

## How to use deliberate practice to drive your development

Deliberate practice is when you are focused on a task beyond your **current level of competence and comfort.**

Deliberate practice involves two kinds of learning:

- 🔗 Improving the skills you already have
- 🔗 Extending the reach and range of these skills.

The skill of deliberate practice is useful because the *more* practice you get, the *better* you'll get. This can be a good structure to use to set yourself up for success.

*"Each time you practice a component of a skill, aim to make it 10% harder than the level you find comfortable."*

**Shane Parrish, Clear Thinking**

### Coach yourself questions

What do you want to deliberately practice and why?



How are you going to track your progress?



### 4-step process for deliberate practice



#### 1. Decide what you want to deliberately practice and why

This could be an individual or team goal. For example:

- 🔗 Writing or improving your emails
- 🔗 Presenting to other people
- 🔗 Active listening
- 🔗 Developing curiosity
- 🔗 Improving relationships or working weak ties
- 🔗 Building a personal brand.



#### 2. How you practice matters

When setting time aside to work on your tasks without distraction, think about *the level of attention* you can give as well as the importance of retention.

Ask yourself:

- 🔗 How does my deliberate practice build on the last time I practiced?



#### 3. Create a self and supported feedback loop

Reflecting on your progress is a way to help you coach yourself.

For supported feedback, find others who you can learn from. They can challenge you to higher levels of performance through candid feedback.



#### 4. Build in rewards along the way

Rewards along the way support us to stay motivated.

They can be personal to you and can be extrinsic as well as intrinsic. They can also be as simple as using a red/amber/green system to see how you're doing.

### Recommended resources



**The making of an expert**  
by K. Anders Ericsson, Michael J. Prietula and Edward T. Cokely



**What is deliberate practice?**  
article from Farnam Street Blogs



**Doing by learning**  
Author and founder David Erixon shares how to develop and learn everyday on Squiggly Careers [#317](#)