

CAT 2026 Last 30 Days Preparation Strategy: Week-wise Plan, Mock Timings, Exam-Day Tips from 50+ CAT Toppers (Free PDF)

CAT Last 30 Days Preparation: CAT 2026 will be held on Sunday, November 29, 2026, and the last 30 days of CAT preparation begin soon. How should you plan your CAT exam preparation in the last 30 days? MBAUniverse.com has interviewed 50+ CAT toppers, from CAT 2019 to CAT 2025, who are now studying at IIM Ahmedabad, IIM Calcutta and other top B-schools, for their guidance on CAT last month preparation. Their advice is remarkably consistent: stop starting new topics, take more mocks and analyse every one of them, practise in your own CAT slot, and reduce stress in last few days before CAT exam. This CAT 2026 last 30 days preparation strategy turns their experience into a week-wise one month CAT preparation plan, a section-wise strategy, and a last-week and exam-day checklist. You can also download the complete article as a free CAT Last 30 Days Preparation Plan PDF, along with checklists, in this article.

CAT Last 30 Days Strategy: 5 Rules from CAT Toppers

What is the best CAT last 30 days strategy? CAT toppers use the final month to “consolidate their learning”, and not to learn new concepts or fundamentals. They stop starting new topics, take three or more full-length mocks a week and analyse each one, fix their section-wise plan in those mocks, practise in their CAT slot, and de-stress in the last two or three days. The table below sums up the five rules behind the CAT 2026 last 30 days preparation strategy. Each rule is explained, with the toppers’ own words, in the sections that follow.

Rule	What toppers did	Example
1. Revise, don't start new topics	Finished the syllabus early and spent the final weeks on formulas, past mistakes and strengths	Harsh Khudania, CAT 2025, 99.93: advises keeping the last two months only for mocks and revision
2. Take more mocks, analyse every one	Final-month routines ranged from two or three mocks a week to one a day	Nishakar Kumar, CAT 2023, 99.83, IIM Ahmedabad: one mock every day in the final month
3. Lock your section-wise plan in mocks	Fixed the section order, time limits and set-selection rules before exam day	Dhruv Aggarwal, CAT 2025, 99.76, SPJIMR Mumbai: tested every section plan in mocks and changed nothing on exam day
4. Practise in your CAT slot	Took mocks at their slot time once the admit card was out, and practised the idle wait before the test	Shivam, CAT 2022, 99.84, IIM Calcutta: mocks in his slot after the admit card
5. Ease off in the last two or three days	Took the last full mock between two days and two weeks before	Sahiti Potnuru, CAT 2023, 98.23, SPJIMR Mumbai: last mock two days before CAT

CAT, then revised lightly and slept well
--

Let's go into details of each of these five rules and strategies in following sections.

Revise, Don't Start New Topics: CAT Last Month Strategy of Toppers

The most common advice in our topper interviews is that the last month is too late to learn a new chapter properly, but the right time to make what you already know work for you. A topic half-learned in November rarely produces marks in the exam, while a familiar topic revised well can help you score marks. That is why toppers try to finish syllabus early and save the final weeks for revision and mocks.

[Harsh Khudania](#), who scored 99.93 percentile in CAT 2025 on his second attempt, advises aspirants to complete the CAT syllabus two months before the exam and to "keep the last two months for mocks and revision." [Shefali Chhaya](#), who had not studied Maths after Class 10 and went on to join IIM Ahmedabad, followed a clear rule: "I didn't give any mock or pick up new topics two weeks before CAT," she recalls, explaining that she used that time to work on her final strategy and revise the concepts she had already covered. [Sanjiv Kumar](#), an IIT Madras graduate who scored 99.99 percentile in CAT 2024, went a step further in his final phase and dropped low-return topics such as Geometry and P&C to consolidate his strengths.

For these toppers, revision meant three specific tools, all of which you can build from your own past mocks:

- **A formula book.** [Anmol Gupta](#), who scored 99.96 percentile in CAT 2025 and joined SPJIMR Mumbai, made a separate formula book for Quant and revised it in the last couple of days before CAT.
- **A mistake log.** [Padmasandhya S](#), a Chartered Accountant who scored 98.49 percentile in CAT 2021 and joined IIM Ahmedabad, kept a small journal with an index of the mistakes she had made in mocks and sectional tests, and went through it on the morning of the exam.
- **Bookmarked questions.** [Sruthy S Kumar](#), who scored 97.71 percentile in CAT 2019 and joined IIM Lucknow, bookmarked important questions in each section during mock analysis and re-solved them with a timer as the exam came closer.

If you are planning your CAT exam preparation in the last 30 days, begin by putting these three tools together this week.

