

## Esports Practice Starter Guide

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### **Vocabulary:**

- **Mechanic:** The basic skills within a video game that are not strategy based. Examples of mechanics are Aerial Dribbling (Rocket League), Quickscooping (Valorant), Last Hitting (League of Legends), etc.
- **VOD:** A video recording of your match that you can review to see mistakes, scout opponents, and plan strategies.
- **Scrim:** Short for scrimmages, or practice matches against other teams.
- **Goals:** Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely.

### **Basic Formula for Esports Practices:**

#### **1. VOD Review**

- a. For strategy and planning what your team needs to work on this week. Review films of your previous matches, or of an upcoming opponent. This is usually done at the start of the week or soon after your match was played.
  - i. Focus on reviewing at least one loss and one win. Comparing how the team played differently between winning and losing will help the team identify mistakes easier.

#### **2. Goal Setting**

- a. Create goals that your team will target this week in practice. Create a specific plan on how you intend to achieve and measure your achievement of these goals.

#### **3. Drills**

- a. Anything that targets a specific mechanic can be practiced repetitively for improvement.

#### **4. Scrims or Ranked Play**

- a. Matches against other teams where you can practice the strategies and mechanics in a real game situation.



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- b. If scrims are not available, having the team play consistently as a full team in ranked if available will help them build their teamwork and communication skills.

### 5. Professional Player Video Review

- a. Have players look up videos of professionals who play their game/role/position/character and learn from those videos. Watch guides and then try to emulate them to improve faster.

### **Non-Esports Activities for Teams:**

1. Icebreakers
2. Fundraisers
3. Team bonding activities (e.g., outings, fun game time)
4. Team workouts — physical activity is an important, often overlooked aspect of esports
5. Discuss wins and let players share things they were proud of
6. Model activities (e.g., demonstrate how to do a VOD review)
7. Field trips to college programs or esports companies
8. Invite college recruiters to visit your program
9. Host in-house tournaments (students only)
10. Build non-competitive teams (social media, broadcast, design, etc.)
11. Let top players teach mechanics to the team
12. Read general and game-specific rules at:
  - a. ND: <https://fenworks.com/nd-season-information/>
  - b. MN: <https://www.mnvl.org/rule-handbook>
  - c. SD: <https://fenworks.com/sd-season-information/>
  - d. WY: <https://fenworks.com/wy-season-information/>
  - e. WI: <https://www.wihsea.org/resources/index.cfm#d911873>

### **Example Practices**

Apply these same principles and practice ideas to formulate a weekly schedule for your team. While each game varies, the same core practice concepts can apply to all of them. For a more detailed example here is a theoretical weekly schedule for a rocket league team.

### **Sample Weekly Practice Overview (all times per week):**

1. **(Team) Vod Review and Goal setting:** 1 hour
2. **(Team) Drills:** 15-30 minutes before each practice session
3. **(Team) Scrims or Ranked Play:** 2 hours
4. **(Individual) Pro Player Review:** 30min

### Helpful Resources and Tools

- Professional Video Guides: [YouTube.com](https://www.youtube.com)
- Aim Tools:
  - Aim Labs - <https://aimlabs.com/>
  - 3D Aim Trainer - <https://www.3daimtrainer.com/>
- League of Legends
  - <https://op.gg/>
    - Player look-up tool. Great for scouting opponents and identifying champions they play.
  - <https://u.gg/>
    - Build and champion guides. Great for learning more about specific champions and the current meta for each role.
  - <https://www.mobafire.com/>
    - League of Legends strategy build guide
- Rocket League
  - <https://rocketleague.tracker.network/>
    - Player stat tracker. Great for checking your own and opponents' stats and previous matches.
  - <https://dignitas.gg/articles/rocket-league-training-packs-and-workshop-maps-to-improve>
    - Dignitas, a professional Rocket League organization, has practice tools and maps available for skill development.
- Valorant
  - <https://u.gg/val>
    - Tool to look up player stats or learn about specific agent or map information and meta.
  - <https://playvalorant.com/en-us/news/announcements/beginners-guide/>
    - Learn from the official beginners guide to Valorant written by the developer, Riot.
- Marvel Rivals
  - <https://rivalsmeta.com/>
    - Tool to view the current meta, characters, team compositions, and team ups.
  - <https://marvelrivals.gg/guides/>
    - Tool to view tips and best practices for being competitive in Marvel Rivals.
- Chess
  - [Chess.com](https://www.chess.com) has a number of learning tools.
  - <https://www.chess.com/terms/cheat-sheet-chess>
- Mario Kart
  - <https://www.nintendolife.com/guides/mario-kart-8-deluxe-guide-tips-hints-tricks-and-unlocks>
    - Tool to view tips and best practices for being competitive in Mario Kart.





