

## Failed the CPA Exam? Now What?

You've just failed the CPA exam. Don't worry, most first time test takers are right there with you. In fact, the [passing rates are less than 50%](#) for three of the four sections of the CPA exam. So, don't beat yourself up if you're one of the many who lost the first battle in the war that is the CPA. Allow yourself a day to have a pity party, but then it's time to get back up and fight for your certification.

### Why Did You Fail the CPA Exam?

Failing the CPA Exam comes down to not enough time, effort, or knowledge.

It is completely understandable if you ran out of time. Most of you are [working full time](#), taking care of kids, or have many other commitments that steal your study hours. Life doesn't stop for people to take the CPA exam, so you're just going to have to adjust accordingly.

Did you not have enough time to complete all the review course material before the exam? That's okay, just pick up where you left off and keep studying. Were you racing against the clock, only skimming concepts before taking the exam? Obviously this didn't work, so go back and practice all the questions until you are confident with every section. Either way, if you're not ready for the exam there is no shame in pushing back your exam date a few days to ensure you are ready. Be cautious of rescheduling fees though!

Now, be honest. Did you give it your all? Or were you hoping to study by osmosis—your book is open and the computer is on, but you're on your phone looking through your Facebook news feed instead of studying for the CPA exam. If this was you, you already know what has to be done. The only way to defeat these exams is to make a plan and *stick to it*. These tests require self discipline and perseverance. A river cuts through rock not because of its power but because of its persistence.

### How to Get Back up There

Not passing the CPA exam on your first try is not failure. According to an old Chinese proverb, failure is not falling down but rather refusing to get up. It may be time to look over your study plan and make adjustments. You may have to be stricter with yourself when it comes to study time. Wake up an hour earlier or study during your lunch break at work. Everyone has different a way they learn best and the review course you use [should complement your learning style](#).

For me, I had to kick my skimming habit and read all the material in order to have a solid understanding. I also focused on practicing over reviewing after failing my first CPA exam. Many people skimp out on their CPA study materials and fail as a consequence. Sure, the initial investment in one of the [top CPA prep courses](#) is expensive, but you'll save yourself hundreds of

hours of headache and get a pay raise that much faster if you take the plunge. If you read the material well enough the first time, spend the rest of your time on practice questions instead of reviewing the material. This will help you figure out what you're struggling with and how to improve.

Practice questions—new ones and not repeating the same tests you've already taken—are a much more efficient way to study and comprehend concepts! I think Thomas Edison, the inventor of the light bulb, said it best: "I failed my way to success." Don't let this failure bring you down. Use it as fuel so you can make it all the way to your CPA certification.