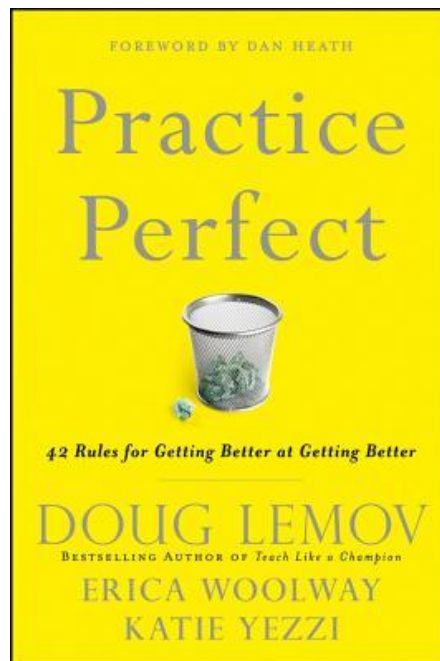




Practice Perfect: 42 Rules for Getting Better at Getting Better

Doug Lemov , Katie Yezzi , Erica Woolway

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Rules for developing talent with disciplined, deliberate, intelligent practice

We live in a competition loving culture. We love the performance, the big win, the ticking seconds of the clock as the game comes down to the wire. We watch games and cheer, sometimes to the point of obsession, but if we really wanted to see greatness--wanted to cheer for it, see it happen, understand what made it happen--we'd spend our time watching, obsessing on, and maybe even cheering the practices instead. This book puts practice on the front burner of all who seek to instill talent and achievement in others as well as in themselves. This is a journey to understand that practice, not games, makes champions.

In this book, the authors engage the dream of better, both in fields and endeavors where participants know they should practice and also in those where many do not yet recognize the transformative power of practice. And it's not just whether you practice. How you practice may be a true competitive advantage. Deliberately engineered and designed practice can revolutionize our most important endeavors. The clear set of rules presented in *Practice Perfect* will make us better in virtually every performance of life. The "how-to" rules of practice cover such topics as rethinking practice, modeling excellent practice, using feedback, creating a culture of practice, making new skills stick, and hiring for practice.

Discover new ways to think about practice. Learn how to design successful practice. Apply practice across a wide range of realms, both personal and professional The authors include specific activities to jump-start practice Doug Lemov is the best-selling author of *Teach Like a Champion*
A hands-on resource to practice, the rules within will help to create positive outliers and world-changing reservoirs of talent.

Practice Perfect: 42 Rules for Getting Better at Getting Better Details

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From Reader Review Practice Perfect: 42 Rules for Getting Better at Getting Better for online ebook

Dave Smith says

Excellent book for those who not only coach or train others, but for anyone that wants to get better at anything!

Joseph says

Practice Perfect contains a wealth of information on how to develop a regimen that improves one's skillset in any number of endeavors, from sports to the workplace. The author goes about this by presenting each of the 42 "rules", detailing pertinent examples, and backing it up with relevant case studies and research.

At times, it does its job too well with a deluge of information that can be overwhelming. As such, this book may be better used as a resource in which to refer back frequently. To aid in this, there are also several mentions of another of the author's co-written books, Teach Like a Champion, which he appears to upsell. This is a little off-putting, but no less useful.

Elizabeth says

I won this book in a giveaway so I am obligated to review.

I thought the book had a very organized, clear set up. I also really enjoyed the direct writing style, particularly because it is an 'advice' book.

My problem was that I just couldn't get to the end. I truly tried for the integrity of my review, but I found that a lot of the advice in the book was advice I already knew. I feel that for me, personally, it was not worth the read. It is not worth it for anyone who is already well organized and 'in control' of their life. However, this book might be useful for someone who is in a rough patch needing direction.

Overall, this was more of a 1.5 to me. I'm a tough critic though, so it may be worth looking at the reviews in terms of people who actually purchased this book for guidance, as opposed to people like me, who won it in the giveaway.

