MIKKE GOES CODING

Start Learning Programming:

15 TIPS
TO START
LEARNING
HOW TO CODE

Hi there!

First of all, I want to thank you for letting me share these 15 actionable tips with you.

They are all lessons I've learned along my journey of learning how to code. That's why I'm sharing them with you, hoping that I can give back to the community by helping out others who are getting started with learning coding.

When you're interested in learning how to code, what's the best way to start? These 15 practical tips will help you figure out the right way to start that will suit your needs the best.

They will get you in the right mindset for finding the best resources and solutions so that you can learn coding more easily and efficiently.

Let's get started!

Recommended helpful articles:

- **The Best Way To Learn Coding: Beginner's Guide**
- **Why Learn Coding? 12 Essential Benefits From Learning Programming**
- **The Best Websites To Learn Coding In 2019**
- **How To Make Money Coding? 4 Ways To Earn Money As A Developer**

TIP #1:

GATHER INFORMATION ABOUT CODING

If you're just starting out with learning coding, congrats!

You will soon learn that **coding is actually a proper superpower!** Once you start learning, you will soon understand the endless possibilities of creating awesome things with coding.

But first, you should **gather some general information on what coding is all about**. Before you jump into learning coding itself, you should be able to answer the following questions:

- *What is coding? What is web development?*
- *What is a programming language? Why are there so many of them?*
- *What happens when you run a computer program?*
- *How does the Internet work?*
- *What tools do I need to start learning coding?*

Figuring out the answers to these questions will help you understand the fundamentals of computer programming better. This in turn will make learning coding much more enjoyable and **you will see results more quickly**.

To help you out, I've created a **Free Coding Guide for Beginners** on my blog. It covers all of the questions above and much more - check it out!

The guide will also help you define your goals and set yourself some clear targets. You will be able to choose the right programming language to learn and find useful tips and resources for learning how to code, both online and offline.

TIP #2:

FIGURE OUT WHY YOU WANT TO LEARN CODING

Once you have a clear idea of what coding is all about, this second point is by far the most important thing you need to consider.

Why are you interested in learning coding?

Try to be aware of and analytical about the reasons why you wish to learn programming. I don't mean that you need to spend days or weeks figuring this out. But take some time and make sure you know what's motivating you.

Once you figure out what your "mission" is, you will know what steps are necessary to achieve your goal.

> *Remember that learning programming is a process that will tie you up for a long time. And things will not always go the way you plan, trust me.*

Hence, **you need to be able to find your motivation over and over again**. You will need at least several months or even years to reach your goals.

Nevertheless, the journey towards your goal will be amazing, I promise.

Let's look at **two different scenarios on the following page**. These two are the top reasons I've heard why people want to start learning coding:

REASON #1: I'M IN IT FOR THE MONEY OR I WANT TO GET A JOB IN CODING

These days, becoming a developer can give a nice boost to your paycheck. Right now, **skilled programmers are some of the most sought-after AND highest-paid workers worldwide**.

Thus, using all the amazing resources out there to teach yourself how to code could really change your life. As an added bonus, working as a developer could give you more freedom in life when it comes to working remotely, for instance.

And the best part is: nowadays it's easier than ever to learn digital skills online - your timing couldn't be better!

REASON #2: I'M INTERESTED IN LEARNING WHAT I CAN DO AND CREATE WITH CODING

If this is the case, then *hooray*! You will most likely keep going even when times get rough.

Perhaps you're trying to learn how to automate stuff at work. Or maybe you're using a simple mobile app and you're not quite happy with it. Learning how to program your own mobile app isn't as difficult as you might think!

What sets this reason apart from others is something called *intrinsic motivation*. It's what makes us enjoy what we're doing and curious to see what's headed our way next.

So whatever your reason is, just be conscious about it. Having a clear idea of what is driving you to learn coding will help you stick to your learning routine. If you're not quite sure about your long-term goals, it's really easy to slip out of your practising schedule.

The bottom line here is: **learn coding in a way that keeps you motivated**. You will find the best way to achieve your goals once you know why you want to reach it in the first place.

