



[www.long-live-pitmans-shorthand-reading.org.uk](http://www.long-live-pitmans-shorthand-reading.org.uk)

[www.long-live-pitmans-shorthand.org.uk](http://www.long-live-pitmans-shorthand.org.uk)

<http://long-live-pitmans-shorthand.blogspot.co.uk>

Images & Text © Beryl L Pratt

## FACILITY DRILL

**Blog - 2013 - February**

**Just Do It**

A series of horizontal blue lines for writing, starting from the top right and extending down the page. The lines are evenly spaced and cover the right half of the page.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on a blue-lined background.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on a blue-lined background.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on a blue-lined background.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on a blue-lined background.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on a blue-lined background.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on a blue-lined background.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on a blue-lined background.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on a blue-lined background.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on a blue-lined background.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on a blue-lined background.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on a blue-lined background.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on a blue-lined background.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on a blue-lined background.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on a blue-lined background.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on a blue-lined background.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on a blue-lined background.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on a blue-lined background.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on a blue-lined background.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on a blue-lined background.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on a blue-lined background.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on a blue-lined background.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on a blue-lined background.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on a blue-lined background.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on a blue-lined background.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on a blue-lined background.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on a blue-lined background.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on a blue-lined background.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on a blue-lined background.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on a blue-lined background.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on a blue-lined background.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on a blue-lined background.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on a blue-lined background.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on a blue-lined background.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on a blue-lined background.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on a blue-lined background.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on a blue-lined background.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on page 7, line 1.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on page 7, line 2.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on page 7, line 3.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on page 7, line 4.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on page 7, line 5.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on page 7, line 6.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on page 8, line 1.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on page 8, line 2.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on page 8, line 3.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on page 8, line 4.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on page 8, line 5.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on page 8, line 6.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on page 9, line 1.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on page 9, line 2.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on page 9, line 3.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on page 9, line 4.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on page 9, line 5.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on page 9, line 6.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on page 10, line 1.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on page 10, line 2.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on page 10, line 3.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on page 10, line 4.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on page 10, line 5.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on page 10, line 6.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on page 11, line 1.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on page 11, line 2.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on page 11, line 3.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on page 11, line 4.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on page 11, line 5.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on page 11, line 6.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on page 12, line 1.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on page 12, line 2.

Handwritten shorthand symbols on page 12, line 3.

## Just Do It

How often have you heard the phrase "Just do it"? I must admit that this is one that I find rather subversive. It seems to be encouraging me to do something and the "just" part is telling me not to consider, hesitate or even think at all about what I am doing, at least not long enough to decide against it. I can think all I like after the event, when it will be too late to change my mind. If I obey this apparently urgent suggestion, then any reservations I have about the action can be overridden, the deed is done and the consequences follow. Maybe I will have acted too quickly for my own good. I might just prefer to wonder why someone would want me to suspend my judgment at that point, hence my suspicion at the motive behind this catchy saying. It may be an advertiser or anyone who might benefit from impulsive behaviour, or even friends who would prefer an accomplice rather than an observer.

Having decided that this phrase serves someone else more than me, I realised later on that something similar to this type of behaviour does have its rightful place at certain times. In a pressured situation where there is no time to think, well-practised reactions are the ones at the front of the "queue". A pilot, doctor, soldier or police officer all have to act rapidly at times, with no spare seconds to wonder what to do or to consult anyone or anything else. Their training has supplied them with all the advice and knowledge they need, in order to take the best course of action for the situation that faces them. The difference is that they don't "just do it", they do not suspend their good judgement, but they "do it immediately" and act very quickly in ways that have been determined beforehand as being the most appropriate.

A beginner in shorthand, after their very first dictation attempt, will probably have realised that there is no time for hesitating, considering, constructing outlines from theory, waiting for them to slowly surface from memory, or anything other than instant writing of the outline. Being required to write immediately and not being given enough time to recall them seems most unfair, quite unreasonable and downright cruel! A glance at the shorthand dictionary will reveal tens of thousands of even longer outlines, and it is amazing that anyone perseveres in their shorthand quest with this seemingly impossible task ahead. Any such discouraging thoughts must be firmly erased by replacing them with remembering how much has been learned already and building on the successes.

In my class we were fortunate enough to have a very skilled teacher with many years' experience, and she was always full of encouragement. However, we did get a shock in one particular lesson when our typewriting teacher took the class in her absence. I think she saw everyone leaning over, slouching, and drawing slow and heavy-handed outlines. A peaceful cosy classroom is not the place where one expects to need or acquire the mindset of a runner or sprinter. With a mixture of kindly impatience on our behalf and a desire to do away permanently with our plodding manner, she decided that we needed a rocket under us, so to speak. Every mark written in a leisurely manner was consolidating that slow frame of mind and this had to be eliminated as soon as possible. She told us boldly that shorthand was not meant to be written slowly and that doing so would hold us back indefinitely. She got us to write very simple phrases like "it is" "for the" "to our" along the line as fast as we could. "Come on, quicker, faster, how many times can you write it before I say stop."

## Just Do It

Everyone rose to the challenge and we were informed that those who had managed to write "it is" ten times in fifteen seconds had written at 80 words a minute. We were thoroughly astonished by this revelation, as any thoughts of high speed had been seen as belonging to the far distant future, that is, next term. By the end of the lesson we were still full of energy, buzzing from our unexpected speed achievements, and looking forward to more next time. We were still only raw beginners, but this early taste of success and introduction to the speed writer's attitude set us all on the path to exam victory. I don't think our shorthand teacher recognised us as the same students when she returned to take her class!

Having attacked and practised those phrases, we were able to "just do it" when they were dictated to us. The same applies to every shorthand outline that you are ever called upon to write. If you learn an outline, you can merely "do it", maybe slowly, maybe eventually. This might be sufficient if you only want to write a private diary or a shopping list. But if you practise assiduously, you can "just do it", the word "just" meaning you have removed any hesitation in your writing.

If it is altered to "just write it" it becomes a motto for practising shorthand, where any pressure is self-imposed for the specific purpose of attaining your goal of increased familiarity and therefore speed. You copy a correct outline, phrase or sentence, and you "just write it" over and over again, saying the words to yourself. No exhausting effort, mental gymnastics or leaps of genius are required. No thoughts of theory need intrude and there is no need to dredge up the outline from memory, as it is right there on the line above. All you need to do is not only just do it, but keep on doing it until it can be written smoothly and legibly. (969 words)