



C&O Family Chess Center

217 W. Diamond Ave.
Gaithersburg, MD 20877
www.chesscenter.net

"Seven Habits of Highly Effective Chess Students" (Summary)

The most important reason that people play chess is "because it's fun." If you're not having fun there are only two reasonable choices: 1) "Quit playing and do something you enjoy," or 2) "Learn how to make chess fun!" The following seven "habits" will help you to improve your game and increase your fun! This does not mean that it is "easy." Habits require discipline and regular practice to acquire. This material has been distilled from many sources and will be expanded on in individual articles.

Habit 1) Practice Regularly.

"The will to win" means nothing without "the will to prepare."

Regular practice is the foundation for all of the other "Habits." By "regular" practice we mean setting a "goal" and maintaining a schedule that keeps one from constantly "forgetting" to play.

Habit 2) Learn, and then apply the opening theory represented by the "Three Opening Goals" and further detailed by the "Seven Things To Do in the First Ten Moves."

An expanded summary of these strategies is found on the "Students I" page of our website. There is also a wealth of opening information on Chess.com and other internet and print sources.

Habit 3) Learn to recognize the "The Ten Bad Moves" (from my basic curriculum), and always ask the "Key Questions" that will help avoid "Moving Too Fast" (Bad Move No.1).

An expanded summary of these may also be found on the "Students I" page of our website. Of course, many other "bad moves" exist, as well. Learn to avoid them in your play and exploit them in your opponents'. Motivated students will seek out further information on strategic, tactical, and other player errors and bad habits.

Habit 4) Practice endgames!

Learn and understand both offense and defense for the "Three Basic Checkmates" (Two Rook Mate, King & Queen Mate, and King & Rook Mate) and basic Pawn play (and structure). Pawn promotion (or the *threat* of promotion) in the endgame is a powerful weapon that often wins games. There are numerous sources on endgame play, including articles and videos here on Chess.com.

Habit 5) Learn and practice Tactics!

The "Four Basic Tactics" I begin with are 1) Pins, 2) Forks, 3) Skewers, and 4) Discovered Attacks. But there many, many more. Learn to recognize them, set them up, and defend against them.

Habit 6) Review your own games (and others') for mistakes and new ideas.

In addition to your own games, there are many available resources for others (website databases, videos, printed materials, etc.)

Habit 7) Improve your ability to "visualize" upcoming moves (both yours and your opponents') before they are made.

“Visualization” is a “skill,” like any other, that may be *improved* with “practice.”

“See it in your head *before* you do it on the board!”

Additional Sources to Expand Your Chess Experience.

Chess.com has free “Articles” and “Study Plans.” These may be found on the “LEARN” menu. There are many other “free” things to help you on Chess.com. There are also many parts of Chess.com that are available only to “Premium” (paid) Members.

Most beginners do not need to become Premium Members. Chess.com for free members is “ad supported.” There is a free app for your “browser” called “Adblock Plus” that will disable most of the Chess.com ads. However, their “Gold (Star)” premium membership blocks all the ads and is reasonable for beginners who use Chess.com regularly and want to help support it.

ChessTempo.com has a great “database,” “tactics problems,” and other free things for beginners to access. When you register you should use the same Username and Password that you have for Chess.com (easy to remember).

YouTube.com has thousands of chess videos for instruction at all levels. Unfortunately they are not very well organized, so you need to learn how to “search” for what you want. Then you need to learn to distinguish the good from the bad. We have listed some on our website “Links, etc.” page. There is also much “inappropriate” non-chess material on YouTube, so get permission and let parents know when you go on this site.

Wikipedia.org has a wealth of chess material, both historical and practical for “players.” Most of the articles start with introductory remarks and progress to more in-depth material. There are also numerous links and cross-references.