

“Kick-Start Your Spanish!”

- A Free Report from NotesinSpanish.com

It doesn't matter how long you spend studying if you aren't really enjoying yourself. Get super-motivated, and your Spanish will improve faster than you could possibly imagine!

We've put together some top tips for getting really motivated, enjoying your Spanish, and learning a lot more this year. The quick 'pin to the fridge' list is below, with full explanations and more pointers on the following pages.

(We've also added a page of **real Spanish phrases**, we're a bit obsessed with learning **Real** Spanish!)

- Ben, [Notes in Spanish](http://NotesinSpanish.com)

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8 Top Tips - NotesinSpanish.com

Print me out and stick me to the fridge!

1. If learning Spanish gets boring, change something immediately!
2. If you get a Spanish teacher, make sure that teacher is GREAT!
3. Align your Spanish learning with your interests.
4. Don't just study hard, have some fun with the language!
5. Love your favourite phrases and keep looking for more!
6. Plan a trip to a Spanish Speaking country soon.
7. Set short-term goals and don't *agobiar* (stress) yourself.
8. Make a little time for Spanish every day.

Read the rest of our report for full explanations of each point on the list...

Our 8 Top Tips - In Depth

1. If learning Spanish gets boring, change something immediately!

If the textbook, classes, or CD course you are using to learn Spanish are **boring**, then:

Ditch them right now and try something else!

NOTHING can kill your learning experience faster than getting bored. So act now, before it's too late! This is probably *the most important* piece of advice we can give you.

When I (Ben) started learning guitar recently, I found myself a teacher. He gave me lots of boring classical guitar exercises to practice when all I wanted to do was to learn how to play rock songs.

I quickly lost interest in the guitar. The answer? I ditched the teacher after lesson one, and started teaching myself those songs – now I love the guitar again and I'm learning really fast!

2. If you get a Spanish teacher, make sure that teacher is GREAT!

OK, so it might be possible to teach yourself the guitar, and a lot of people do learn Spanish on their own, but there is nothing better than having an expert Spanish teacher on hand every now and again to point out those persistent mistakes which we *all* make, no matter what our level.

So why don't you take a class this year? Learning in a classroom full of other motivated students can be a lot of fun. But remember, if you don't like the teacher or you're getting bored:

Get out of there! Boring teaching kills language learning fast!

On the other side of the coin, an interesting, exciting teacher can send your motivation through the roof!

3. Align your Spanish learning with your interests.

Do you love **cooking**? Get yourself a Spanish cookbook. Fanatical about **sport**? Find a way to read about *La Liga* on the net.

Love **movies**? Get DVDs of Spanish films. Set the subtitles to Spanish if it helps. I learn several great new phrases every time I see a good (or bad!) Spanish film. Alternatively, see if your favourite DVD's have a Spanish audio option, and watch them again in Spanish.

How about **reading**? Look for the sort of books you enjoy in English and order the Spanish version, and it needn't be classic Spanish literature! I really enjoyed Dan Brown's 'Angels and Demons' in the Spanish translation (easier than you think!), and many people love the Harry Potter series.

Just take your favourite hobby or pastime, then find out where the Spanish are talking about it on-line, or seek out Spanish magazines, radio programs, books or TV shows that focus on what you love.

4. Don't just study hard, have some fun with the language!

We all need to nail the grammar, learn more irregular verbs, and build up vocabulary, but *please* make sure you spend at least half your time having fun with Spanish as well. How?

Try thinking in Spanish, or make up sentences/stories in Spanish in your head as you sit on the bus. Find an *intercambio* to try out your favourite new words on, even write a poem or love letter in Spanish, or a nasty email to your boss (don't send it!)

Another quick guitar comparison: I still work hard on exercises to get my technique right, but I spend even more time jamming away, making up little tunes, and experimenting with new sounds. It drives Marina mad, but I love it!

Whatever you do, set the grammar book aside every now and again and:

Get creative!

5. Love your favourite phrases and keep looking for more!

Everyone has favourite words or phrases when they learn a new language. Do you know what most people answer when asked what their favourite Spanish word is? *Murciélagos*! That's right, the word for a **bat**! It just sounds **so nice** (plus it includes all the vowels).

Personally I love the word *agobiado*, which means a combination of stressed/overwhelmed. You use it when everything has got just a bit too much:

Estoy un poco agobiado con el trabajo, no quiero salir esta noche.