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- Super Smash Bros Ultimate
  - <https://ultimateframedata.com/smash>
    - Showing the numbers and frame data of each character.



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### VOD Review Worksheet

Review recent matches by uploading them to the cloud or on a thumb drive. Review your own play and the gameplay of your opponents to identify areas of improvement and areas where either team did well.

Fill out this worksheet as a guide for your team VOD review:

#### **Opponent:**

**What are three things we did well?**

1.

2.

3.

**What are three things we did poorly?**

1.

2.

3.

**What did our opponent do well?**

**What did they do poorly/where is the weakness in their game?**

**Goals for this week (SMART goals):**

1.

2.

3.

**Practices to target those goals:**

**Game Specific Practice Examples and Topics****Chess**

- **Chess.com Learning:** Use the courses and resources from Chess.com's learning platform: <https://www.chess.com/learn>
- **Openings**
  - Resource: <https://www.chess.com/lessons/learn-the-openings>
  - Start by viewing several openings to understand the purpose of them and the different advantages and disadvantages of openings.
  - To not overwhelm a player, only pick a handful of openings to take a look at.
- **Theory:** Study theory and the purpose of learning good openings. Start to build an understanding of openings to decide on which one you would like to practice based on your playstyle.
  - Make sure to learn at least one white piece opening and one black piece opening.
  - A newer player should not focus on their playstyle, as they likely have not developed one. Likewise, a newer player should only learn openings 1-3 moves deep. More advanced players should learn about 5-7 moves deep of an opening.
- **Openings Practice:** Practice your openings in bot games to build muscle memory. Then play five matches against real opponents using your new openings.
  - While playing these matches focus on what these openings do and how they help you build a better position as the game progresses into the mid-game.
- **Match Review:** Once you have finished your matches take some time to review them and see how the new opening affected your game.
  - See if the openings you picked fit your desired playstyle.
  - Check on professional level players or guides the cover the opening to see how its played and utilized at the highest level.
  - Return to this lesson multiple times to learn more openings and how to defend against them.
- **Drill: Puzzles**
  - Resources: <https://www.chess.com/puzzles>
  - Use Chess.com's puzzles to sharpen your skills. Puzzles help you find solutions and better moves in your matches.
- **Practice:** Solve 5-10 puzzles. Pay attention to what the puzzles are about and they are trying to teach you.
  - Do your daily puzzle. The repetition of solving puzzles will help you see different moves in your games.
  - Many puzzles also teach about important tactics that can be used in matches such as pins, forks, discover attacks, sacrifices, etc.
- After completing puzzles, play matches with a focus on trying to use the tactics and strategies you learned in the puzzles.

