|  |
| --- |
| Here are the top things to know before you start programming: |
| * You learn by doing |
| * Programming is not like studying for a test |
| * Cheating is very well acceptable |
| * Letting problems pile up is a poor strategy |
| * You do not need 5 monitors |
| * Pair programming as much as possible |
| * There's a right way to ask for help |
| * Always celebrate small wins |
| * Never stop learning |

## #1: IT’S NOT GOING TO BE EASY

First of all, whatever your reason is for learning coding, it’s not going to be easy!

Just like anything else you want to learn, you’re going to start at the very bottom. Working your way up the skill ladder is going to take months and years of hard work.

So, it’s going to be difficult and challenging, and you will feel like quitting at some point. Or at several points, in fact.

But trust me, learning how to code is also incredibly rewarding and empowering!

You can definitely learn everything you need to get a job as a developer or change careers.

But it’s just going to be tough. And that’s what I’m here for.

I’m sharing with you *every* lesson I’ve learned along the way so that you don’t have to make the same mistakes I did.

### #2: FIND YOUR SOURCE OF MOTIVATION

First, make sure you have something on your mind that motivates you day after day after day.

You’ll be doing a lot of stuff alone, so most of the time you’ll just have to know how to push yourself through the rougher patches.

Also, find a way of learning that motivates you:

* If you love learning alone, use[*books and online courses*](https://mikkegoes.com/learning-programming-online-coding-courses-vs-books/).
* If you prefer learning with others, find a work group near you and team up with like-minded people.

Just figure out how you can feel comfortable and find an approach that helps you reach your goals.

If you’re not sure how to start, just try different ways of learning first.

You’ll soon notice whether it’s your thing or not. Learning by doing like this is definitely one of the most important things to know before learning programming.

## #3: YOU NEED A GOAL FROM DAY 1

Answer this one question right now:

What do I want to achieve with coding?

Done? Awesome! That’s going to be your goal. It’s your purpose and motivator for learning how to code altogether.

Now, it might just seem like a cool thing to do –to learn programming – but you really need a long-term goal to work towards.

I thought I’d just solve one small problem at work and that would be it.

I was totally blindsided by all these cool things I learned about tech and programming. With a dozen awesome uses for coding, my head was spinning and I was just getting lost in it all at some point.

To make things easier for yourself, try to find the one most important thing you want to learn coding for.

## #4: LEARN THE BASICS FIRST

**When you start learning programming, there’s a lot of new jargon and terminology to learn.**

I remember when I started learning coding like it was yesterday, really.

True story: I was a total mess!

I felt so confused and overwhelmed with all these new words I kept seeing, not knowing half of them. And with each word I learned, three new ones popped into sight. Heeeeelp!

I just wanted to build a few websites and that’s it! I didn’t want to learn everythingat once!

I knew I had to start at the very fundamentals of how computers even work if I was ever going to become a developer.

And you know what? That was the best thing I could have done.

## #5: HAVE REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

I know, we all want to build the next big social network and become successful overnight.

What I mean is that you should set yourself *realistic goals and expectations*, that’s all.

* *What can you really achieve with coding?*
* *What can you create in 1 year? How about 5 years?*

**As I mentioned above, learning programming is going to be a *long* journey. You’ll need to define a clear goal for yourself and strive to achieve that, step by step.**

But what’s even more important is that you goal is possible to achieve in the first place.

And that’s when it gets rough: you’ll start thinking you’re not good enough and that maybe you should just quit altogether.

**Disappointment is the best way to fail at learning programming. You want to avoid that at all costs!**

Therefore, make sure your expectations are realistic starting now. When you start programming, you’ll begin with learning the very basics first. Slowly, you’ll build up your skills and you can create more challenging and complex projects.

Just make yourself a learning plan based on your goals. Then, go one step at a time and track your progress. Celebrate each small success you have and remember to look back at how far you’ve come already!

## #6: BUILD MEANINGFUL PROJECTS

So you want to become a professional web developer or programmer? Congrats!

Along the way, you’ll be using your new coding skills for building all sorts of different projects. Early on, they are rather small and simple, of course. But as you progress, your projects get bigger and more complex, too.

**Whatever you build, always think about your future job as a developer.**

That’s right. You need to know what you want to do with coding. If you’re learning coding to start a new career, figure out what your dream job would be.

Where do you want to work? What do you want to do?

Once you’re done, start thinking about what your future employer needs from you:

1. How can you help your employer with your programming skills?
2. What sorts of problems can you solve for them?
3. How can your skills bring value to your employer?

These questions will give you a better idea of which skills you need to emphasize in your portfolio.

See where I’m getting here?

That’s right – now all you need to do is build practical projects using those skills for your portfolio. Meaningful projects, that is.

What’s determination going to help you with?

Everything. It goes hand in hand with you ambition and perseverance. It keeps you going even when you’re having a really difficult time learning. Determination just lights a fire under you ass time after time and gets you back on your feet.

**Now, patience is something that balances out your ambitions and determination.** I mean, having big, ambitious dreams is awesome, yes. But without patience, they’ll never come true.

## #7: MAINTAIN YOUR FOCUS

**Remember that goal I was rambling about above? Great!**

It’s the single most important recipe for your success – don’t lose sight of it, ever!

One lesson I’ve learned during the past years is that you must stay focused on that goal. Whatever it takes.

But why? Can’t I just have a new goal?

Well that’s just a bad idea.

## #8: YOU NEED TO START NOW

**Finally, if you really want to start learning programming, start NOW!**

It took way too long for myself to get into learning coding a few years ago. I had all these ideas in my head about coding:

* Coding is super difficult,
* I need to be great at math,
* I should get a college degree instead…

And that’s all just a bunch of bullcrap!

Don’t worry about what others are saying or what you’ve heard about coding. If it’s something you really want, just go for it!

In short: if you want to learn programming, just start learning programming. Simple as that!

I know it can be difficult to find the best resources for learning when you’re a complete beginner. But don’t worry! I’ve tested heaps of courses and other resources throughout the years to help you out.