

Tips For Learning Morse Code (CW)

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Start! Whether you use CDs, computer software, or a partner to send and receive, you won't get anywhere until you get started.

- As a small child learns first to crawl, then to walk, and finally, to run, you, too, must learn in steps. Learning Morse code (CW) properly requires both self-study, and the help of someone sending CW to you.
- Learn each character as a sound. Morse code is a language of sounds. Never write dots and dashes.
- Repetition is the key to remembering anything, including Morse characters. Some folks master it in days, others in months. All who kept at it, get it.
- The Farnsworth Method is recommended. With the Farnsworth Method, you learn each character at 15 words per minute with large spacing in between characters. This has been proven to be the best method for long-range development. Once the characters are learned, copying speed is easily increased by decreasing the spacing between each character.
- Practice, practice, practice. No matter if you learn quickly, or slowly, the key to learning is practice. With enough practice, just about anyone can learn Morse code. Sometimes, skipping a day or two of practice is helpful, and can get you back on track.
- Take advantage of all available practice. Your local area may offer Morse code practice through a 2 Meter Repeater, which you can copy with a scanner. If you have a rig or shortwave receiver, you'll benefit from any CW you hear. Just listen and copy as many characters as you possibly can. Once again, practice will pay off. The more you listen, the more you'll be able to copy and understand. After a while, you'll be copying more characters than you are missing. While driving down the road, I would translate road signs to Morse code in my head - the faster the better.
- One of the best ways to practice, is to use the "Buddy System." Get a friend, spouse, relative, or anyone willing to share their time, to learn along with you. Enlist the aid of an experienced CW operator for answering questions, and making sure you don't develop any bad habits.