Matt says

There are great insights in this book, but I always get the feeling Lemov is stretching things out for length. Whereas a shorter book could focus on the main concepts of rethinking practice, how to practice, modeling, feedback, culture building, and post-practice skills, this one breaks those already discreet elements into even smaller components (rules). By the end, there are 42 rules that can be difficult to keep straight. Perhaps Lemov loves using Rule 11, Name It, a little too much.

Jean-marie Prevost says

I really enjoyed the subject and most of the points the authors were making, however as others have mentioned, it feels stretched and diluted.

I was taking a good amount of notes throughout the book. There are many great nuggets of knowledge in there, but that's the thing, the nuggets of crucial info are drowned in examples, repetition and not-always-relevant stories. The book could've been half as long and still pack the exact same payload while being more interesting.

Part of the issue for me was that it's not made clear that this is a book about being a teacher. The information is still just as relevant for the most part, but then lots of time is wasted on explaining how this can be applied in a classroom setup.

All in all it could've been a powerful book, and the content that is somewhat "hidden" in it is still rather valuable, it's just that it's rather slow and painful to read at times.

Gully says

This book had some good ideas. I found the rules under 'Using Modeling' and 'Feedback' helpful. However, the book was perhaps a little lengthier than was necessary.

It seems to be targeted towards people that train teachers—and there are a lot of references to sports. As much as I like sports, I am not training to become a better trainer or coach. In attempting to target a wider audience, the book lost some of its effectiveness for me. Ironically, I found Appendix A, Teaching Techniques from *Teach Like a Champion*, the most beneficial.

Chris Craddock says

As Woody Allen said: "Those who can't do, teach. And those who can't teach--teach gym."

I am reminded of that saying because this book about practice and teaching methods is mostly about coaching sports or teaching teachers how to teach. There is some application to practicing music, but if that is where your interest lies you'll be sorely disappointed. I have zero interest in coaching sports, and am interested in teaching, and playing music. The methods in this book could be applied to music, but there isn't much discussion of that. The parts about training teachers might help me, but only if the people teaching me had read the book. It doesn't really benefit the autodidact.

So, I concede that this is a good book about practice methods that could be very useful to the right person, but I found it dull, dull, dull, and a struggle to get through. But that is just me. Your mileage may vary.

Kev Willoughby says

A little overwhelming, but great and practical information, mostly for the profession of teaching, but some parts were applicable to other professions, as well as coaching athletics.

The best part of the book was the middle section on feedback (Rules 23-30), including advice such as "Practice Using Feedback (Not Just Getting It)," and I also found the recommendation to immediately implement feedback and try it BEFORE reflecting (or deflecting) on the validity of the feedback to be great advice. It was a little ironic that one of the rules was about limiting feedback and not overwhelming people with too many things to try or change at once, given that the subtitle of this book is "42 Rules for Getting Better at Getting Better."

Overall, the book is more of a complete program or system that is packaged and ready for an organization to implement as a whole, although some of the "rules" do stand alone. I thought that Appendix A (which tied some of the rules together in groups that enhanced the likelihood of implementation and adoption) and Appendix B (with some designed activities) were a very useful way to conclude the book and give the reader some next steps to put the program to use immediately and have an opportunity to judge its merit.

Cody Shorter says

9 Things I Learned from Perfect Practice: 42 Rules for Getting Better at Getting Better

By Doug Lemov, Erica Woolway and Katie Yezzi

1 - Practice Makes Permanent

We are fond of saying "practice makes perfect," and indeed the title of this book plays on the connection between practice and perfection. But it is more accurate to say that practice makes permanent. In practice you can master a skill thoroughly or not at all, and what you master can be the correct method or one where your knees are locked. Either way, what you do is likely to become encoded—it will be instilled in muscle memory or mental circuitry and become habit—for better or worse. Practice all the wrong moves and your team will execute the wrong moves when it's time to perform. Practice without intentionality and you will perform without much intentionality. A critical goal of practice, then, should be ensuring that participants encode success—that they practice getting it right—whatever "it" might be.

