

# Drill: Boring, but Vital!

by Greg DeMarco

Many years ago a guy got shipwrecked on a deserted, tropical island. His ship sank the previous night but he managed to grab a survival manual. Now that he was safe from the ravages of the sea, he opened the book to a disheartening surprise. It was the wrong book! He had instead rescued a 1,000-page publication entitled "Everything You Wanted to Know About Bowling".



Ten years later he was finally rescued by a passing ship. Its captain, feeling sorry for the castaway, offered to grant the man one wish. Expecting the survivor to request a steak or a night out on the town, the captain was surprised to hear, "Take me to the nearest bowling alley!" While the request might seem odd to most people, it wasn't odd to a man who had read his only book thousands of times and had bowled numerous perfect games in his mind's eye.

Upon arriving at the first port the man rushed to the nearest bowling alley in anticipation of throwing the first of many strikes. It wasn't to be. Instead, he bowled more gutter balls than a one-legged crocodile. The problem was that while he "knew" how to throw a strike in his mind, his muscles, which actually perform the task, were clueless.

So, how does one bridge the gap between "knowing" something in your head and actually being able to do it?

Simple.

Lots of practice. Lots of repetitive practice. LOTS OF DRILL.

Why LOTS of drill? Well, while your brain has an IQ of 100, your muscles' IQ is around 0! Only through a lot of practice can your dumb muscles learn the required activity. It takes many, many repetitions to establish muscle memory. Afterwards, however, they can be counted on to perform quickly, automatically and properly.

And here's the problem.

While drilling your brain is saying, "I got this, can we please move on to something else?" even though your muscles may be making many mistakes. Remember: Practice doesn't make perfect. Perfect practice makes perfect. Don't learn just 60% or 80% of a move. Nothing less than 100% percent is essential. When it comes to drill, if you don't have the time to do it right, when will you have the time to do it over?

Here are some things you can do to stay focused and on task:

1. Ask your partner to critique your technique as you drill. A good practice partner is essential to becoming a champion.
2. Sometimes more resistance from your partner can better show poor technique.
3. Visualize yourself successfully using the new technique in a big match.

Do the above and soon you'll be throwing strikes and opponents!