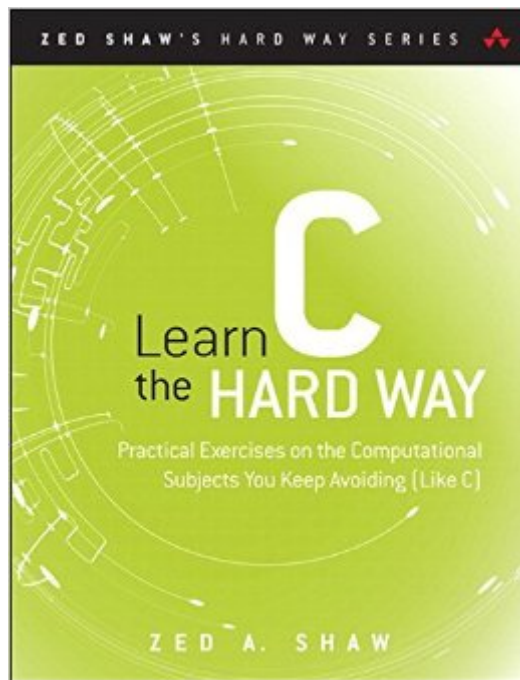


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# Learn C The Hard Way: Practical Exercises On The Computational Subjects You Keep Avoiding (Like C) (Zed Shaw's Hard Way Series)



## Synopsis

You Will Learn C! Zed Shaw has crafted the perfect course for the beginning C programmer eager to advance their skills in any language. Follow it and you will learn the many skills early and junior programmers need to succeedâ “just like the hundreds of thousands of programmers Zed has taught to date! You bring discipline, commitment, persistence, and experience with any programming language; the author supplies everything else. Â In Learn C the Hard Way , youâ ™ll learn C by working through 52 brilliantly crafted exercises. Watch Zed Shawâ ™s teaching video and read the exercise. Type his code precisely. (No copying and pasting!) Fix your mistakes. Watch the programs run. As you do, youâ ™ll learn what good, modern C programs look like; how to think more effectively about code; and how to find and fix mistakes far more efficiently. Most importantly, youâ ™ll master rigorous defensive programming techniques, so you can use any language to create software that protects itself from malicious activity and defects. Â Through practical projects youâ ™ll apply what you learn to build confidence in your new skills. Shaw teaches the key skills you need to start writing excellent C software, including Â Setting up a C environment Basic syntax and idioms Compilation, make files, and linkers Operators, variables, and data types Program control Arrays and strings Functions, pointers, and structs Memory allocation I/O and files Libraries Data structures, including linked lists, sort, and search Stacks and queues Debugging, defensive coding, and automated testing Fixing stack overflows, illegal memory access, and more Breaking and hacking your own C code Â Itâ ™ll Be Hard at First. But Soon, Youâ ™ll Just Get Itâ “And That Will Feel Great! This tutorial will reward you for every minute you put into it. Soon, youâ ™ll know one of the worldâ ™s most powerful programming languages. Youâ ™ll be a C programmer.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

First, a disclosure: I was mailed a free copy of this book by the publisher. I have very mixed feelings about this book. As a bit of background on me, I am a CS student who worked through most of K.N. King's "C Programming: A Modern Approach" last year as my formal introduction to both C and programming in general. So I'm not a total beginner at C, but I'm certainly not an expert, by any means. Let me start with the good points about this book: + You will be exposed to a lot of code. And not just "textbook" code where everything is reduced and condensed to show off some facet of programming (e.g. "class Cat extends Animal"), but real code, the kind of thing you might see in an actual C project on Github. You will have to work through the code and understand what it does with relatively little handholding. + You will be exposed to a lot of data structures. Linked lists of several varieties, databases, structures, search trees, hash maps, and more are all used in various exercises. + You will gain insight from a very experienced programmer--the author! It's clear from reading this book that Zed Shaw has a lot of experience writing C professionally. He has a lot of pointers (heh) on writing code. + The videos are very good. There's an included DVD with lectures related to each exercise. They add a lot to the value of the book. + You will be exposed to other useful ideas: testing, defensive programming, etc. These are useful no matter what language you're writing in. Now, the bad points: - Poor copy editing. One example: in the writeup of exercise 17, in the "how to break it" section Zed writes, "For example, remove the check on line 160..."

This is a darn good intro to C as well as some of the general programming topics that are typically neglected in an introductory book. Of course the author intends this for someone who has previously learned some language previously, so it's not quite a raw beginner's book. The approach, commensurate with the title, puts a lot of the onus on the reader, but doing so forces you to begin making use of the same resources you're going to use after you've finished the book. "Teaching a man to fish" so to speak. In addition to introducing the C language, the author

introduces a number of tools you should become comfortable with and gives you enough information to use the tools without subverting the course into one on any specific tool. This book is much more practical than almost any introductory course I've read. If you search around the internet, you'll find a lot of recommendations for this book and some criticism, some of it pretty harsh. Having read at least the most prominent of the critical reviews I will warn you that most of them are clearly based on a review of the author's website, where a 'beta' version of the book exists (more on that in a minute), and they didn't bother to read the explanation of the teaching approach. If you've visited the "Learn C The Hard Way" site, you've seen the foundations for this book, but you have not seen this book! The author does himself a disservice by not updating the site, or making clear that the book is substantially better. Then there are the videos. The book comes with a DVD and 56 videos that are easily the best part. The demonstrations can go a little quick, but the explanations and additions are fantastic, and the kind of thing you just won't find elsewhere.

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