2 - Go Slow. Get it Right.

As a rule of thumb, we use the following goal for practice: you want your participants to complete the fastest possible right version of the activity. If they aren't able to do it right, slow down and work back up to the original task. If activities don't result in reliable success, simplify temporarily so that participants start successful; then add complexity.

3 - 80/20 Principle (also features strongly in Tim Ferriss' DiSSS method)

Identify the 20 percent of things you could practice that will deliver 80 percent of the value. Practice the highest-priority things more than everything else combined. Keep practicing them: the value of practice begins at mastery! Your goal with these 20 percent skills is excellence, not mere proficiency. Keep going so that what you develop is automaticity, fluidity, and even, as we'll discuss later, creativity.

And because I love football (soccer):

Being great at the most important things is more important than being good at more things that are merely useful. Xavi Hernandez, one of the top soccer midfielders in the world, makes this point in an interview in England's Guardian. Xavi describes a single practice activity that characterizes Spanish soccer and explains its dominance. "It's all about rondos," he says, referring to a game in which four or five players pass a ball rapidly around the outside of a square and one or two players pursue the ball. "Rondo, rondo, rondo. Every. Single. Day. It's the best exercise there is. You learn responsibility and not to lose the ball. If you lose the ball, you go in the middle. Pum-pum-pum-pum, always one touch." The drill is so useful that players do it over and over—at the expense of something new. The value of the drill doesn't decrease as they get better at it; it increases. And in the end the fact that the Spanish have a specific name for this drill expresses its importance—and, incidentally, the usefulness of naming drills to allow participants to discuss them more efficiently. To be, like the Spanish, the best in the world and to develop a competitive advantage, be alert for the times, when participants learn something in an especially valuable type of practice, when it would be more productive to say, "Good, let's keep practicing this until we're truly great."

4 - Automaticity Frees Your Mind to Create

Stress learning skills all the way to automaticity so that participants can use them automatically—and before they consciously decide to.

Consider hitting a baseball. It takes about 0.4 seconds for a serious fastball to reach the plate. "Conscious awareness takes longer than that: about half a second," writes Eagleman, so most batters are not consciously aware of the ball's flight. The entire process happens before the batter becomes aware of it. Success is based on habits the batter has built but cannot consciously manage in the moment when they are most needed.

Cognitive leaps, intuition, inspiration—the stuff of vision—are facilitated by expending the smallest possible amount of processing capacity on lower-order aspects of a problem and reapplying it at higher levels.

5 - Replace Your Purpose with an Objective

Replace the vague idea of a "purpose" with a manageable and measurable objective that is made ahead of practice and gives mastery guidance. Teach skills in a sequence of objectives of increasing complexity. Include objectives that focus on integrating previously mastered skills. Adapt objectives to the rate of participants' mastery.

6 - Use Video of Practice

Use video as an easy way for you or others to capture models that you can analyse, use, and reuse.

Part of building a culture of practice is videotaping practice; it sends the message that improvement through practice matters.

7 - Normalise Error

Be willing to push yourself a little bit harder, out of your comfort zone, and take calculated risks in the name of improvement. Maybe that means practicing a difficult conversation that you never thought you could have with your boss about your career development, speaking with conviction and persuasion. Or perhaps it means practicing your violin solo with the metronome four ticks higher than you normally would. Push yourself to make mistakes in the name of improvement.

8 - Make Practice Fun

Utilise friendly and positive competition (for individuals or between individuals). While striving to make practice fun, always maintain the objective of the practice. Encourage your players to cheer for each other in practice (not just in the game). Incorporate elements of surprise.

