

I hope you really enjoy learning the fine art of umpiring. I think umpiring is the best hobby I have ever had: 1) I get paid to exercise, 2) I get paid to watch baseball/softball, and 3) It is an ever changing challenge. The biggest hurdle that new umpires face is that on every close call (ball/strike, fair/foul, out/safe, etc...) 50% of the people are going to be positive you are wrong and are going to be vocal about it. My best piece of advice to give you would be to accept that criticism as a part of the game, just like hot dogs, hot moms/dads, and pop flies. It is very hard to not take it personally and that is the biggest reason new umpires quit. This is complicated by the fact that you are going to be learning on the job and you are going to suck at times. Know that it is going happen and preplan how to deal with it-I'd suggest tuning it out and focusing on what is going on between the foul lines. I know, easier said than done. Umpiring will get even better as you get more proficient at your job (suck less and suck less often) and advance to higher levels where you get to work with a partner on the field. The whiners will never go away completely, but at least you will have someone to commiserate with.

Many things are important when it comes to officiating baseball. If I had to rank them, they would be in this order: Game Management, Rules Knowledge, Appearance, and Mechanics; but they are all interlinked. Rules are very important and I would recommend learning the Official Baseball Rules (OBR) first. Once you understand OBR, learn the differences as they relate to each different type of ball you officiate. Babe Ruth is very close to OBR, but Cal Ripkin the lower levels of Pony have some safety rules added in. Little League has more stuff added in and some taken out. High School (NFHS) has even more differences, some of which are plain old wacky. Remember that, as an umpire for our Association, you are an independent contractor who is responsible for your own rules knowledge. If you need to know the rules it is your responsibility to get that education whether through our Association clinics, talking to our Rules Trainers, or on your own. You can purchase the Babe Ruth/Cal Ripkin Rule book off [their site](#). Same goes for [Little League](#). These are tax deductible business expenses. Nice guy that I am, here is the link to the [OBR](#) (free), [Pony](#), and [NFHS](#) rule books. Updates to those books are available on their respective websites. Tips: NFHS rule books are available on Kindle. OBR is also available as a free download from the Google Play store. LL has an app that will allow you to search and will tell you where to look up a rule in their book.