TIP #3:

KNOW WHAT YOU WANT TO CREATE WITH CODING

This step will mainly determine the skills you need to learn in order to achieve your goals. Therefore, give it some thought before you start choosing your first programming language to learn.

With seemingly endless possibilities, coding can be used to the most diverse projects. You can start by thinking about the following questions:

1. *Are you interested in creating websites?*
2. *Or would you rather build mobile applications?*
3. *How about some data analysis and visualization?*
4. *Or developing games or software?*

Whatever it is that you wish to create, just be mindful about it.

Of course you could simply start learning a programming language for the sheer fun of learning it. However, your approach to learning would be completely different.

When you already **know what sorts of problems you wish to solve with programming**, learning it will definitely be a lot easier.

Then, when you're learning about a specific topic, you already have an idea about what you're going to need that skill for in the future. Therefore, you will be more focused and pay more attention to what you're learning.

TIP #4:

CHOOSE THE RIGHT PROGRAMMING LANGUAGE

Once you have a clear goal, the next question is: what do you need to learn to reach it?

Knowing what you wish to create is a problem you need to solve. And a programming language offers you the tools to solve that problem.

Many beginners find this choice quite difficult to make - and I was one of them! You might feel like you're choosing something you'll be stuck with for the rest of your life.

However, try not to let this one decision take up too much of your time and energy. All that matters is that you simply start learning! You can always switch to another programming language if the one you started with doesn't feel right.

If you're interested in web development, for example, you will learn *HTML*, *CSS*, and *JavaScript* for **front-end development**. They determine the look and feel for your websites. You would also use *Python*, *Ruby*, or *PHP* for **backend development**. These languages are responsible for the logic and the different functionalities of a web project.

If you're not familiar with the terminology just yet, go ahead and read my blog post about back-end and front-end development.

To help you choose a suitable language for whatever it is you wish to achieve and create with coding, also check out my post on how to choose your first programming language.

Moreover, for a good overview of what you can choose from, I'd recommend another post with 14 different programming languages and their uses explained for beginners.

TIP #5:

STAY FOCUSED: LEARN YOUR FIRST PROGRAMMING LANGUAGE WELL

When you start learning coding, start with only one programming language and stick with it for a while.

Learn that language really well before exploring others.

Once you master one language,
picking up the next one becomes much easier.

I don't mean you shouldn't look around, quite the opposite. You will notice yourself becoming curious about other programming languages, too. That's perfectly fine and indeed a sign of genuine interest in learning programming.

Simply take notes of anything you'd like to learn in the future. Whether it's a programming language, a workflow tool, or anything else.

Writing things down will get them out of your head, freeing up space and allowing you to focus on what you're doing right now.

One great tool for staying focused is keeping a learning journal. Sounds somewhat old-school and boring, but it works.

TIP #6:

START SMALL AND BE EASY ON YOURSELF

When you start learning coding, remember to be kind to yourself and set realistic targets for your projects.

I know how it feels when you're impatient about creating all sorts of cool stuff, but try to keep it cool.

As a beginner, you don't need to aim for the stars. Just like a freshly-graduated engineer doesn't know how to build the world's tallest building, you don't need to know how to create the next Google.

You don't have to be the best coder in the world.

Therefore, try to come up with little motivations for yourself. Start with simple tasks, like writing a small program that only does one thing. And celebrate your success!

Then, while you're writing one program, you will get an idea for the next one. This cycle is a learning process that is fueled by your curiosity alone.

Remember that intrinsic motivation I was talking about above? That's exactly what's happening here, too. **You simply keep going because you enjoy solving little problems with coding.**

With each problem that you solve, you are growing your set of skills and tools in programming. By reaching small targets one by one, things will start to come together. Then, slowly you will **develop a skill set that will allow you to tackle bigger projects and solve more complex problems with coding.**

TIP #7:

DON'T BE AFRAID TO MAKE MISTAKES

This can be a tricky one for the most of us, but it's one of the most important tips for succeeding in learning coding.

