

The term purposeful practice was coined by the renowned psychologist K. Anders Ericsson, who did groundbreaking research on how we attain mastery in a given endeavor.

What is purposeful practice? It's practice in a way where every moment counts. Where every rep, shot, stroke, or whatever the action may be is accomplished with

complete focus and accurate feedback. You see, we all begin at a point, and the only way we move off that point is by training our body and mind to react differently.

Reacting in a way that lends itself to a better performance in whatever pursuit we find our self in.

I began as a golf professional in one of the premier public golf courses in New York.

Dusk would hit, and on my nightly walk down to the range to close up, I would always notice the same two players left.

What I began to really notice was the parallel between them. The one golfer loved his driver. He would pound shot after shot with his driver, rarely switching clubs, never settling himself on a target. He would look back at me with a smirk, "Did you see that buddy?" I would always catch the ball

mid-flight, a long drive that was impressive.

I asked him "Yeah! How did you shoot

today?" He would sigh, "Terrible, mate. I

can't seem to carry it over to the course." I

would look at him, remembering back to

how he proclaimed he would never take

anyone's advice. I would throw my hands in

the air. "Ah, those golfing gods" I would

then drift over to the other man, who I

rarely chose to disturb. Every shot he hit,

even in dusk, was with full concentration.

He would always go through his full pre-

shot routine, never neglecting it. He went

through his bag and made sure to hit every

club. What amazed me was that he was

always settled in on a target, one of the

seven different practice pins in the distance.

Even more, he would rotate what target he

was hitting to every time. He never hit the

same shot twice. I did decide to mutter one

thing to him as I grabbed the range basket's  
behind him. "Nice club championship win,  
sir."

With purposeful practice, there is a level of  
focus on every shot that never leaves.

When we train our mind to wander in  
practice, we train it to wander when it  
counts. The second man also incorporated a  
big principle in purposeful practice: varied

practice. He worked to simulate what would really happen out on the golf course. He constantly varied the clubs and targets he was hitting because he knew that's how golf really works. Rarely will we ever have the same shot twice, so why practice a task we will never have? This is also why our first golfer struggled to bring his "range game" to the golf course, because he was constantly hitting the same club and shot

over and over. He wasn't simulate actual golf, and found himself struggling on the golf course when he had to attempt to hit shots that weren't drivers.

The second golfer also had a purpose going into a practice session and a determination to better the results afterwards. It's not just going through the motions but constantly pushing the boundaries to see what is really



possible. Only then can a player, person, and/or athlete truly grow. He also had feedback at his disposal. He would note if he missed a shot left or right, and eventually he would decide whether an adjustment in technique was needed. When I walked away from the range that day, little did I know I'd see purposeful practice again in my next life venture.

Years later, I would start up a website, [www.thehaloelite.com](http://www.thehaloelite.com), with the purpose to help video game players improve their level of performance online in the game Halo 5. In the first few weeks of the website being up, I thought it was important to interview some of the best professionals at the video game as possible. Yes, I said professionals, since these players were raking in tens of thousands of dollars annually. I asked the

four men, who were apart of the best Halo 5 team online, "What's the key to your success?" One player replied "We practice more than anyone else, honestly. We know our weaknesses and work tirelessly at them." This Halo professional went on to discuss how he incorporated purposeful practice through creating his own practice map. I thought to myself, "This again?"

Expanding, this player described that he would go into the Halo 5 game mode called Forge, which allows players to create their own map. In creating the map, he would place explosive targets that were evenly spread throughout. He then gave himself practice drills, such as how many of the explosive targets he could hit with each weapon in the game in 90 seconds. This tested both accuracy and speed of shots.

This would be done for all of the weapons in Halo 5, from the Sniper Rifle down to the Needler. He would then expand these drills to incorporate strafing, which is a motion from side to side to avoid being hit by incoming shots. After the 90 seconds was up, he would again note how many targets he hit with each weapon. He would note the difference, if any, of his success when strafing compared to just standing still. His

goal for next time would be to increase the number of targets he could hit in that same time frame. He would test not only his weapon skills, but also his grenade skills. By placing targets in hard to reach locations, he would need to execute precise grenade tosses to take them out.

Below is a sample purposeful practice plan they would use...

### **Drill #1-**

Summary: Using a 90 second timer, see how many targets you can hit in this time frame.

You must switch from a target left of center to a target right of center, and must vary

your targets. Do this drill for 5 of the weapons you feel you use most often.

## **Drill #2-**

Summary: Using a 90 second timer, see how many targets you can hit in this time frame **using strafe**. You must switch from a target left of center to a target right of center, and must vary your targets. In terms of strafe, attempt to vary your strafes, incorporating both long and short movements, crouching,



and thruster movements. Again, do this drill for 5 of the weapons you feel you use most often.

### **Drill #3-**

Summary: Using a 90 second timer, see how many targets you can hit in this time frame **using grenades**. You must switch from a target left of center to a target right of center, and must vary your targets. In terms of the grenades, you must switch between

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