**Other topics of practice for Chess:**

- Tactics



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- <https://www.chess.com/article/view/chess-tactics>
- Material Advantage
- Openings
- Midgame
- Endgame
- Attacking
- Defending
- Center Control
- Sacrifices
- Trades
- Counterattacking
- How to review games
- Developing Pieces
- Castleing
- Active Squares
- Double Attacks



### Super Smash Bros Ultimate

- Recovery and Special Fall: Recovery refers to a character's ability to return to the stage after being knocked off. Special Fall refers to the state a character enters after performing their Up Special. Special Fall causes a character to slowly fall, and the player cannot perform any actions until their character lands back on stage.
- Recovery Practice: Each character has distinct ways to recover with some being more vertical recovery or more horizontal recovery. Others hook or grapple to recover, other characters can use multiple special moves to recover. It is very important to learn all the options your character has to recover.
- Mid Air Jump: All characters have at least one mid-air jump. This mid-air jump is important to recovery, as it allows vertical and horizontal movement without special fall. Characters do not regain their mid-air jump until they land on stage.
- Creative Recoveries: The main objective of recovery is to return to the stage, but because your opponent is attempting to prevent you from doing so, you need to mix-up how you recover.
  - Recovering the same way over and over will make it much easier for your opponent to prevent you from returning to the stage.
- Edge Grabs: A safe way to return to the stage is to aim for the edge of the stage. Getting to the edge of the stage will allow your character to grab the ledge, giving you some invincibility for a brief moment and it will restore your mid-air jump and cancel any special fall you might be in.
- Go into training mode without an opponent on a legal stage and practice your character's different ways to recover. Test the limits of how far your character can make it, when to use your mid-air jump, your air dodge, and your special moves to recover.
  - Make sure to identify what special moves cause you to special fall and how to handle that.
- Drill: Combo Practice
  - Enter training mode against a CPU and practice your character's combos.
  - This is a great way to create muscle memory and warm up for matches.
- Combos: Weight Differences: Make sure to change the character the CPU is to different character weights to see how your combos change on those different weight classes. It is also important to pay attention to a character's height when trying to combo them.
  - Super Light: Pichu
  - Light: Falco
  - Mid: Cloud
  - Heavy: Samus
  - Super Heavy: Bowser
- Combos: Percentages: Pay attention to the damage percent of your opponent and see when your combo is no longer effective as the opponent is knocked back too far.





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- **Team Combo Practice:** To help your combos get better is to have a teammate or friend help you. Have your teammate ready to attempt to get out of your combo after you start it by either air dodging or jumping.
  - This helps make sure you are doing the combo quickly enough.
  - This helps make sure your combo is true (an opponent cannot escape it) or if it is one that an opponent can escape from

## Other Topics for Super Smash Bros Ultimate:

- Controls
- Tilt Stick or Smash Stick
- Advantage
- Disadvantage
- Neutral
- Off-stage
- Aerials
- Short hops
- Teching
- Dodges
- Direction Influence
- Spacing
- Special Reverse
- Reads
- Ledge options



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### Fortnite 2v2 Build Battles

- Positioning
- Practice maintaining the high ground: Enter a practice arena with your teammate to 1v1 or against another team to battle 2v2. During this session, the goal should be to always have higher ground than the opponent.
- Competitive Positioning: Being above the opponent is the priority during practice, not eliminations.
- Position Advantage: Maintaining the higher ground in a Fortnite battle will give you the advantage to deal more damage to your opponent positioned lower than you. The opponent's head is vulnerable to being aimed at first from a higher position, which is the highest damage point/deals the most damage.
- Integrate Mechanics: As you become comfortable competing from the higher position, integrate more fundamentals into your practice session. This would include wall edits, inventory management, first shot hit percentage, limited materials, etc.

### Fortnite 2v2 Build Battles

- Drill: Building and Editing Training
  - Build Practice Map: 6483-9631-9857
  - Edit Practice Map: 8655-4007-7726
    - These map codes also contain practice for 1v1 build fights, high ground retakes and other useful skills
- Utilize various map codes to practice the different aspects of building and editing. After learning these, use them as warmups during your other practices.
  - Practice edits from below, sides, and above to replicate in-game scenarios
- Box Fights, Zone Wars, and Realistics are the formats used for official matches. Be sure to practice building strategies for tight maps (Box Wars).

