

# Computer Op Orders

## 10 Rules for Effective System Operations

**I. Be Relaxed, Uncluttered,  
Focused, and Flowing (RUFF)**

**II. Keep a Computer Notebook (KCN)**

**III. Read The Manual (RTM)**

**IV. Follow Instructions (FI)**

**V. Start In the Right Place &  
Proceed in the Right Order (SIRP-PRO)**

Acronyms: RUFF KCN RTM FI SIRP-PRO  
Acrostic: Ruff can read them fine syrup pro!

**VI. Expect Problems (EP)**

**VII. Do *not* Blame Your Computer (*n* BYC)**

**VIII. Do *not* Panic At Mistakes (*n* PAM)**

**IX. Change One Setting At A Time (COSAAT)**

**X. Save Often & Back Up Daily (SO-BUD)**

Acronyms: EP nBYC nPAM COSAAT SO-BUD  
Acrostic: EP onBike enPam co-sat so Bud (could too).

# Computer Op-Orders (COO)

## I—Be Relaxed, Uncluttered, Focused, and Flowing (RUFF)

RUFF works for any life or work situation, but especially with computing. There are so many commands, options, and steps, it takes a clear, relaxed mind, free from distracting thoughts, to be successful.

## II—Keep a Computer Notebook (KCN)

With all there is to know about computing, no one can remember it all. With a Computer Notebook, you can store everything you learn in one place—a single-source reference. Create a tabbed divider for each software program you use. When you figure out an uncommon procedure, write down its steps for future use. Log all hardware and software changes you make and troubleshooting you do on your computer, so you have a history of what you did when.

## III—Read The Manual (RTM)

Take the strategic approach to learning by reading the manual *prior* to trying a new program or procedure. Previous experience, trial & error, or blind luck might help, but they're generally time wasters rather than time savers when it comes to learning. Reading the manual may seem to slow you down at first, but will pay huge dividends in your ability to get the maximum performance from your computer and programs.

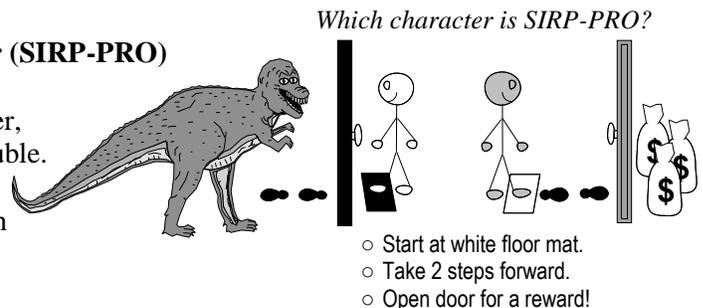
## IV—Follow Instructions (FI)

Pay attention to details and follow instructions precisely. Computers are very unforgiving—even one wrong keystroke can void an operation. Use a ruler to guide you down a page of instructions, so you don't lose your place. Check off each item after you perform it, so you don't miss a step.

## V—Start In the Right Place & Proceed in the Right Order (SIRP-PRO)

If you begin a new task and are on the wrong screen, or in the middle of the previous command, or perform steps out of order, your procedure at best won't work and at worst will cause trouble.

In the diagram, which character is starting in the right place, proceeding in the right order, and destined for success? Which character is doing neither and doomed to failure, or worse?



## VI—Expect Problems (EP)

Computers work on a simple principle—using on/off states to represent data and send messages. But with millions of switches and components interconnected in thousands of ways, problems are inevitable. What's amazing is that most of the time, things go right. But if you expect problems, you'll be better prepared to cope when they happen. Instead of getting upset, treat problems as puzzles to be solved and challenges to be overcome.

## VII—Do not Blame Your Computer (nBYC)

On rare occasions, hardware fails. More often, software causes problems. But by far, most mistakes are caused by user error. Blaming the computer without investigating your own actions is like blaming your hammer because it missed the nail and hit your thumb. Realize that the computer is your tool, you are in charge, and it does exactly what you tell it to do (most of the time!).

## VIII—Do not Panic At Mistakes (nPAM)

If you panic when you make a mistake, there's a good chance you'll make things worse. In a panic state, you're likely to compound the problem by pressing keys or clicking frantically to make the problem go away. It's better to walk away, calm down, and analyze what happened. Then, go back and methodically track down and solve the problem.

## IX—Change One Setting At A Time (COSAAT)

When troubleshooting, in an effort to make things right as quickly as possible, the temptation is to alter *several* settings at once. Unfortunately, if the problem gets solved, you won't know which setting was responsible, and you won't know what to "fix" when the problem recurs. Therefore, discipline yourself to change only one setting at a time. With multiple solution attempts, it's easy to forget what you've already tried and waste time repeating your actions, so use your Computer Notebook to log the date of each change and its result until you reach the ultimate solution.

## X—Save Often & Back Up Daily (SO-BUD)

Make it an automatic habit to save your work from your computer system's temporary RAM memory to its permanent disk storage every few minutes. That way, if you lose power, you won't have to reenter more than a few minutes of data. At the end of a work session, or at least daily, create a backup copy of your data and store it safely away from your computer. If disaster strikes and your original data is lost, you can restore it from the backup copy.