

FREE RESOURCE

# Your DAT Study Guide

Timeline, resources, and how to structure your prep for a 20+ score.

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The DAT is a 5-hour computer-based exam administered by the ADA. It is taken at a Prometric testing center and can be taken at any time of year — there is no designated test window.

Survey of Natural Sciences	100	90 min	Biology (40q), Gen Chem (30q), Org Chem (30q)
Perceptual Ability (PAT)	90	60 min	Spatial visualization across 6 sub-types
Reading Comprehension	50	60 min	3 science passages with 17 questions each
Quantitative Reasoning	40	45 min	Algebra, probability, statistics, basic calculus

02



## MONTHS 1–2

### Content Foundation

Work through all biology, gen chem, and org chem content using your primary review resource. Do not take practice tests yet. Focus on understanding, not memorizing. Begin light PAT exposure (10–15 min/day).

## MONTH 3

### Content Reinforcement + PAT Daily

Review any weak content areas identified in Month 1–2. Increase PAT to 30 min/day. Begin Reading Comprehension timing practice. Do subject-level question sets (not full DATs) to identify gaps.

## MONTH 4

### Practice Tests Begin

Take your first full-length practice DAT under real testing conditions — no phone, timed, one sitting. Review every wrong answer. Do not fixate on the score; identify patterns in your mistakes.

## MONTH 5

### High-Volume Practice

One full practice DAT per week. Review thoroughly after each. Drill PAT sub-types where you score lowest. Timed RC passage practice daily. Begin reviewing QR if it has been neglected.

## MONTH 6

### **Refinement + Test-Day Prep**

No new content. Reinforce what you know. Two to three more practice DATs. Simulate test-day conditions including the drive to the center. Final week: light review only, prioritize sleep.

03



# Primary Review Resources

## Bootcamp ([datbootcamp.com](https://datbootcamp.com))

The gold standard for most sections. Excellent biology and chemistry content, high-quality practice questions, and the most realistic PAT generators available.

## Anki + Pre-made Decks

Spaced repetition is highly effective for biology memorization. The "DATBootcamp Biology" Anki deck is widely used. Supplement with your own cards for gaps.

## Feralis Biology Notes

A free 100+ page biology content summary compiled by a high scorer. Dense but comprehensive. Many students use this as their primary biology reference.

## Khan Academy

Excellent and free for gen chem and org chem concept review. Use it to fill gaps, not as your primary source.

# Practice Tests

## ADA Official Practice Tests

Take these in the final 4–6 weeks. They are the most predictive of your actual score. Do not burn them early.

## DAT Bootcamp Tests

Use these throughout your prep. Widely considered harder than the real DAT — which is the point. If you score well here, you are prepared.

# What to Avoid

- Cliff's AP Biology — outdated; use Feralis instead
- Chad's Videos alone — good for chem but not comprehensive enough as a sole resource
- Taking too many tests too early before content review is complete
- Memorizing without understanding mechanisms (especially in o-chem)
- Studying 8+ hours/day — burnout before test day is a real risk

04



The Perceptual Ability Test is unique to dental admissions. It has no equivalent on the MCAT or GRE. Most students underestimate how much dedicated practice it requires.

#### PAT SUB-TYPE 1

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### Keyholes

A 3D object is shown. Identify which hole it can pass through. Work systematically — eliminate wrong answers rather than trying to confirm right ones.

#### PAT SUB-TYPE 2

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### Top-Front-End (TFE)

Given one view of a 3D object, identify the other two views. Practice daily. Your spatial reasoning improves measurably over weeks.

#### PAT SUB-TYPE 3

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### Angle Ranking

Rank 4 angles from smallest to largest. The fastest section to improve — most students can master this in 2–3 weeks of daily drill.

#### PAT SUB-TYPE 4

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### Hole Punching

A paper is folded and punched. Where are the holes when unfolded? Work with physical paper early to build intuition, then shift to software.

#### PAT SUB-TYPE 5

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### Cube Counting

Count how many cubes in a stack touch a given number of other cubes. Develop a systematic labeling approach — do not guess.

#### PAT SUB-TYPE 6

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### Pattern Folding

A 2D pattern folds into a 3D shape — identify which. The most challenging for most students. Heavy software practice is required.

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PDI mentors who have scored 20+ on the DAT can help you build a custom study schedule, identify your weak areas early, and hold you accountable through test day. Apply at:

**[predentalinstituteofchicago.com](https://predentalinstituteofchicago.com)**

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