

# Guide to Language Exchange Websites

OUR BEST TIPS, TOOLS & RESOURCES FOR MAKING THE  
MOST OF YOUR ONLINE CONVERSATIONS





# Foreword

Chatting with conversation partners is one of the most effective ways to practice a language for free and improve your language skills.

The biggest problem for people who are learning a language at school or who are self-taught is how to practice it, especially speaking. It isn't always easy to practice speaking a foreign language, especially when you are unable to travel. Fortunately, there are tricks that can help, like language tandems and sites where you can meet people to practice with.

We've created this eBook to pass on our selection of the best language exchange websites, where you can find conversation partners and practice your target language, all while making friends from around the world!

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# How Does Tandem Language Learning Work?

If you want to practice a language, one of the most effective and fastest ways to find conversation partners is to take advantage of language exchange sites, using the **tandem language learning formula**.

Tandem language learning involves **breaking a conversation down into two parts**: roughly half of it takes place in your native language, and the other half in the native language of your partner, that is, your target language. Your partner could be from England, Spain, Portugal, Russia, or anywhere else!

These exchanges are free; the idea is to exchange your time and language expertise. You both give something, and get back something very valuable in return. It's a very effective method for practicing a language and making quick and impressive progress.

We've been using these sites for a long time. It's great because it allows us to practice speaking and make friends with people from around the world. We find conversation partners very helpful both at the beginning of the learning process and later on, to maintain a learned language.





# How to Find Conversation Partners

Finding conversation partners to practice your target language with is easy. Simply sign up for one of the communities in our list below to get in touch with people from around the world who, like you, want to learn a language.

If you study French, for example, you can find a few conversation partners from France who want to learn English and talk to them in English and French. While each site's interface is different, the basic principle is the same:



*Sign up on one of the community websites below.*

In most cases, you'll just need to provide your name, email address, and date of birth. However, keep in mind that you should try to fill out your profile with as much information as possible. This serves two purposes.

First, as we discuss below, it will help show people that you're serious about the tandem method, which will help attract the best kinds of partners: those who are serious about it too.

Second, by describing your goals and interests, it will help you find conversation partners that are at your level and interested in some of the same things as you! As we'll see, this is essential to getting the most out of your tandem language learning sessions.



*Start looking for a good conversation partner.*

The first and most obvious criteria to filter by (which most websites support) is language. You'll want to find somebody **who speaks your target language** and **who wants to learn your native language**.

Because your focus is on pronunciation and fluidity, you should aim to speak with somebody whose **native** language is your target language. This will ensure that you get the best possible exchange. Finally, look for somebody with a similar level to you, so that you can both progress at the same rate. This makes the exchange much more equitable — and fun!





## *Finally, get in contact with your prospective partner!*

Don't worry — we've prepared a few tips to help you take the first steps ;)

### Do some preparation before diving in.

Before starting your first conversation, you can prepare some material of which you may have need. Notably: an English/target-language dictionary (e.g. English/French or English/Spanish dictionary). The best is an online one, already open in a new tab, for finding words quickly. You should also check out one of our conversation guides. Again, keep it open and at hand.

### Set some ground rules from the get-go.

All in the interest of good fun, of course! Don't forget that this is an exercise that should be fun. Nonetheless, it's good to set some ground rules, especially concerning the time spent in one language or another. Otherwise, you risk becoming an amateur English teacher, or taking advantage of somebody's kindness (or poor time management skills...) — neither of which is the goal here! You can split it up as you like: 50/50 each session, or one session English and one session in your target language, or swap every 10 or 15 minutes. You can even alternate your phrases: you speak in your target language, and your partner responds in English! It's up to you, but deciding all this in the beginning will help you get into a good rhythm. It will also help you figure out if you "click" well.

### Introduce yourself and find common interests.

During your first exchanges, you'll want to start by introducing yourself and asking some of the standard questions: Where are you from? What's your line of work? How long have you been studying English? To quickly find new, more interest subjects, don't hesitate to ask your partner what they'd like to do in life and why they've decided to learn English. The point is to find some common interests in these first few exchanges that will allow you to have enriching conversations moving forward.