The modern society is so focused on striving for efficiency, perfection, and success, that most people are unconsciously terribly afraid of making mistakes.

While learning coding, try to **be mindful of letting your curiosity take over**. It's the most powerful asset you have, trust me.

Use it to open your mind for trying out new things and learning by doing. A significant part of it is of course learning through trial and error.

A person who isn't making any mistakes

isn't making any progress either.

Thus, simply **keep your mind focused and track your progress**. That way you can always take a look at your notes and see how far you've come.

TIP #8:

UNDERSTAND COMPUTER SCIENCE BASICS

How to start learning coding?

By learning Computer Science basics first!

When you learn how to code, you're telling computers what to do for you. To get a better idea of what computers are capable of, I'd recommend learning the basics of Computer Science right away.

Understanding how computers work "under the hood" will make learning programming much easier for you. Just imagine trying to drive a car but not knowing what will happen when you turn the steering wheel. That's what it feels like to code your own programs and run them on a device you don't understand properly.

The bottom line is that you will simply reach your coding goals faster when you're familiar with the fundamentals of Computer Science.

To help you find **the best courses for learning CS basics**, I've put together a short list in my post about learning CS basics before coding on my blog.

Simply browse through the post and the list of courses and see which one seems interesting to you. They're all absolutely great, so pick whichever you like and you'll learn all you need to know for now!

TIP #9:

START AN ONLINE CODING COURSE

Ok, now you got a clear goal in your mind, you've chosen a programming language to learn, and you know a bit about how computers work.

Next, it's time to actually start learning coding, finally!

Luckily, you will not have difficulties in finding enough resources online to get you started. Quite the opposite: the Internet is so packed with coding tutorials, guides, and courses that it's hard to find the best ones out there as a beginner.

My suggestion is that if you're interested in learning web development, **choose one course that will cover several different programming languages and other tools**.

The trick here is to find a course that actually does a good job at teaching you multiple languages. Many courses out there give you a brief introduction to a bunch or languages but you end up with knowing none of them well enough to actually create something.

Since I'm a nice guy, I wouldn't like that to happen to you. To help you out, I've written a post with the best website to learn coding for beginners. Check it out!

For further courses for programming languages and other useful tools, check out my guide for recommended coding courses for beginners.

TIP #10:

ASK FOR HELP WHEN YOU NEED IT

Facing difficult times is inevitable for anyone who's learning new things. It's all part of the learning process and only shows that you're stepping out of your comfort zone.

Luckily, there is a huge global community that will catch you when you fall.

Remember that hundreds of people have been struggling with the same questions you might be asking yourself. These people are most likely happy to help you out.

The entire world of technology revolves around continuous development. In an industry like this, curiosity and collaboration feed the amazing advancements we've been seeing for the last few decades.

Hence, stay curious, keep asking questions, and head out to those discussion forums for support and help when you need it.

For instance, check out CodeNewbies on Twitter. It's a fantastic community of developers, both beginners and experts. Ask your question and you'll receive help in no time.

**Just remember to give back to the community later on
when you're ready to answer a question yourself!**

TIP #11:

FIND A MENTOR IF YOU CAN

You know the feeling when you're all excited about the new things you're learning, but suddenly you're not sure if you've understood them properly?

I know the feeling – and it's really easy to get rid of.

Try to find someone who's already found the answers to the same questions in the past. This person could be someone you already know or someone from a local Facebook group for coders, for example.

Sometimes finding a coding mentor can be a bit of a challenge, though. If you know someone who's more experienced, don't hesitate to contact them directly and ask if they could lend you a hand from time to time.

Alternatively, you can find help and support on the various **discussion forums** out there.

Later on, **remember to give back to the community**. Once you're more experienced, you can easily return the favor by helping others. Simply browse through a forum of your choice every now and then and see if you can answer someone else's question.

TIP #12:

DON'T TRY TO LEARN EVERYTHING

When you start learning coding, all the technicalities and terminology might easily seem overwhelming. I can fully assure you that this is only temporary.

