



How Close to the ACT Should You Take a Practice Test?

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INTRO

Practice Test Scheduling



It's extremely important to take full-length practice tests under [realistic conditions](#) when studying for the ACT. However, you need to make sure you're getting the full benefit by spacing out the practice tests correctly.

In this ebook, we'll discuss both the earliest and the latest you should consider taking full ACT practice tests.

1: Early Practice Tests

- > **Key Point:** How early should you take a practice test? As soon as you start continuous ACT study.



There really isn't any harm that can come out of taking a practice test long before the ACT as long as you're planning on taking additional practice tests or studying more afterwards. In fact, **taking a practice test at the very beginning of your studying is a good idea** because it'll give you an idea of what your current score would be if you took the ACT and what your weak spots are. Ideally, you'll also take other practice tests over the course of your studying to assess your progress and determine if your studying is making a difference.

If you're only planning on taking **one practice test before the real test**, just to familiarize yourself with the format and instructions, then the earliest we recommend taking it is **seven to eight days before your test**; any earlier and you'll start to forget things, cancelling out any value taking the practice test might have had for you.

Again, this seven to eight day recommendation is assuming you're only taking one practice test without any further studying; if you are planning on studying after taking your first practice test and taking more practice tests, then the next section of this ebook is more relevant for you.

> Conclusion: If you're planning on taking several practice tests, take them as soon as you start studying; if you're just taking one practice test, the earliest you should take it is 7-8 days before the ACT.

2: Late Practice Tests

- > **Key Point:** The latest most students can take a realistic full-length practice test is the weekend before the ACT.



While taking realistic practice tests is an important part of ACT preparation, **you don't want to take a practice test too close to the test or it might have a bad effect on your morale (and, consequently, on your test score)**. If you do well on the practice test, it might artificially boost your self-confidence and cause you to make careless errors on the real test if you think you can just coast through. On the other hand, if you do poorly, it will just make you more stressed and anxious without giving you time to address those anxieties through studying, which in turn might cause you to second guess yourself and run out of time on the real test.

The latest that you take a practice test, therefore, should be the amount of time before the test that still allows you time to [review your wrong answers](#) and do some practice drills of questions you struggle with. When exactly this is will vary from student to student, but in general, we recommend taking your last practice test no fewer than two to three days before your scheduled test date. That means that **if you're taking a test on Saturday, the last full-length realistic practice test you take should be on Wednesday or Thursday of that week.**

It's important to keep in mind, however, that taking a full-length practice test with realistic timing is difficult on a schoolnight; plus, you don't get the benefits of taking the test in the morning (and getting a realistic idea of what it'll feel like to take the test early in the day). **The Saturday or Sunday before the test, then, is the last chance you have to take a fully realistic practice test.** Monday-Thursday before the test, you can try taking a full test or taking it section by section with a few sections grouped together, but be wary of unrealistic conditions because you're taking it in the evening and not all at once. An hour or so of practice is helpful the day before the test, as is (for non-anxious test-takers) doing a couple of practice questions before the test.

AND NOW WHAT?

Through this guide, you've learned a lot about how close to the ACT you should take a practice test. Make sure you match your specific situation with the timing of your full-length ACT practice tests to get the best results.

We at PrepScholar believe we've built the best ACT prep program in the world. But even if you don't work with us at PrepScholar, we hope you found this guide useful.

Next up: Read our free Ebook on the PrepScholar system today: [Click here to get your Ebook!](#)

or **call us** at **1(866) 811-5546**, where one of our Academic Advisers will walk you through the best options for you and your family.

We'd love to hear from you.

Finally, if you found this guide helpful, please share it with any other people who might benefit.

Good luck!

-The PrepScholar Team