I'm a bit stressed with work, I don't want to go out tonight.

It's not that I feel stressed all the time, I just love the sound of the word *agobiado*!

Try to collect words and phrases like this and use them whenever you can. Enjoy them. Show them off! You'll enjoy Spanish even more as a result, and learn a whole lot faster.

You can find words and phrases like these anywhere – the [100+ free podcasts](#) on [notesinspanish.com](#) are full of them! Plus, all our newsletters include new, cool Spanish phrases, and we've added a list of 5 great phrases to the end of this report for good measure.

6. Plan a trip to a Spanish speaking country soon.

Even if you don't think you'll make it to Spain, or Central or South America for another 6 months, a year even, it's still really important to visualise yourself using your Spanish in a real Spanish speaking environment at some point in the near future.

Set yourself the goal of making it to one of these fascinating countries, and *using* your Spanish, soon (if you aren't there already!)

7. Set short-term goals and don't *agobiar* (stress) yourself.

This is another trick I picked up in my quest to become a guitar-hero: don't try to learn it all at once. Set yourself short, achievable targets...

For example?

- Pick a new tense like the Pretérito Imperfecto (*Estaba, Hacía*, etc) and learn all the regular endings one week, and three irregular verb endings the next.
- Take on one tiny aspect of the subjunctive at a time, and nail it before you move on to another corner of the subjunctive universe.
- Pick one topic (e.g. travel, jobs) and dedicate a week to learning associated vocab.

The important thing is to take it step by step. Set small, achievable goals, and take them one at a time. And remember, if the task you have set yourself is too hard or is getting boring, then run like hell and **come back to it later on!**

8. Make a little time for Spanish every day.

Even if it's only 5, 10, or 15 minutes a day, do some Spanish! Even if you just talk to the cat in Spanish, or watch a Spanish video on YouTube... it all helps.

Research into learning techniques has shown that doing a little a day gets you a lot further than cramming in a lot just once a week. Plus, of course, getting to grips with your favourite language once a day helps to keep you **Motivated!**

Read on for a few of our favourite Spanish phrases...

Real Spanish Phrases

Here are a few more examples of **real** Spanish phrases you'll hear in Spain. Add a few to your Spanish conversation to sound totally fluent, and keep an eye on our newsletters for more!

Esta película es un tostón

Meaning: This film is really boring/slow. (Literal translation: this film is a big toast!)

Lots more really boring things can be a *tostón*: a meeting (*esta reunión es un tostón*), a party (*esta fiesta es un tostón*), a person (*este tío es un tostón*), or a really dull book (*este libro es un tostón*).

Este chico es un buen partido

Meaning: This guy is a good catch. (Literal translation: this boy is a good match - as in soccer match!)

Can be used for girls too, *esta chica es un buen partido*, or boys who are trying to persuade girls of the fact: *¡Soy un buen partido!*

¡Eres un rata!

Meaning: You are really tight, stingy, mean. (Literal translation: you are a rat!)

This expression is great for when your brother/sister, boyfriend/wife, etc doesn't exactly break the bank with your Christmas present, and you want to tell them how mean they are. Even better if they don't speak Spanish, then you can shout 'Eres un/a rata' across the festive table without ruining Christmas lunch!

¡Yo alucino!

Meaning: I can't believe it! (Literal translation: I am hallucinating!)

The Spanish use this phrase whenever they are presented with an outrageous situation. Price of bread gone up 200%? *Yo Alucino...* Your friend tells you they are going on holiday for the 10th time this year? *Yo Alucino...* You will often also hear *Alucino* used alone, or in conjunction with *con*: *Alucino contigo*, *Alucino con el*, *Alucino con el precio de la fruta*

Remember, when you say it, the stress goes on the 'i' - *Aluci**no***.

Nos hemos ventilado el jamón

Meaning: We've finished off all the ham. (Literal translation: We have ventilated the ham!)

In fact you can 'ventilate' (polish off!) any kind of food - e.g. *nos hemos ventilado el queso* - we've finished off the cheese.

And Finally...

Look out for more real phrases in our next newsletter, plus:

Have you started listening to all our free audio yet? These authentic Spanish conversations will help you reach higher levels, fast. [Click here for details.](#)