

15-Minute Deliberate Practice Workouts

Here are my top three deliberate practice Spanish workouts.

I recommend doing at least one of them *first thing in the morning*. That will make sure that you're able to work on your Spanish even on the days when you don't have a lot of time.

If you happen to have more than 15 minutes, you can simply continue with the workout that you're going through or combine multiple ones. Whatever seems more enjoyable.

I hope you find them productive. If you'd like to find out more deliberate practice strategies, check out my blog at itsnachotime.com

Workout 1 — Reading → Speaking

Grab a book or find something written by a Spanish native, find a room where no one will bother you (or go outside) and **read the first few paragraphs out loud**.

The key words here are OUT LOUD. Try not to mumble—either say it confidently and correctly or confidently and incorrectly, but it's best to avoid the squishy middle zone.

If you catch yourself stumbling as you read, you're going too fast. Focus on going syllable by syllable at first. You'll be able to go faster once you're more familiar with the sounds that you're making.

The point of the workout is to **focus on the way you're pronouncing each word and on the intonation you use for the whole sentence**. It's okay to sound like a robot the first time around, but make sure you read it again trying to add an emphasis that seems more natural.

Workout 2 — Listening → Writing

Pick a close-captioned movie or a video online with someone speaking in Spanish and **transcribe around a hundred words**.

The pause button is your friend here. Listen for a few seconds, hit pause and try your best to keep it in memory as you write it down.

Keep going back for a few seconds and re-listening to the same fragment until you no longer able to catch any new sounds.

To make this easier, you can type directly in a text editor like Microsoft Word and set the language to Spanish. That way the spellchecker will let you know about any typos that you might have made.

Once you've completed around a hundred words' worth, stop and look for differences between what you wrote and the original transcript.

Now comes the most important part!

Grab a piece of paper and divide it into two columns. On the left column, write the English translation for every word or expression that you got wrong. On the right column, write the words in Spanish with the correct spelling.

Once you have this list, you'll be able to **revisit it tomorrow to see what you remember**. Simply cover the second column with a piece of paper and see how many words you can write correctly.

If you need help finding close-captioned videos in Spanish, try my YouTube channel (youtube.com/NachoTimeSpanish) or search for TEDx + your favorite Spanish city (for example, most of the TEDx Madrid talks have subtitles).

Workout 3 — Listening → Speaking

Listen to a podcast or a recording of someone speaking in Spanish and **memorize three full sentences by repeating them after you hear them.**

This is another workout that needs to be done OUT LOUD. If you don't understand the sentence the first time you hear it, save it for Workout 2 and pick another full sentence.

By full sentence I mean a meaty sentence that can stand on its own. This is neither meaty nor full. However, this sentence is full and meaty because it makes a statement and it provides a conclusion.

When you dig your teeth in a meaty sentence, you'll start to notice a bunch of little details that were able to fly under the radar the first time you heard it.

Once you're able to recall the words from memory, **pay attention to the intonation** and the pauses that the native speaker is using and try to reproduce those as well.

Retrieving all the words from memory will take multiple tries, but once it clicks, you'll be surprised at how confident and natural you sound when you're saying them out loud.