



American Water Works
Association



STUDY TACTICS

How to Get Motivated
and Spend Your Time

Far too often people do not devote themselves to learning and growing because they do not see the reward. Dedicating yourself to learning your craft can benefit you in many ways:

SHORT-TERM GAIN

Practically all positions have some sort of educational or professional license requirements to be considered for a recruitment process or promotional opportunities. Taking classes or preparing yourself for upcoming exams will not only qualify you for that position—but can also boost your confidence because you will value the hard work that you put forth.

LONG-TERM GAIN

In each position, salaries are based on the educational and professional license requirements for that particular position (also, most pensions are based on your highest salary earned and longevity). To continuously grow in your profession, you must continue to grow your skills and knowledge. If not, you will hit a ceiling that might be sooner than later.

DO NOT LET YOUR PAST DEFINE YOUR FUTURE

Many of us in the blue-collar trades struggle with school work like reading, writing and math, and the water industry is no exception.

We did just enough to get through high school, then it was off to the “trades”. We weren’t the best students, but we quickly learned that to grow in this profession, we had be good workers to succeed.”

Many of us have insecurities that still haunt us today like, test taking, studying or basic algebra, everything that we will need to become proficient at for our operator certification exams.

Those that have the most success in their careers are the ones that do not let their past define their future.

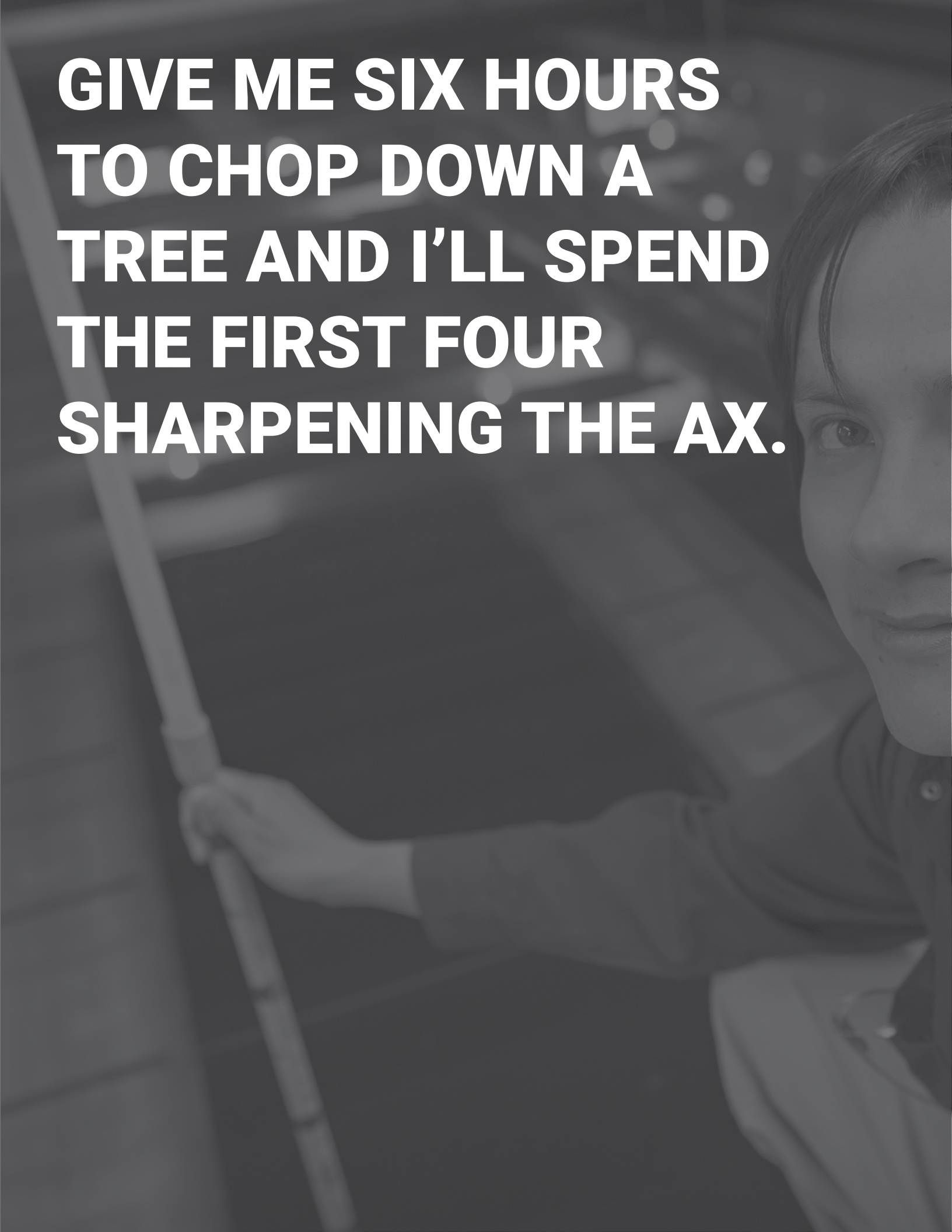
Strengths and Weaknesses are only defined by where we focus more of our time and energy.

Example: The only way to get better at math, is to practice math...or to get better at reading, one must read more often.

“EXCUSES WILL ALWAYS BE THERE FOR YOU. OPPORTUNITIES WON'T.”



**GIVE ME SIX HOURS
TO CHOP DOWN A
TREE AND I'LL SPEND
THE FIRST FOUR
SHARPENING THE AX.**



6 EFFECTIVE STUDY TACTICS

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SET THE MOOD

To concentrate, create an environment that supports clear thinking where there are little to no distractions. Go to the library to get some quiet time to review material or study after the family goes to bed. Note: chewing gum or candy can be a great way to stimulate the mind to be better focused during these study sessions.

STUDY TO UNDERSTAND, NOT TO MEMORIZE

It is best to study to understand the material so that you can use that knowledge to pass an exam as well as to use it in your day to day work duties. By putting into practice at work the material you are studying, you will not only better comprehend the study material, you will build your skill sets and ultimately build value within yourself.

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WRITE WHAT YOU READ

Summarize the material in your own words on paper or make flash cards to help comprehend the subject matter. Drawing pictures of the material you are studying can also be a great learning trick for visual learners!

DON'T PROCRASTINATE

Start studying the day you send in your application to take the operator certification exam. Study 2-4 times per day and increase the intervals when the exam date gets closer and /or the subject matter is becoming easier to retain.

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QUALITY OVER QUANTITY

Short intervals (15-20mins.) of studying are better than long sessions. The brain can only take in so much at a time; take breaks to let your mind digest the material and then go back to your books when you are eager for more.

SET YOUR GOALS HIGH

To pass any course or operator certification exam you need a 70% passing score. Most people tell themselves when they are studying, "all I need is a 70%". This leads to minimal studying and sacrifices. Instead tell yourself, "I want to get a 100%", or "I want to Ace that test."

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The American Water Works Association and WaterWisePro Training have teamed up to create resources for operators looking to start or advance their careers.

We hope that these resources offer motivation and guidance for those front-line workers who are or will be making a difference in the future of water.

AWWA's Water System Operations (WSO) brand includes a variety of certification resources that fit any study style.

WaterWisePro Training offers distribution and treatment exam prep courses in various states and represents the California-Nevada section.



Steve Hernandez, WaterWisePro Training



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