

Strays – Your amateur radio milestones

Back in medieval days, long before our familiar American green mile markers, Europeans often indicated distances to or from localities by tall stones with numerals carved into them. These **milestones** helped travelers know that they had reached another mile in their journey to a town.

Today, we use the term *milestone* to indicate one of many successful achievements while progressing toward a larger goal. In the world of amateur radio, one can check off several accomplishments toward the target of becoming licensed, the goal of all the courses, studying, and examinations. But are there other long-term goals to reach after getting your ticket? And if so, what milestones should you reach on your own journey?



On one hand, you shouldn't feel pressured into achieving any sort of milestones at any stretch of your radio path. Then again, I have a few suggestions for those who feel sufficiently driven to reach some goals, depending on their interests and interest levels.

Operating proficiency

One of your most important goals is to become proficient at radio operation. This means operating like you know what you're doing, and that takes practice. Here are some possible milestones:

- Learn how to [speak into the microphone](#)



- * How close to place your mouth and how loud
- * [How to call out](#) and [how to close the QSO](#)
- * [When to say your call sign](#)
- * How to [ask for a signal check](#)
- * How to [give a signal report](#)
- Talk with a stranger
- Check into a net
- Become acquainted with [the terminology](#)
- Learn to manually program your radio
- [Serve as Net Control](#) for a net
- Learn how to manipulate your radio
 - * Operate simplex, [repeater](#), and [reverse](#)
 - * [Upgrade your antenna](#) and battery
 - * How to [scan](#), [monitor](#), and [orient](#)
- [Teach another person all of this](#)

Technical proficiency

If you're interested in the technical hobby, you might want to become versed at it:

- Learn the [educational aspects](#)
 - * [Electrical knowledge](#)
 - * [Radio spectrum knowledge](#)
- [Upgrade to General or Extra](#)
- [Build an antenna](#)
- Submit a [Microvolt](#) article
- Teach a [ham radio course](#)

Your amateur radio milestones will depend on your personal goals, and will likely differ from those of others. So, what milestones are appropriate for your own goals?