

GM Training Plan

Desire for greatness

I always knew I will be a GM chess player. I don't think I ever doubted it for a minute! If you want to become a champion, you **MUST** start to think like one. Throw away the doubt and fear and prepare your soul for the success it always desired. Fulfill your wildest dreams and climb the rank to the top. If I did it, you can too. **Are you ready for greatness?**

Become a chess GM *yourself!*



Use this training plan to boost your ability to learn and massively improve your chess playing skills. Let's get started!

The best plan is having a plan!

Unfortunately, there is no magical formula for boosting your understanding of the game. In my years of coaching experience, I've found out that most players' biggest struggle is varying their trainings. *You cannot become a GM if you only study openings!*

Do you often find yourself having the same problem? Don't worry, that's what this training plan is for. I have split the training into 4 categories:

#1: Calculation & Time management

Become a better tactician!

This is probably the fastest way of getting your first +100 rating points. You cannot become a GM without firstly improving your tactics.

How to build this training?

1. Tactics and strategy are tightly connected. In most cases, you should restrict the number of candidates moves by calculating into the right direction. You should try to achieve by tactical means the strategic goals you know or feel that are required by the position. As an extreme example I would quote Capablanca's answer when asked how many moves ahead is he able to calculate: "do not calculate; I know!"
2. You should train your tactical abilities on regular basis. Depending on your available time, you should reserve half an hour or more for daily tactical puzzles solving. Before the tournaments it is optimal to reserve 5-10 days only for this type of training, at least 5 hours every day.
3. Do not be afraid of tactical complications! Tactics are part of our game and you should embark complications with joy and faith in your skills, built up by the training recommended above.
4. Be practical. Do not try to calculate everything when this is not possible. Your intuition (developed by systematical training) should indicate you when to stop.
5. There are two typical mistakes you should avoid: trying to convince yourself that a certain forced variation does not work, or, on the contrary, that a dubious line works. In other words, be objective. Sometimes, looking away from the

board for half a minute helps you to understand whether to go on or not.

What are you achieving?

- Better chances to convert your advantage into victory
- Less blunders, more confidence
- Never miss tactical opportunities

#2: *Opening & Repertoire*

Know your repertoire, save time for later!

The most important part here is finding the openings that fit your own style of playing chess. Picking the wrong ones will only lead you into frustration.

How to build this training?

1. Finding the right opening is a bit like falling in love. If you feel that you would be delighted to play a certain opening, then start studying it, even if it is not fashionable at that time!
2. You should pick up one or a few model players, specialized in the opening you are going to study. Play over their games on the board in order to understand their strategic and tactical subtleties.
3. Learning an opening means a lot more than analyzing and memorizing long variations. You should build up your understanding of the typical middlegame structures and even of the typical endings!
4. In order to master an opening properly, you should play over the lines over the board, at least until move 12 or 15. Watching hundreds of games on the computer gives you a false feeling of strength. Most likely, you will not remember too much after an hour, a day or, surely one week.

What are you achieving?

- Successful preparation of the board for midgame
- Knowing the right time to break the main line

#3: Midgame & Positional play

Learn how to build your winning plan!

This is probably the most important training on the long run. You need to make the pieces and pawns work for you!

How to build this training?

1. Strategy is not an easy notion to define. This can cause some inhibition when wishing to study it. Avoid thinking too much about its essence and start building up your knowledge bit by bit.
2. You should develop your strategic understanding patiently. Every new structure or maneuver added to your knowledge is a step ahead. The process is practically unlimited as strategy is the widest territory in chess.
3. As a few model players who excelled at strategic play, I would recommend studying the games of Karpov, Petrosian, Kortschnoj. But you can choose your own models.

What are you achieving?

- Great transitioning into winnable endgames
- Converting small opening edges
- Avoiding overthinking plans

#4: Dominating the endgame

Queen your pawns!

Now it's time to use your earlier gained advantages and get to the desired part: *winning!*

How to build this training?

1. I would compare the endgame knowledge with the computers' ability to use the Nalimov tablebases. The more technical endings you know, the easier it is to find reference points with few pieces on board. You should study technical endgames systematically, preferable on daily basis.
2. Endgames are not dull. You should remain open to perceive their deep, abstract, beauty.
3. From my personal and other players' experience I can assure you that after studying a certain type of ending intensively, there is a high probability that you will frequently face them in your future games.

4. I would recommend Averbakh's five volumes on endings or the Chess Informant Endgame Encyclopedia (also five volumes). But Dvoretzky's endgame manual should also do.

What are you achieving?

- Knowing your target: winning or getting a draw
- Converting your advantage into a win
- Efficient use of your remaining time

How to use these trainings?

If you want to get the most of this plan, I recommend doing one of each training per week (tactics should be done daily, as I said before). The order is not important, but persistency surely is. Invest in high quality books and other chess materials and don't forget: *track your progress daily!* There is no other better way to see your results as soon as possible. Slam a notebook on your desk, grab a pen and start writing down your results. You will be surprised of how much you can achieve if you do this everyday for a month! Trust me, I do it too!

To your success,

Mihail Marin