

THE 10 MOST COMMON CHESS MISTAKES

1. **BAD DEVELOPMENT:** A chess game has a beginning, middle, and end.
2. **NEGLECTING THE KING:** Nothing is more important than safeguarding your King by castling within the first dozen moves if possible.
3. **MISJUDGING THREATS:** Every time your opponent makes a move, stop everything and ask yourself, “What’s your opponent threatening?”
4. **IGNORING PINS:** The pin is by far the most encountered tactical theme. In general it is good to break pins as soon as possible. There are two kinds of pins: **absolute** meaning the piece cannot move without exposing the King to attack and **relative** meaning the piece is free to move, but at its own peril.
5. **PREMATURE AGGRESSION:** Don’t make the mistake of launching an offensive with too little, too soon. A successful attack requires patience and firepower.
6. **MISCALCULATION:** Visualization – the ability to see ahead and evaluate positions in your mind without touching pieces – can be trained with practice and more practice.
7. **IMPULSIVENESS:** “Sit on your hands!” The itch to move is hard to resist. Over come the obstacle at jumping to make the first move you see, not taking into account any forks or combinative play the opponent planned.
8. **PAWN SNATCHING:** Take it and run but do not amass material and jeopardize your King.
9. **CREATING WEAKNESSES:** The Pawn is the only piece that may never retreat. When you push a Pawn make sure you will not regret it.
10. **INATTENTION:** All errors can be attributed to inattention. Most goofs can be ascribed to fatigue and shortage of time rather than lack of skill or inexperience.

Checkmate comes from the Persian “Shahmat” meaning the King (shah) is dead (mat).

Three elements of chess – space, time, and force – constantly change after each move. But Pawn structure is enduring.