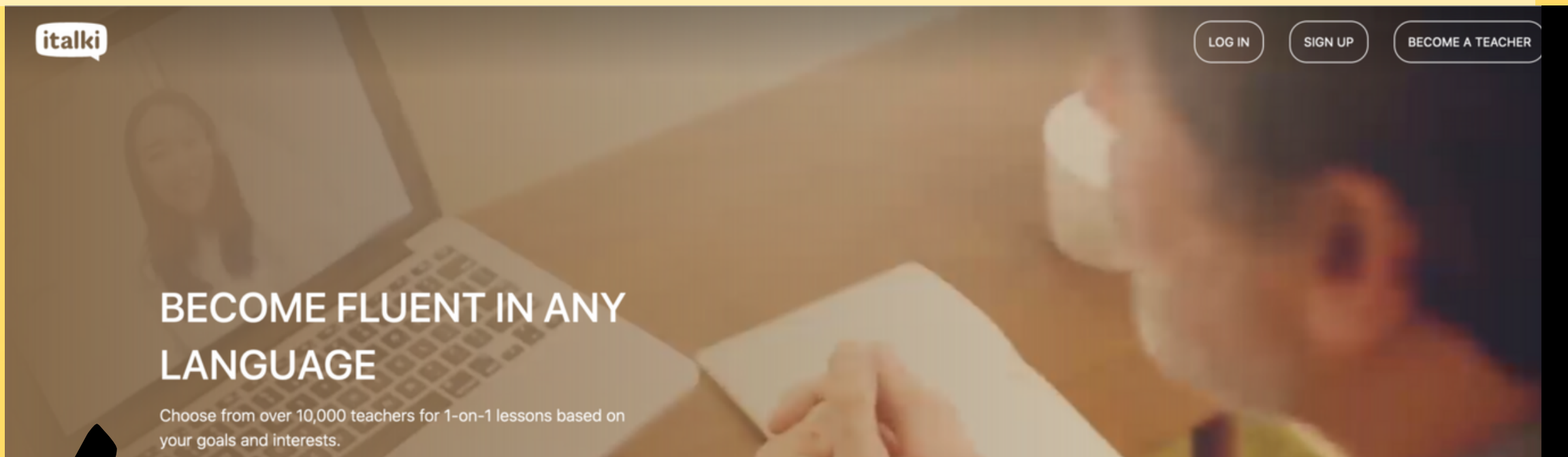
Learn how to react even when you're not sure how to respond.

One last thing, before your language exchange: learn the most essential phrases for expressing yourself, especially, for example: "Can you please repeat yourself?" or, "How do you say \_\_\_\_\_?" This will allow you to have a fluid back-and-forth, even when you don't understand everything 100%. You can find all these important phrases in [Explore > Categories > The Basics > Starting a Conversation](#) in your MosaLingua app. Learn them, and keep them at hand while chatting with your conversation partners.





# Our List of the Best Language Exchange Sites



## *Tandem*

Once on the site, click “Start learning.” You'll be prompted to answer questions about the language(s) you want to practice and your level, as well as your native language(s). You will also be asked a few questions about your interests and what you're looking for in a partner. This will help the search algorithms present you with the best possible options for a future partner. Because part of setting up your profile is selecting which languages you're learning and what level you're at, **try to be totally honest** — putting too low a level means you won't make progress, and putting too high a level means you won't understand your partner. If you can, the best is to take a language test to see where you fall on the European Framework (e.g. A2, B1, etc.)

Once you've completed your profile, you can start looking through matches to find a new conversation partner!

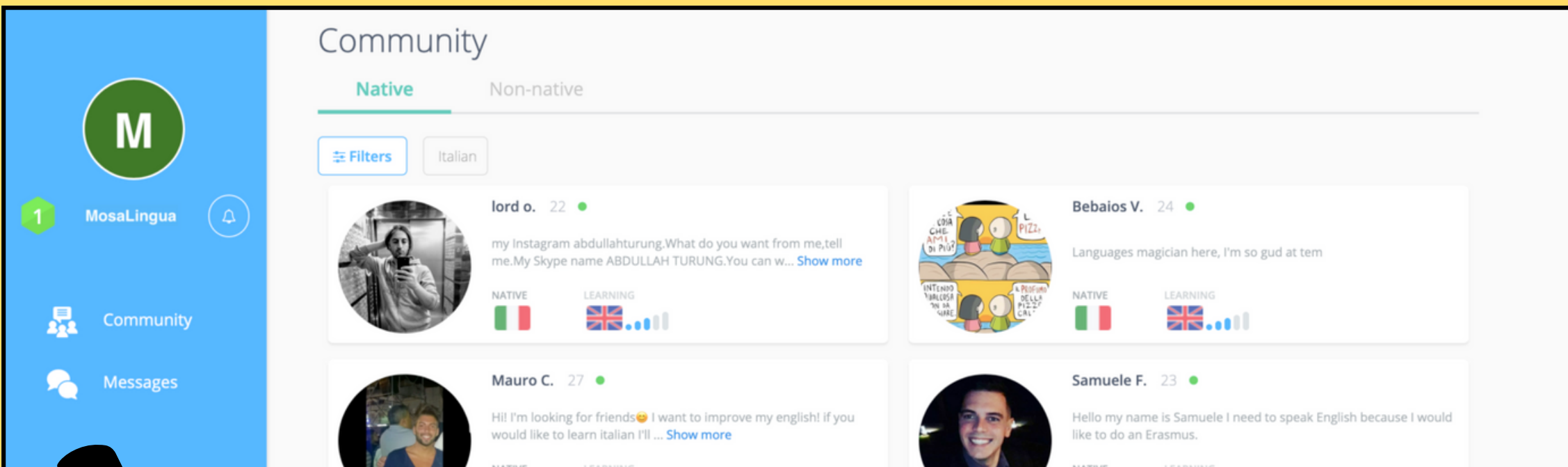
### Pros:

Settings allow users to define their learning preferences for the most optimal matches ... Tons of members and many active users ... Switch between the web interface and mobile app ... Purchase language tests for around \$3 for an official record of your language level (based on the European Framework scale).

### Cons:

Web interface is not 100% optimized for those who want to find a language partner online ... Sometimes having many, many people who want to chat can be overwhelming.





# 2

## Speaky

We like Speaky because you can start using it very quickly. It only takes two minutes to register (you can use your Facebook or Google account). Additionally, the “live” button helps you find conversation partners very easily, by seeing the people who are online now.

With the “Find Friends” menu, you can study someone’s profile before initiating contact. You can see the languages they speak and those they are studying, their nationality, sex, age, and interests. Moreover, the search engine filter helps you identify those who speak your target language as their native language, or see the most active members. If you’re looking for a conversation partner, it is a waste of time to contact someone who hasn’t logged in for over a year! The site is completely free, and has recently been made accessible on Android.

### Pros:

Easy to find a language partner quickly ... The chat system with the ability to correct others’ mistakes (and be corrected) ... The calling system (no need to go through Skype) with suggestions for topics and questions, the timer and the ability to take notes ... Badges and competitions motivate people to find a language tandem.

### Cons:

The live feature is nice, but it is hard to see your conversation partner’s level for sorting purposes ... It would be better to have more added filters and options to choose the appropriate language partners ... You have to register with a Facebook or Gmail account (although it does make signing up easy).





## Conversation Partner

From the start menu, you can choose your preferred language exchange method: face-to-face conversation, voice chat or written correspondence. The search menu allows you to find a language partner to add to your network. Our team has only used this site to find English-speaking conversation partners, but you'll have no trouble finding tandems for Spanish, Italian, German, Portuguese, Chinese, Russian, etc.

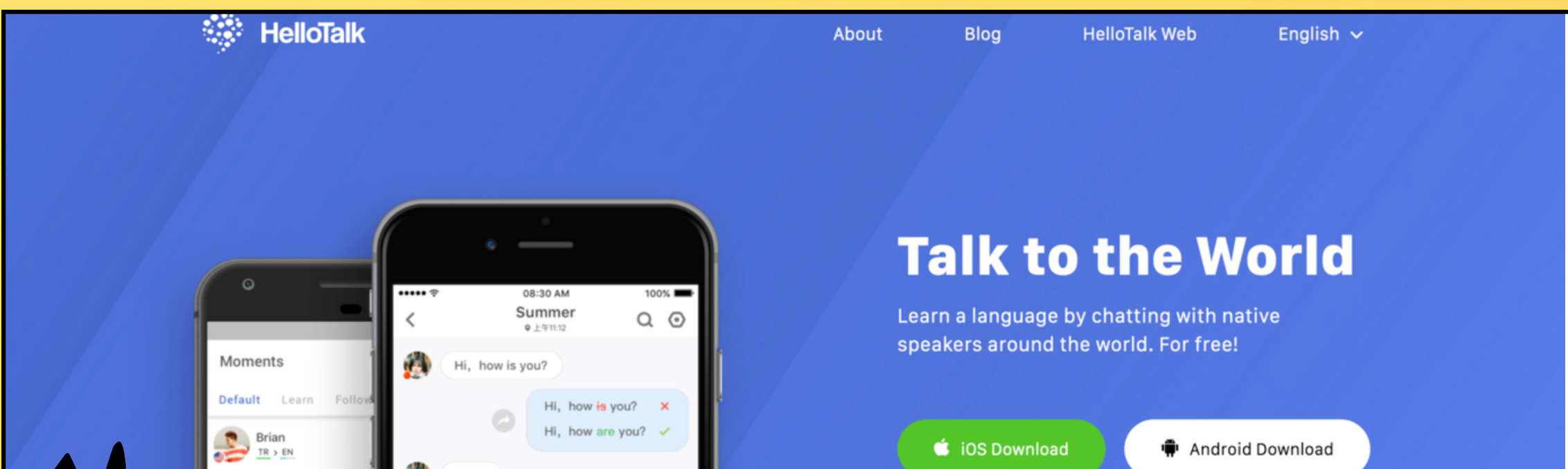
### Pros:

