

The Chess Improvement Guide

Stop hanging pieces, start winning games

Most beginners lose for the same three reasons. Fix those and your rating jumps fast — no opening memorization required. This guide is the fastest path from casual to dangerous.

The three rules that win beginner games

- Don't hang pieces: before every move, ask 'is this square defended? what can capture me?'
- Develop fast: knights and bishops out, castle early, connect rooks. Don't move the same piece twice in the opening.
- Control the center (e4/d4/e5/d5) — central pieces have more power.

Tactics are 90% of the gains

- Learn the patterns: fork, pin, skewer, discovered attack, back-rank mate.
- Do 10-15 tactics puzzles a day — this is the single highest-ROI habit.
- Always check for checks, captures, and threats before deciding your move.

Endgame basics that close out wins

- Learn king + queen vs king, and king + rook vs king mates cold.
- In pawn endings, the king is a fighting piece — activate it.
- Know the 'opposition' — it decides many king-and-pawn endings.

Insider glossary

Fork — One piece attacking two enemy pieces at once.

Pin — A piece can't move without exposing a more valuable one behind it.

Zugzwang — Any move you make worsens your position.

Opposition — Kings facing off with one square between — a key endgame tool.

Starter checklist

- A free account (lichess.org is free, no ads)
- Daily tactics puzzles
- One opening for white, one vs e4, one vs d4
- Review your losses

The queen goes wherever she wants — tee at 15d0.com/shop/chess/