### Other Topics for Fortnite

- Aim Training: 8022-6842-4965
- 1v1 no terrain: 9478-9823-9373
- Fenworks Map Code: 4201-4963-2615
- Battling and Building as a Team
- Box Fights
- Zone Wars
- Realistics
- Loadouts and Weapons

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### Mario Kart

- Drifting and Turbo
- Drift Spark: Make sure to drift long enough to gain sparks for a speed boost once you finish drifting. The spark color indicates the speed boost you will get, Blue being the smallest, Orange being more, and Purple being the maximum.
  - Eventually aim to drift long enough to gain the purple sparks for the maximum speed boost.
  - To get to the third and final stage of boost, you must disable smart steering.
- Drift Angle: When drifting you don't always have to force a hard turn. You can lightly move your analog stick to maintain a mostly forward direction while still drifting to gain the turbo boosts in places that don't have hard turns.
- Drift Timing: Focus on drifting at the right times. Starting too early will put you too far on the inside of the track, possibly crashing or falling off. Starting too late will push you to the outside of the track.
  - Also make sure to hold your drift as long as possible, to maximize the speed boost you get.
- Map Knowledge: Practice your drifting on maps with lots of simple corners like Mario Circuit or Moo Moo meadows. Try to at least always hit orange sparks.
  - As you become more comfortable trying our harder course to focus on your accuracy and not getting off track.
- Drill: Defensive Item Usage
  - Item Timing: Practice the timing for defensive items such as bananas or shells. Head into a CPU or online race.
    - Eventually practice throwing and dropping the item behind you, instead of just holding it.
    - Insuring you know how to best defend yourself will help you maintain your position.
  - Alerts: Focus on using those items to block. For example, when you hear the red shell noise, trail a banana behind you to block it.

### Other Topics for Mario Kart:

- Hops
- Boost Stacking
- Ramp Tricks
- Slipstreams
- Shortcuts
- Defensive play
- Offensive Play
- Timing of items
- Item Cycling
- Item RNG
- Time Trials
- Hazard Management
- Front-Running





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- Mid Pack
- Back-Running
- Awareness



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**Rocket League:**

- **Boost Management**
  - The first step is identifying where the full boosts are and the pads.
  - Knowing the pads well enough allows you to stay in center position more without having to go to the sides or corners for full boost. Learning good paths that go over pads can really help maintain pressure.
- **Feathering Boost:** Practice using short bursts of boost to maintain higher speed, picking up pads to keep your boost high. Make sure to not completely starve yourself by using all your boost every time you get it.
- **Timing Boost Pads:** Know when you need / can pick up a full boost. If you are at 80 boost, you don't need to grab the full boost. Leaving it for a teammate would be much more useful or saving it for when you really need boost.
  - Making sure to not break rotation to grab boost.
  - If you and an opponent are nearby, it may be a good idea to grab the boost, regardless of if you need it or not to starve your opponent.
- **Stealing Boost:** A good tactic is when on offense rotation, try and grab your opponent's corner boosts to starve them.
- **Maintain Boost and Speed:** A good practice is to go into freeplay and practice getting across the field at higher speed, while maintaining at least 30-40 boost. Do this without using full boosts and only using the small pads.
- **Utilize training packs:** To focus on specific parts of the game. Use the training packs below based on your rank. Look up different mechanics or types of offensive/defensive play to find all kinds of training packs to master. Most are available to preview in-game.
  - Use training packs as warm-up tools or drills.
- **Striking:**
  - Striker training packs
    - Bronze - E85E-51A5-748C-56EC
    - Silver - AC75-B416-CF81-85C6
    - Gold - 8F4C-8963-1D67-D7B1
    - Platinum - 1B95-9183-E20D-F2A1
    - Diamond - E76C-A136-9E69-960B
    - Champ - CA56-F0A0-0385-9C5C
    - GC - E76C-A136-9E69-960B
    - SSL - CA56-F0A0-0385-9C5C

