



5 daily habits to perform my best

When you are officiating at your best, you are an athlete, and your best habits are the same best habits as athletes. So, reach this section below but also read the section on daily habits for athletes over here - it is really good for you too.

1. Study Hard

There is no replacing knowledge. Experience is great, a subtle understanding of nuances is important, but nothing replaces just knowing your stuff. In some cases it is the rule book, in some the case book in others it may be a code of scores. But no matter what your book is, read that book, over and over again - you can never know the rules too well.

For someone starting out, here are some tips on reading the rules well:

- Get two rule books.
 - One for at home and another for your bag/portfolio to take to competitions. At home, it is great to read the book a bit every day, or at least on a regular basis. In your bag, having a rule book lets you look up a rule right away when you see something or talk about something with fellow officials.
- Definitions Matter.
 - If you are a football referee and you are dealing with a tough situation, often it all hinges on a definition. Catch/no catch, in/out of bounds etc. Focus on defining the key terms in the rule book so that you can read the rest with that foundation in place.
- Casebook Matters
 - Largely in team sports, the case book is important as it provides context to the rules. In some spots (like Hockey Canada), the casebook is embedded into the rule book. In others (like NFHS) the casebook is separate, and sometimes referred to as a “secret rulebook”. That issue aside (secret rulebooks are not a good idea), get that casebook and read it too.
- Talk About It



- Reading on your own is good and important, but talking about what you've read also matters. This can be done informally with friends, formally at officiating meetings or even on twitter - but talk about it. Working through what you've read is always a good idea and reading a rule book is no different.

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2. Get and Stay Fit

Your fitness will make you a better official, and a healthier person, both physically and [mentally](#). If you are working at a high level or intending to work at a high level, customizing your fitness program around the challenges of your sport is a good idea. If you are not, just let officiating be another good reason to get and stay fitter.

3. Deliberate Practice

So, maybe the 10,000 hour rule was a bit overstated, but the idea that it takes a lot of good practice to get really good at something holds up. Officials are no exception. So, if you are an official, how much do you practice in a year? Let's see a typical year:

Practice Activity	Hours Per Season
Pre Season Clinic	16
Rules Study (1hr per week)	20
Evaluations (2/Year)	4
Officials Meetings (Non Admin Talk - 20 minutes per meeting, 1 meeting/month)	2
Total	42



So, if you stick with this, you will hit the 10,000 hour mark (our placeholder here for “lots”) in a short 238 years. There are ways that you and your officiating association can integrate more practice into your life (see “read the rulebook” above as an example). No matter what, getting your number of hours of practice out of the “dozens” and into the “hundreds” is hard. One key way is to be intentional in your games about what you are going to work on. Spend a game focusing on something, and really thinking about your performance, during and after that game. If possible, have someone else watching you and providing you with feedback on that area.

Every competition is a chance to practice, and the more of them you take the better you will get.

4. Mentor and Give Back

Officiating is something we do because we care. If we care, we need to care about our fellow officials too. Be there for them, as a mentor as a colleague as a friend. As you give more back to your sport and to officiating, you will get more out of it.

Think about what mentoring you wanted and needed when you were a younger official. Sometimes it is a pat on the back, sometimes it is a chance to work a game with a more experienced official, sometimes it is a formal evaluation. Be the mentor you wish you had!

5. Participate in Your Schedule

The best way to get more games is to become known as the official that never says no. The people assigning officials like being told no as much as anyone (not so much), so saying yes will make them more likely to call you. The trick with that is that if you are the person who says yes, you will get assignments all day every day. If that is your jam, that can work, but rest is a weapon. Use your schedule with intention, including building in time to take a break, do other things.



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