CAT Last 30 Days Preparation: How Many Mocks Toppers Recommend?

If revision is the first half of a topper's final month, mocks are the second. Almost every topper increased the number of full-length mocks as CAT approached, because only a full mock tests speed, question selection and stamina together. The number varied widely, but toppers agree that what you do after a mock matters more than the mock itself.

Topper	Mocks in the final weeks before CAT
Nishakar Kumar, CAT 2023, 99.83, IIM Ahmedabad	One mock every day in the final month

Prateek Kumar Rai, CAT 2022, 99.80, SPJIMR Mumbai	Daily in the last month, up from one a week in August
Sahiti Potnuru, CAT 2023, 98.23, SPJIMR Mumbai	One mock every day in the five weeks before CAT, along with sectional tests
Harsh Khudania, CAT 2025, 99.93	20 of his 40 full-length mocks in the last month
Shrey Srivastava, CAT 2024, 99.24, SPJIMR Mumbai	Three a week from September to November, along with timed sectional and topic-wise tests
Rajee Dhruva, CAT 2025, 99.06, SPJIMR Mumbai	Two or three a week in the last two months, up from one a week
Shubham Bajaj, CAT 2020, 99.98, IIM Calcutta	Fewer mocks in the final two weeks; solved the CAT 2017–19 papers on alternate days

Five of these seven toppers took three or more full mocks a week in their final month, which suggests a practical range of three to five mocks a week. Choose the higher end only if you can still analyse each mock properly. [Nishakar Kumar](#), who prepared in his final year at IIT Kharagpur, credits the routine directly: “In the final month of my preparation, I attempted one mock every day, which significantly contributed to my readiness for the actual exam.”

Analysis is where the real learning of the final month happens. [Ahan Sarkar](#), a technology consultant who scored 99.4 percentile in CAT 2025 on his second attempt and joined SPJIMR Mumbai, says that in his last two months “most of my new learning came from questions I faced in mocks, which I was unable to solve.” After every mock, re-solve the questions you left, note why each wrong answer was wrong, and add the lesson to your mistake log before you take the next one.

Past CAT papers make excellent mocks for the final weeks because they show the real exam’s level of difficulty. [Shubham Bajaj](#), who scored 99.98 percentile in CAT exam and joined IIM Calcutta, took a couple of weeks’ leave from work before the exam and solved the CAT past papers for many years on alternate days. You can download them from [CAT Previous Year Question Papers](#) and take [free CAT mock tests on MBAUniverse.com](#).

CAT 30 Days Preparation Strategy: Week-wise One Month CAT Preparation Plan

The plan below puts the CAT 2026 last 30 days preparation strategy on a calendar. It has been built by MBAUniverse.com from the routines that toppers told us. Each week is labelled by the number of days left, so you can join the plan on any date. Adjust the number of mocks to your own performance and time available, but keep the order: revise, test, lock and taper.

Days left	Dates	Focus	Full mocks	Revision
30 to 24	October 30 – November 5	Close gaps and build your revision kit	3 to 4, plus one past CAT paper	Formula book and mistake log
23 to 17	November 6 – November 12	Admit card, slot-time practice, lock your strategy	4 to 5, at your slot time	Weak areas found in mocks

16 to 10	November 13 – November 19	Peak mock week	4 to 5, at your slot time	Bookmarked questions with a timer
9 to 3	November 20 – November 26	Final revision and slowing down	Last 1 or 2 by November 22–24, then sectionals	Formula book and mistake log
2 to 0	November 27 – November 29	Rest and exam day strategy	None	Formulas only

Days 30 to 24: Close Gaps and Build Your Revision Kit

- Revise only the topics you already know but keep getting wrong in mocks, and build your formula book and mistake log from past mocks.
- Analyse each mock on the same day or the next morning, and solve one past CAT paper under timed conditions.
- Watch for the CAT 2026 admit card, expected in the first week of November; CAT 2025 admit cards were released on November 5, 2025.

Days 23 to 17: Move to Your Slot and Lock Your Strategy

- Note your session timing from the admit card and take mocks at that time wherever possible.
- Fix your section-wise plan: the order within VARC, your DILR set-selection window and your Quant pace check.
- Practise sitting idle for 20 to 30 minutes before a mock, as you will have to before the real test.

Days 16 to 10: Peak Mock Week

- Use any past CAT papers you have not solved as full mocks, and re-solve your bookmarked questions with a timer.
- Align your waking time, meals and study hours with your slot.

Days 9 to 3: Taper

- Take your last full mock five to seven days before CAT, the most common pattern among toppers, then shift to sectional tests and revision.
- Do not add any new material, books or test series at this stage.