**Other Topics for Rocket League**

- Speed Control
- Rotation
- Recovery
- Ground Dribbles
- Air Dribbles
- Flicks
- 50/50s



The Backbone of High-Tech Activities

- Aerials
- Wall Hits
- Defense
- Saves
- Clearing
- Backboard defense
- Kickoffs
- Wave Dashes
- Half Flips

### Minecraft Bedwars

- **Resource Control:** Learning where the diamond and emerald generators are on each map and how to control them.
  - Gaining more resources than your opponent allows you to get stronger gear faster.
  - You and your team should practice quick routes to the generators on each map and which ones you want to control.
  - Focus on building routes to check all the generators to maximize resource efficiency.
  - Caution: Having your team out gathering resources can leave your base and bed open to attack without ample defenders.
- **Hinder Opponent Resource Control:** Sabotage the opposing team by eliminating your opponents after they collect resources or denying them access to the generators. This can prevent them from getting better equipment.
  - Make sure to balance your resource gathering, with offense and defense strategies.
- **Bridging:** The faster you can safely bridge, the more effectively you attack your opponent, escape situations, or the faster you can gather resources.
  - In the gym of the server practice your bridging. Focusing on becoming more accurate and faster.
  - Make sure to practice the different kinds of bridging. From normal, speed, diagonal, and upward.
  - Next head into the maps and practice bridging there. Take notice of optimal paths to key points like the center platforms, resource generators, and the enemy base.
  - Always be aware of your surroundings. Practice quickly defending yourself with blocks if you are being attacked from range while bridging.
- **Combat:** Combat can make or break a game. Practice how different weapons and armor builds interact, record damage values, and work on team combat strategies.
  - Ranged Aim Practice: Use the archery range in the Minecraft server to practice your aim.
  - Melee/Weapon practice: Use the arena area of the Minecraft server to test individual items in the arena or the practice area near the shop vendors.

### Other Topics for Minecraft Bedwars

- Resource Economy
- Items and Builds
- Movement
- Combat and Team fights
- Bed Breaking
- Bed Defense
- Rushing
- Late Game Strategies



### Valorant

- Rotations
  - Knowing your team's positions and strategy to rotate when needed. When one site is under attack, the players on the other site need to rotate.
- Communication: Making sure your team has solid communication about the game state and if a rotation is needed.
  - Keep communication clear for rotations. Your team should make it known when you need to rotate fast or slow.
- Timing: Making sure not to rotate early, leaving one site weak in case the opponent faked an attack. Timing is key.
- Purpose: Only rotate for a reason. Your team should stick to their positions until they need to move.
  - While rotation is very important for defensive strategy. Attackers utilize the same principles to make their attacks more effective.
- Pathing: Attacks can fake one site, then rotate to where the real attack is happening. Knowing what paths to take and being aware that your opponents are also likely rotating.
  - You don't want to be caught out in the open while rotating.
- Practice: Go into a custom game with your team. Have half your team attack and the other defend. Both teams should focus on gathering information about their opponent and the calling rotations.
  - The players rotating should stay aware, checking corners and lanes while moving to make sure they are not caught and to see if they can catch an opponent rotating.
- Drill: Moving Target Aiming
  - Use the in-game firing range and set the bots to strafe. Starting on "Easy" speed and focus on only shooting in short bursts.
  - As you improve and get more of the bots, increase the difficulty.
  - While practicing, pay attention to what you struggle with. Are you having difficulties hitting distant moving targets or close ones?
  - Adding this to a warmup rotation to help build muscle memory and skill.