The search for partners by exchange mode (if you want to talk, no need to find someone who just wants to exchange letters) ... Fast and convenient website.

### Cons:

No integrated video chat (but you can use Skype) ... It is not clear whether a user is online, so you first need to exchange messages ... You have to send each other messages before you can start your language exchange.





## 4 Hello Talk (iOS & Android)

HelloTalk is an app that helps you to find language partners directly on your smartphone or tablet. You can converse over text or send small audio messages (like WhatsApp). You can send an invitation for free and start speaking with native speakers in minutes. Once you reach an appropriate level, you can also do voice or video chats. The app also has a whole suite of tools for helping you communicate (written and spoken translations, for example).

More than a million people use HelloTalk to speak in over 100 languages. Thanks to the app's success, it's transformed itself into a lively social network, with a news feed and many people who post photos and videos, and comment in every different language. It's a great space for zoning out on social media while practicing your language skills!

Tip: To find good conversation partners more easily, set your filter to display only the people who took the time to complete their profile (or who are online), as, unfortunately, there are a lot of inactive users.

### Pros:

Allows you to practice on your smartphone, which does not take much time ... Social network with chat, audio calls, and integrated video ... We especially like the voice message, and translation/correction system.

### Cons:

Not always easy to find people who are online and active (depending on what time you are available and what language you are learning). ... Not very suitable for iPads or tablets, as it takes a little time to get used to the interface and find all options.





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## Your Online Language Exchange Community!

Over 3 million members from over 175 countries, practicing 164 languages!

Become fluent in **any language** while making friends with native speakers.

We are the only website with a proven **language exchange method** and **lesson plans**, so you can get fun, effective practice! Created by a **qualified language teacher** specializing in language exchange learning, this will:

## My Language Exchange

MyLanguageExchange is one of the best known language exchange sites, and has a quite good reputation online. There are lots of people to exchange with, and 2/3 of the users are active and have regular exchanges. This is great because, regardless of which site you choose, you'll end up finding two or three good partners to speak with in the long run — which is really all you need to make progress.

The site is similar to the others on this list. You sign up, create a free profile, and set off to meet millions of language learners from all over the world. You can filter profiles by country, languages spoken, and age, which helps you find the right language partner.

### Pros:

Well-known site, so there are close to 3 million members in 133 countries, making it easy to find language partners, and especially language partners at the same level as you ... You can communicate via email or voice chat, which means that, based on your goals and level, you can improve your spoken or written correspondence ... Free...

### Cons:

Free, up to a certain point. To make real use of the site as a discussion platform, either you or your language partner will need to have a subscription. Regrettable for a free language exchange site — but otherwise, you can easily exchange on Skype, by email or by telephone. ... The user interface and graphics are, as you've surely noticed, quite dated. But really, what's more important: an interface that's easy on the eyes, or rich and interesting language exchanges?



# Want More? Our Videos with More Tips and Essential Info

Check out two of our most popular videos on tandem language learning:

Practice a language without moving abroad.



<https://youtu.be/TcGBOqSRtp4> ... Finding the right site is only half the battle. To improve your speaking skills, you need to speak frequently with your conversation partner(s). In this video, Alizah talks about the importance of language exchange sites for practicing a language. She also gives you 3 great tips to help you make friends with somebody on the other side of the world, and how to make rapid progress by speaking in your target language.

Everything you need to know about language exchanges in one video!



<https://youtu.be/tZjFaLLg-s> ... Finding a language partner and jumping into your language exchange doesn't have to be complicated. Just follow the advice in this video and be sure to have fun!