





On-the-Job Training | Quick Guide



Introduction. This Quick Guide is a succinct reminder of the key steps for effective OJT. To see these steps in action (video) and for more OJT support go to <https://training.lbl.gov/OJT/>

NOTE: “OJT” refers to training people receive while performing some part of their job. It is an opportunity to address the specific hazards, controls, and safe work practices associated with the work the person will be doing. For this reason, most lab- or safety-orientations aren’t examples of OJT.



Step 1. I Do it. In this step you demonstrate the task exactly the way you want the worker to perform it. Repeat the task until the trainee has a clear understanding of how and why you perform the task as demonstrated. You control the pace of instruction to meet the learner’s needs, and encourage the learner to ask clarifying questions.

1  **Trainer:** EXPLAINS and PERFORMS each step
 **Learner:** OBSERVES each step and asks clarifying QUESTIONS.

Step 2. We Do It. In this step, you do it together. The learner tells you what to do, and you perform the actions the learner specifies (unless the learner asks you to do something unsafe). Your goal is to discover how well the learner understood the procedure you taught, and to correct any misunderstandings.

2  **Learner:** EXPLAINS each step and RESPONDS to questions.
 **Trainer:** PERFORMS each step and QUESTIONS the trainee.

Step 3. You Do it. In this step, the learner performs the task under your direct supervision. If the learner performs well without requiring any intervention from you, then the learner has passed your OJT. If you had to intervene to prevent the learner from doing something unsafe, then you provide coaching and ask the learner to try again. Depending on the complexity, this cycle can take ongoing practice over multiple days with direct supervision and coaching to get the learner’s performance to the point where you no longer need to intervene.

3  **Learner:** PERFORMS each step and EXPLAINS what is important about each step.
 **Trainer:** CONFIRMS or CORRECTS the Learner as needed.

Provide Post-OJT Support and Validate Learning. OJT is not a “one and done.” Learning new skills takes repeated practice over time. It is helpful to pair up new workers with experienced workers (job shadowing) to help new staff strengthen and practice newly learned skills or ways of doing things. This is especially important for work where poor performance can cause injury or damage.

Timing of OJT

It is best to provide OJT as close to the time when the worker is going to use the skills as possible. Research shows that people start to forget new information very quickly (as much as 90% retention loss within a day), unless we apply what we are learning. Repeated practice is needed to retain knowledge and build skill which suggests that OJT should be followed with repeated practice at spaced intervals.

Use of Procedures

- Generally speaking, if a task has more than four to five steps, you want to have a procedure that workers can use as a memory aid and reference. Procedures help reduce errors.
- You and the learner should use the procedure during OJT (to show its value)
- You should encourage the use of procedures until the learner has internalized the steps through ongoing practice.
- Have procedures readily available for reference in situations where the task is performed infrequently. Place it where it will be used (or it may not be used).
- Use of images is beneficial in situations where the task requires a visual assessment, for example determining if the seal on a pressure vessel is properly sealed. Pictures are really worth one thousand words. Labeling equipment and referencing the label in a procedure is helpful.

OJT Delivery Tips

Be Prepared

- People generally accept the ideas of an organized person much faster than they accept the ideas of a disorganized one. It is especially important for the trainer to be organized and familiar with the training process. Trainees recognize and appreciate when the trainer is prepared.

Positive Support

- A positive and open attitude will have a positive effect and enhance the learner's performance. Learners should feel safe making mistakes as they learn and you should encourage the learner to ask questions.

Engage with Empathy

- Each learner comes to OJT with different amounts of prior experience and training. Ask the learner about their prior experience so you can tune your OJT to their level. During OJT, you don't always need to be the one giving out information; you should also ask questions that give learners a chance to show you what they know (or don't know). Always question with empathy. Your goal is to coach your learners, not catch them with "gotcha" questions.

Counselor and Advisor

- Learners expect your instruction and support. They need your feedback on their performance. They want to know what progress they have made and areas where they can improve. Be fair and objective when assessing their performance. Commend them on their strengths and help them to improve their weaknesses.

Language challenges

- Language and cultural understandings can influence communication and learning. As an instructor if you sense that there is a language barrier that affects communication and understanding, stop and get support from someone who speaks the learner's primary language so that they can help translate and facilitate communication.