Last Two Days and Exam Day

- Glance through your formula book only, and solve no new questions.
- Print your admit card and keep printed copies of the passport-size photograph you uploaded; the CAT 2026 Registration Guide states that this photograph must be affixed to the admit card on the day of the test.
- Plan your route to the test centre, sleep early on both nights and avoid all discussion of earlier slots on exam day.

For a longer CAT study plan that covers basics like pattern, syllabus, books, coaching etc, see the [CAT 2026 Preparation Guide](#).

CAT 2026 Section-wise Strategy for the Last 30 Days

In the final month, section-wise preparation changes its purpose. You are no longer trying to cover the syllabus; you are deciding exactly how you will spend each section on exam day, and then rehearsing that plan in every mock. CAT 2025 had three sections of 40 minutes each, and candidates could not switch from one section to another; CAT 2026 is expected to follow the same pattern. No CAT 30 days preparation strategy is complete without this rehearsal. [Dhruv Aggarwal](#), a fresher who scored 99.76 percentile in CAT 2025 and joined SPJIMR Mumbai, explains why it pays: “I had a clear strategy for each section because I had already tested it in my mocks.”

VARC: Fix the Order and Cap the Time

Decide whether you will start with the RCs or the VA questions, and how long each passage may take. Dhruv Aggarwal usually began with the RCs and finished all four passages in around 30 to 32 minutes before moving to the VA questions. Sanjiv Kumar used a hard limit instead: “I imposed a time limit of 7.5 minutes per RC, regardless of difficulty.” If VA questions keep costing you negative marks in mocks, it is legitimate to drop them; [Srishti Yadav](#), who scored 99.69 percentile in CAT 2022 and joined IIM Kozhikode, focused only on RCs in the exam after noticing that para jumbles and para summaries were costing her marks. In the final week, Sruthy S Kumar stopped full mocks but kept taking VARC sectionals to maintain her momentum.

DILR: Set a Selection Window

Your DILR score is decided largely by the sets you choose. [Pranshav Shah](#), who scored 99.80 percentile in CAT 2025 in his first attempt, spent the first four to five minutes selecting sets and always avoided conditional sets. His rule for getting stuck is worth copying: “if you feel you can crack the set, give yourself 2–3 more minutes; otherwise, move on to a different set.” Anmol Gupta, who scored 100 percentile in DILR, gave himself a maximum of five minutes to judge whether a set was solvable. Use your remaining mocks to settle on one such rule and apply it every time.

Quant: Strengths First, Then a Pace Check

In Quant, toppers start with the topics they trust most. Dhruv Aggarwal first solved the Arithmetic and Algebra questions, the areas he had prepared most thoroughly, before moving to other topics, while Sanjiv Kumar left low-return topics alone. Shubham Bajaj checked his number of attempts every ten minutes and began skipping questions whenever he was slower than five questions in ten minutes. Revise your formula book every day this month so that the easy questions stay easy on exam day.

CAT Slot-Time Practice: Train for Your CAT Session

CAT exam will be held in three sessions on a single day, and your mind should be at its sharpest during your own session, not at the hour you usually study. Several toppers therefore treated the

final weeks as a rehearsal of exam day, from the time they woke up to the idle minutes before the test begins.

The CAT 2026 admit card release is expected on November 4, 2026. Once his slot was announced, [Harshit Pansari](#), who scored 99.18 percentile in CAT 2024 and joined SPJIMR Mumbai, took mocks only in his CAT slot, because “it helps in setting that mindset.” [Shivam](#), who scored 99.84 percentile in CAT 2022 and joined IIM Calcutta, gives the same advice, and also practised “sitting idle for 30-45 mins” before his mocks so that the wait before the real test would not unsettle him. [Srishti Vazirani](#), a computer engineer who scored 99.00 percentile in CAT 2024 and joined SPJIMR Mumbai, simulated the 20 to 30 minutes of idle time between verification and the start of the exam during a couple of her mocks, and used that time for box breathing.

CAT 2026 Exam Day Tips by Toppers

The toppers’ routines on the day before CAT were strikingly simple: a quick look at formulas, practical arrangements, an early night and a deliberate effort to stay away from noise about the paper.

- **Formulas only.** [Mehak Rathi](#), who scored 98.08 percentile in CAT 2022 and joined MDI Gurgaon, only went through her Quant formulas on the day before CAT. [Aditya Uday Manolkar](#), who scored 99.56 percentile in CAT 2022 and joined SPJIMR Mumbai, revised his Quant formulas and took a long eight-hour sleep.
- **Travel and logistics.** [Bhavya Hoda](#), who scored 99.33 percentile in CAT 2025 while working at Microsoft, booked a hotel near her distant test centre a day before the exam.
- **Sleep and a quiet mind.** [Rahul Gupta](#), who scored 100 percentile in CAT 2019 and joined IIM Ahmedabad, made sure of a good night’s sleep and tried not to think about any topic, to avoid last-minute panic.