9 - We Are What We Repeatedly Do

Practice, in this framework, is perhaps defined not as a series of drills and activities and scrimmages but as the opportunity to invent or reinvent ourselves in whatever way we wish, by repeatedly doing these activities with strategy and intentionality. We can become not just better surgeons and teachers and soccer players through practice, but better people. As Aristotle also observed, “We become just by performing just actions, temperate by performing temperate actions, brave by performing brave action.”

Some of My Favourite Quotes

“You can practice shooting eight hours a day, but if your technique is wrong, then all you become is very good at shooting the wrong way.” - Michael Jordan

“Never mistake activity for achievement.” - John Wooden

"When you punish your people for making a mistake or falling short of a goal, you create an environment of extreme caution, even fearfulness. In sports it's similar to playing “not to lose”—a formula that often brings on defeat.” – John Wooden

“To get to the art, one must work very hard. Art doesn't exist just as talent. It exists as effort, work and judgment.” - Javier Bardem

“We become just by performing just actions, temperate by performing temperate actions, brave by performing brave action.” - Aristotle

Amy says

The golden nuggets are words of wisdom from John Wooden. The book includes lots of solid suggestions, but 42 rules does seem a bit listy, even for a type A listmaker like me. However, I must read Lemov's Teach Like a Champion.

Willian Molinari says

A good book with lots of advice. The structure is not so good, but it's OK.

As the title says, it shows 42 rules to improve yourself and practice in the right way. It an introduction, 42 tips on how to get better at getting better, a conclusion, and the appendices. The structure looks like a to-do list of "rules", so it's not so comfortable to read.

The book was made for teachers and then changed to a general purpose. You still feel many of the examples related to education, but this is not a bad thing IMO. The appendices are really great, I found many of my teachers' techniques there.

Here are my notes:

- * Practice doesn't make perfect, it makes permanent. If you're doing something wrong you will just good in doing something in the wrong way
- * To practice is not saying you're bad in what you do, but you can be better in it
- * Plan everything before practicing. Use every minute in the right way.
- * What looks like talent is actually a lot of right practice
- * To improve their answers to students, two teachers practice students questions for 10 minutes each day for some weeks. Practicing the right thing.
- * There are countries where people are better in sports, but they had a good coach since the beginning and have been practicing it since forever.
- * If errors are persistent in your training, reduce it to make it simple. You want the participants to complete the fastest possible light version of your training in the right way and then you can increase the complexity
- * Practice the 20% (Pareto)
- * Plan before doing. Find your 20% and plan on practicing it.
- * You don't have to be aware of your knowledge to use it. You learn by doing, even if you don't remember it
- * Automate skills to unlock creativity. When you know how to do a task without thinking about it (just like system 1 of Thinking, Fast and Slow) you have time to think creatively about what to do differently.
- * Replace the vague idea of purpose with a managed and direct goal. Instead of "be a good basketball player", go for "Score 70% of my three point shots in a match".
- * Find and train areas of talent and areas of weakness. Doing that in group is even better, as one person weakness may be the other's talent
- * Focus on correcting errors, not critique
- * Isolate the skills. Practice in chunks
- * Name it. Define names for the important skills and guarantee everyone is on the same page
- * Mathing skills. Make your practice environment similar to the game field. Practice like you are in the game, with the same conditions.
- * Make a plan, plan to the last minute, video tape and watch your practicing sessions
- * Before modeling (or teaching) tell them what to look for. When you're explaining something, students will better understand what you're trying to say.
- * Make models believable. Model in the context of the students
- * When creating a model for someone you're coaching, show them what you made to get to this point, not just the instructions you are using.
- * Feedback is great, use it and give some.
- * Apply the feedback first, then reflect about it
- * If you want to change behavior, shorten the feedback loop. Give feedback sooner
- * Give feedback right away, even if it's imperfect. The speed of consequence beats strength of consequence almost every time.
- * A simple change implemented right away is simpler than rewiring the steel
- * If you really care about something, you give it constructive feedback. If you don't care about something, you give it only positive feedback
- * Ask people to summarize your feedback, so you know they understood what you mean
- * Normalize error. Don't punish people for their mistakes, it will create a culture of extreme caution or fear.
- * Failure is normal, not an indication of the lack of skill
- * Failure rate and level of skills are Independent variables
- * Expose your weakness to your peers so they can help you improve
- * Challenge people to do things and make mistakes, then correct it before they become too ingrained
- * Practice should not be punishment, make it fun
- * Just coach during the game, don't teach. Use small signals instead of full lessons
- * As a leader, state feedback not just as an advice but as something needed for progress
- * Collect data on specific skills to work on. e.g. how much a sales strategy resulted in success
- * Look for how great people on your field practice in environments similar to yours