At the beginning, everything you read and learn is new. Be easy on yourself and allow yourself to take your time.

In the first days and weeks your learning curve will be extremely steep. Keep this in mind for the moments when you feel like you're not making any progress.

Starting with understanding the binary system or exploring data structures can be daunting and exhausting. When your brain is processing too many new things at the same time, you will tend to lose your focus.

That's when frustration and impatience kick in.

If this sounds familiar, **take a little break and let your brain rest for a bit**. For instance, do something completely different for the rest of the day. Head out, go for a walk and come back to your questions tomorrow.

Moreover, don't be to hard on yourself. It's perfectly fine to just understand the basics first.

Take care of the rest when you're ready. If you get too tangled up in all the technical terms and let them get the best of you, you are only wasting your time.

TIP #13:

PRACTICE EVERY DAY

Repetition, focus, consistency – that's what success is made of!

The key to learning coding and mastering the art of programming requires a consistent, daily dose of training.

Your coding session doesn't have to be at the same time every day. Simply give your brain something to process on a daily basis. This will ensure a smooth transition from your short-term memory to the long-term storage units in the back of your mind.

I know how difficult this can be – I've been there. And I still am!

So how do I find my motivation on those days when I don't feel like coding at all?

I simply look back at how far I've come and remind myself of all the great things that are still to come. Then I open my laptop and **practice for 30 minutes**. That's the minimum I've set for myself, but your daily time could be something completely different.

And here's the good news: on most days you will feel like learning for way more than just 30 minutes. If you're really motivated to learn programming, you probably won't have any problems with creating a daily routine out of it.

You dan do it!

TIP #14:

TRACK YOUR LEARNING

Tracking your learning is one of the best tips for learning coding you will ever hear. I've been nagging about it in too many blog posts already. However, it's still working for me so I can only recommend it over and over again.

When you start learning how to code, it's often difficult to tell whether you're making progress and actually learning.

Tracking your learning will help you focus and stay motivated. You will be more mindful of what you're doing and the new skills you're acquiring.

Moreover, keeping track of your progress is really easy and doesn't require much time or effort. Get a journal from your bookstore or try a web app like Penzu. Or even better: code your own learning journal!

If simply writing a journal doesn't sound like your thing, why don't you **start a blog and share your learning experience with the world**? In a previous post of mine, you will find more reasons for creating a coding blog of your own.

Whenever you're lacking the motivation or drive to keep going, looking back at how far you've already come is the most helpful thing you can imagine.

Seeing you've managed to finish all those steps towards your goal is something that will get you back on your feet.

TIP #15:

NEVER STOP LEARNING

The world of tech is constantly evolving and progressing. It's an industry where technological advancements are happening so quickly that it's hard to keep up sometimes.

With computers and programming, we see new technologies, solutions and tools appear at an ever-increasing rate.

Thus, anyone interested in learning coding should also be interested in developing themselves further all the time – for the rest of their careers and lives.

Keep studying,

Keep learning,

Keep coding!

Remember that **you will never be done with learning programming**. You will never be "ready". There's always something new and cool just around the corner that will spark your interest and curiosity.

Find new resources, read blogs and discussion forums. Browse through online courses and books. You will always find new things that are worth taking a closer look at.

Just have fun with this amazing experience of learning new things and you'll succeed for sure!

FINAL THOUGHTS

THANKS FOR READING!

There you go, that's it with the tips for now! I hope you can make use of some of the points for learning coding.

As I mentioned, almost all of them are simple to carry out and the time you will spend on them will pay itself back sooner than you think, I promise.

Remember that understanding and speaking the language of code is like magic. It's a superpower.

Coding will help you understand how things around you work. All you need is some curiosity and discipline and you're good to go!

Anyone can learn how to code - and it's never too late to start!

So, I hope you're going to have as much fun with learning coding as I have!

Good luck with your coding journey!

You can do this!

Please feel free to share your thoughts and feedback on this little e-book and say hi on Twitter or contact me directly at mikke@mikkegoes.com.

See you around!

- Mikke