On the day itself, stay away from reviews of earlier slots. Ahan Sarkar had Slot 3 and says, “I consciously avoided looking at what questions had appeared in the earlier slots.” Bhavya Hoda, writing in Slot 2, did not open any feedback or predictions about the first slot.

Handling Stress and Bad Mocks in the Final Month

The final month brings the most mocks, and therefore the most bad scores. The MBAUniverse.com topper interviews show that a poor mock, or even a poor exam day, does not decide the result; how you respond to it does.

Anmol Gupta prepared for CAT 2025 alongside a six-day office job and had a fever on the night before the exam. “I scored minus 5 in a VARC mock in November and still went on to score 99.96 percentile,” he says. Ahan Sarkar’s mock average was around 105, yet he scored 92 in the actual exam and believes he had one of his worst days; it still translated into 99.4 percentile. Pranshav Shah puts the lesson plainly: “a bad score should not stop you from taking mocks.”

Toppers also protected their state of mind on purpose during their CAT exam preparation in the last 30 days. [Pooja Sudhakar](#), who scored 99.11 percentile in CAT 2022 and joined SPJIMR Mumbai, recommends taking one day off every week to watch a movie or meet friends, so that

you start afresh the next day. [Shreyasee Sarkar](#), who scored 99.68 percentile in CAT 2022 on her second attempt and joined IIM Calcutta, stopped preparing a week before the exam because she had been overstressed in her previous attempt. [Nandan Goel](#), who scored 99.95 percentile in CAT 2020 and joined IIM Calcutta, sums it up: “CAT is about 50% preparation and 50% state of mind.”

CAT Preparation Tips for Last 30 Days: Dos and Don'ts

These CAT preparation tips for last 30 days summarize everything from the toppers interviews.

Dos	Don'ts
Revise your formula book, mistake log and bookmarked questions	Start a new chapter, book or test series in the final month
Take three or more full mocks a week and analyse every one	Take more mocks than you have time to analyse
Fix your section order, time limits and set-selection rule in mocks	Change your strategy on exam day
Take mocks at your slot time once the admit card is out	Take a full mock in the last two days unless it genuinely calms you
Plan your travel, keep your admit card and photographs ready, and sleep well	Read reviews and discussions of earlier slots on exam day
Take one short break a week to stay fresh	Let one bad mock decide your confidence

For a section-by-section CAT toppers strategy, read the full interviews on the [CAT Toppers](#) page.

CAT Last 30 Days Preparation: Summary

CAT 2026 will be held on Sunday, November 29, 2026, and the last 30 days begin on October 30. The CAT 2026 last 30 days preparation strategy that emerges from 50+ CAT topper interviews comes down to five habits: revise instead of starting new topics, take more mocks and analyse every one, lock your section-wise plan, practise in your own slot once the admit card is out, and ease off in the last two days. Follow the week-wise one month CAT preparation plan in this article, take [free CAT mock tests](#), download CAT previous year papers, read the full [CAT topper interviews](#), and download this guide as a free PDF. For your complete CAT preparation strategy, visit the [CAT 2026 Preparation Guide](#) on MBAUniverse.com, India's No 1 MBA Portal.

FAQs on CAT Last One Month Preparation

How many mocks should I take in the last 30 days before CAT?

In the last 30 days before CAT, most toppers who described their final-month routine to MBAUniverse.com took three to seven full-length mocks a week. Nishakar Kumar (99.83) took one every day, Harsh Khudania (99.93) took 20 in his last month, and Rajee Dhruva (99.06) took two to three a week. Analyse every mock before taking the next.

Should I study new topics in the last month before CAT?

You should not start new topics in the last month before CAT. Harsh Khudania (99.93) advises completing the syllabus two months before the exam, and Shefali Chhaya (IIM Ahmedabad) picked

up no new topics in her final two weeks. Use the month to revise formulas, past mistakes and your strongest areas instead.

What should I do the day before CAT?

On the day before CAT, toppers kept things light: a quick revision of Quant formulas, admit card and travel arrangements, and a full night's sleep. Aditya Uday Manolkar (99.56) revised his formulas and slept for eight hours, and Ahan Sarkar (99.4) relaxed with music and family before his exam.

When should I start taking mocks in my CAT 2026 slot?

Start taking mocks in your CAT 2026 slot as soon as the admit card is released, which is expected in the first week of November based on last year's schedule. Harshit Pansari (99.18) and Shivam (99.84) took mocks at their slot time after the admit card, and Shivam also practised sitting idle before each mock

MBAUniverse.com