

Training a practical skill

We recommend taking a **four-step approach** when training practical skills.

Initial training of practical skills may incorporate the use of videos for the demonstration and/or deconstruction stages, as outlined below.

Demonstration

A first demonstration by the **trainer** in **real time without commentary** (may be covered by videos)

Deconstruction

A second demonstration by the **trainer**, **deconstructing** the skills in different **steps**, with **full explanation** (may be covered by videos)

Comprehension

A trainer demonstration, **step by step**, with **commentary by the learner**

Performance

The **trainer verbalises** (when appropriate) **and demonstrates** the skill.

Example of practical application:

Step	Approach
1. Demonstration	Face to face or video demonstration of the skill without commentary (learners can watch the videos prior to the teaching episode).
2. Deconstruction	This can be achieved by showing and 'deconstructing' the procedural steps during the training episode, prior to learner starting the task. This can also be done in a video.
3. Comprehension	<p>This stage can be repeated as much as needed, especially when supporting learner in areas where they are struggling.</p> <p>For example, if a learner is struggling to complete a task correctly, trainer could demonstrate this, asking learner to comment on what they see. If the material needed for a procedure cannot be re-used, learners can describe the procedural steps they would take in a real-life situation, and trainer can advise and correct.</p>
4. Performance	Finally, learners can attempt the skill themselves, verbalising what they are doing. This could be described the assessment stage. It is worth remembering that even if the learner can 'perform', they may still need further practice to embed the learning.

Research indicates that these four steps are essential for efficient learning and so should not be glossed over. Moving directly from step 1 to step 4 can result in errors, both in understanding why and how skills are performed, and in actually undertaking the skill.

If the learner is encountering difficulties, the trainer can go back to the previous step to cover it again.

When training complicated practical skills/ procedures, chunk it down in smaller sections, to avoid cognitive overload.

As with all training, the learner must be given constructive feedback and allowed time for practice of the skills.