Eustacia Tan says

Everyone knows that practice makes perfect. But, practicing the correct way is as, if not more, important. That, at least, is the premise of the book and I really believe it's true.

What this book does is to distill the tenets of effective practicing into 42 rules, explaining each rule in it's own chapter. What I want to do for this review is to looking at the rules that struck me the most (and there are quite a bit) and explore why. Warning: The "why" is going to be all about Kendo <3 (On a completely unrelated note, I will be going to Kendo camp from tomorrow onwards ;))

Rule 3: Stress learning skills all the way to automaticity so that participants can use them automatically - and before they consciously decide to.

Definitely! Even in things like piano, it's only when you have memorised things like fingering that you can work on timing and expression (not that I ever mastered expression). In kendo, it's things like practicing your footwork so you can work on your stroke. Or practicing the stroke so you can work on more advanced footwork (I cannot do fumi-komi, a kind of footstamp).

Rule 15: Use modeling to help learners replicate, and use description to help them understand.

Modeling is when you watch someone and learn from what I do. I think it's self-explanatory as to why it's effective, but really, the best way for me to see how to do the stroke correctly is if my seniors show me how to do it before making me do it.

Rule 20: Model complex skills one step at a time and repeat when necessary.

Case in point: Kiri-kaeshi, a sequence of hits. If we started with it straight away, I would not have been able to do it. But since we first practiced the feet, then the stroke, it became a matter of putting it together rather than trying to do everything at one go.

Rule 25: Speed of consequence beats strength of consequence pretty much every time. Give feedback right away, even if it's imperfect.

I get feedback right away. ^^ And if I don't, I ask for feedback.

Rule 27: Limit the amount of feedback you give; people can focus and use only a few things at a time.

I never really noticed this, but upon reflection, my seniors only tell me to work on one thing at a time. While I was worrying about my feet, they told me to focus on my stroke, and that the feet could be improved later.

Ok, I should stop here. Basically, I believe the things in this book because I can see that they are effective. As for the things that I've not tried, I really want to try. It's definitely something to keep in mind during Kendo camp at least :D

Disclaimer: I got a free copy of this book from NetGalley in exchange for a free and honest review.

First posted at Inside the mind of a Bibliophile

Sergei_kalinin says

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<http://s-kalinin.blogspot.ru/2013/09/...>

(???????????? ? ?????????-????? ?????? ?? ????)

Laura Thompson says

Buyer beware! Do not buy the audiobook version. The narrator's voice sounds like a monotonous computer. I am 75 minutes into the book and don't recall a word. This will be a tough one to finish.

Marcus says

This is one of the best books on mastery that I've come across. It's much more than a bunch of summaries of studies and books on practice, it's the wisdom of some amazing teachers who spent a lot of time actually learning and teaching others how to master their fields. Most of the examples in the book are geared toward teaching teachers how to perform, however the techniques are easily applied to any field or endeavor.

The passion for learning the authors bring to the subject is palpable and the presentation is excellent. Also, don't be put off by the "42 Rules" in the title, this a rare exception to the rule that articles and books based on enumerated lists are no good.
