

Adverbs of frequency: The ultimate cheat sheet

The frequency scale

- **100% — Always:** Every single time.
- **90% — Usually:** Most of the time.
- **80% — Normally / Generally:** As a rule or habit.
- **70% — Often / Frequently:** Many times.
- **50% — Sometimes:** About half the time.
- **30% — Occasionally:** Every now and then; not regular.
- **10% — Seldom:** Not very often; rare.
- **5% — Rarely / Hardly ever:** Almost never; very rare.
- **0% — Never:** At no time; not at all.

Placement rules at a glance

If the verb is...	The adverb goes...	Example sentence
A main verb	Before the verb	I often walk to the park.
The verb "to be"	After the verb	He is always happy to help.
An auxiliary verb	Between auxiliary and main	They can usually find a solution.
A negative auxiliary	After "not"	I do not often go out late.
Definite frequency	At the end of the sentence	I run three miles daily .

Common mistakes to avoid

- **The double negative trap:** Never use "don't" + "never." (Use "I **never** go" or "I don't **ever** go").
- **The verb-object split:** Never place an adverb between a verb and its direct object.
 - **Incorrect:** I drink **often** coffee. **Correct:** I **often** drink coffee.
- **Capitalization:** Only capitalize these adverbs if they are the first word of a sentence or part of a title.
- **Placement with "have to":** Unlike other auxiliaries, "have to" (meaning obligation) usually follows the adverb. *Example:* I **always** have to wake up early.