5	___/5
Safety & Infection Control	___/5	___/5	___/5	___/5	___/5
Health Promotion	___/5	___/5	___/5	___/5	___/5
Psychosocial Integrity	___/5	___/5	___/5	___/5	___/5
Basic Care & Comfort	___/5	___/5	___/5	___/5	___/5
Pharmacological Therapies	___/5	___/5	___/5	___/5	___/5
Reduction of Risk Potential	___/5	___/5	___/5	___/5	___/5
Physiological Adaptation	___/5	___/5	___/5	___/5	___/5

## Pre-Exam Final Checklist

■ Completed all 8 weeks of scheduled content review	
■ Reached 1,000+ practice questions minimum (goal: 1,200+)	
■ All 8 NCLEX content areas scored above 60% consistently	
■ Completed at least 2 full-length timed simulations (75 and 135 Qs)	
■ Reviewed all high-alert medications and critical lab values	
■ Practiced all NGN item types (bow-tie, trend, matrix, cloze, drop-down)	
■ Test-taking strategies reviewed and internalized (ADPIE, Maslow, ABCs)	
■ Registration confirmation, Pearson VUE authorization received	
■ Exam location visited/mapped; travel time confirmed	
■ Got 7–9 hours of sleep the night before the exam	
■ Planned a nutritious breakfast for exam morning	

■ Emergency contact and support person identified for exam day

**You've got this!** Remember: The NCLEX is designed to test minimum competency for safe nursing practice. You have been trained for this. Trust your education, trust this process, and trust yourself. Walk into that testing center knowing you are prepared. Good luck — your patients are waiting for you! ■