### Other Topics for Valorant

- Aim Training
- Tracking
- Spray Control
- Strafing
- Peeking
- Angles
- Agent Abilities
  - Utility
  - Offensive
  - Defensive
- Defuses
- Site plant locations







The Backbone of High-Tech Activities

- Taking and Holding Space (Offensive vs Defensive)
- Maps

### League of Legends

- Economy
  - Gold is directly tied to your champion's strength. Gold allows you to purchase items that significantly increase your stats.
- How to gain gold: The most common way of getting gold is last hitting minions. Scoring the final hit on a minion awards gold. Making sure you are always last-hitting minions if possible is the most important form of gold gain.
  - Other methods of gaining gold included
    - Eliminating an enemy champion awards a large amount of gold
    - When your team destroys a turret you receive some gold. If you destroy a turret, you receive more.
    - Eliminating Baron Nashor awards your team gold.
  - Knowing how and when to spend your gold is very important. Picking good openings to recall to purchase items.
    - Make sure when you recall to purchase items, you have enough gold to make a meaningful purchase. Being aware of your build path and knowing what items make the most impact and trying to recall when you have that amount of gold.
- Opponent's Economy: Since your opponent gains gold the same way as you, try and deny them last hits. When an opponent goes to last hit a minion try and damage them to pressure them out of lane.
  - Likewise avoid being eliminated by an opponent, as they will be awarded a large sum of gold if they do.
- Bounties: Pay attention to if any opponent has accrued a bounty, eliminating them will award a substantial bonus amount of gold.
  - Be aware if you have accrued a bounty and play safer to not give your opponents that gold.
- Build and Build Paths: Study builds and items paths to know what items are worth their gold, making sure the gold you do earn is making an impact.
  - Don't sit on too much gold. Gold in your pocket is useless.
- Drill: Lane Phase
  - Load up a custom game with a teammate. You play a mock "lane phase" \*(12-15 minutes) learning to harass the enemy while still farming effectively.

### More Topics for League of Legends

- Wave Management
- Trading and Harassing
- Skillshot Accuracy
- Vision control
- Objective control
- Rotation
- Lanes and Jungling
- Roles
- Team fighting
- Target priority





The Backbone of High-Tech Activities

- Jungle pathing & leashing
- Stages of game (early, mid, late)

### Marvel Rivals

- Map Awareness: Understanding all the paths and checkpoints of each competitive map
  - Learn the Maps: Study and walk around the competitive maps to learn their layout. Formulate plans with your teams on how to use the terrain.
- Pathing: Be aware of the different routes and vantage points different heroes will be at.
  - Know locations that flying heroes like to position and try to deny them cover.
  - Know the high points that long ranged duelists like to play to avoid their angles.
  - Know the corners and safe spots the strategists like to play
  - Know the choke points where vanguards like to funnel teams and offensive ultimate's like to be used.
- Breakable Terrain: Be aware of what major pieces of terrain can be broken.
- Positioning: Find high value positions for your character.
  - Choke points for vanguards
  - Safe positions for long range duelists
  - Flank routes for short range duelists
  - Good lines of sight for strategists to maintain healing on their team without endangering themselves.
- Strategize team plays: Formulate strategies with your team that utilize the different map layouts and game modes.
- Tracking Ability / Ult usage
  - Know how each character has a way to get out or a movement option.
  - Track when enemies dont have abilities, like Mantis no Sleep, Loki no Rune
  -
- Target Practice
  - Use the in-game practice range with your chosen hero.
  - Use the target range and set an enemy to move. Practice your own aim while moving to simulate the real game with both you and your targets in motion.
  - Focus on target acquisition and consistency on hitting your target
  - Mix up what hero you chose as your target, make sure to get a variety of sizes from the larger vanguards, to smaller strategists, and to flying duelists.
  - Add this drill to your warm-up before matches to make sure you are building the muscle memory for aiming.
  - Train on all the heroes you play, as some may aim differently.
  - If your character is more combo focused, like spiderman, focus on performing your combos accurately and quickly.

### Other topics for Marvel Rivals

- Tracking and Headshots
- Movement
- Cover Usage
- Vertical movement
- Abilities and Hero kits.





## The Backbone of High-Tech Activities

- Ultimate usage and timing
- Mobility abilities
- Team-ups
- Objective control
- Objective types
- Flanking
- Backline
- Attacking
- Defending.