PRECISION PIPS

ICT EXECUTION MISTAKES

Part 1 · Mistakes 1 to 7

Explanations, worked examples, fixes and practice tasks

STRUCTURE | LIQUIDITY | TIMING | RISK



Based on a social-media thread titled “10 Mistakes Making You Unprofitable”.

Educational material only. Not financial advice. Trading involves substantial risk of loss.

About this lesson

The thread you shared argues that most ICT traders do not fail for lack of knowledge. They fail because they cannot **execute** what they already know, and that the missing ingredient is **structure**: a fixed order of questions asked before every trade. This lesson takes each of the seven mistakes in the images, explains the reasoning behind it, adds worked examples and figures of our own, and gives you a concrete fix and practice tasks.

#	Mistake	The fix in one line
1	Treating ICT like a toolbox	Master structure, liquidity and **one** PD array before adding anything.
2	Letting the lower timeframe override the higher	The higher timeframe writes the story; the lower one picks the entry.
3	Searching for entries before finding liquidity	Find the destination (DOL) first, then build the trade backwards.
4	Trading patterns instead of narratives	Run the full six-step sequence; a sweep alone is not a setup.
5	Forcing trades outside delivery windows	Trade defined time windows. If nothing appears, wait.
6	Chasing price	If your model needs a retracement, wait for it. No exceptions.
7	Stops that fit the risk, not the structure	Structure sets the stop; risk sets the position size.

What is covered

The images you sent cover mistakes 1 to 7, plus the cover and introduction slides. Mistakes 8, 9 and 10 were not included, so this is **Part 1**. Send those slides and Part 2 can follow in the same format.

A note on the thread's claims

Treat claims like “95% of ICT traders never become profitable” and “probability drops dramatically” as **rhetoric, not data**. The thread gives no source for them. The advice itself is sound, but the way to prove it is your own journal: track your trades and see which of these mistakes shows up in your losses.

The big idea: knowledge versus structure

The introduction slide makes one claim that frames everything else: **the problem is not knowledge, it is structure**. Most traders keep hunting for another order block, another fair value gap, another model or another mentorship. But a trader who already knows eight concepts and applies them in a random order will lose to a trader who knows four and applies them in the same order every time.

What does “structure” mean here? It is a **fixed process** that answers the same questions in the same order before every trade. The seven mistakes are simply the seven most common places where that process breaks. The figure below shows the process and where each mistake lives.

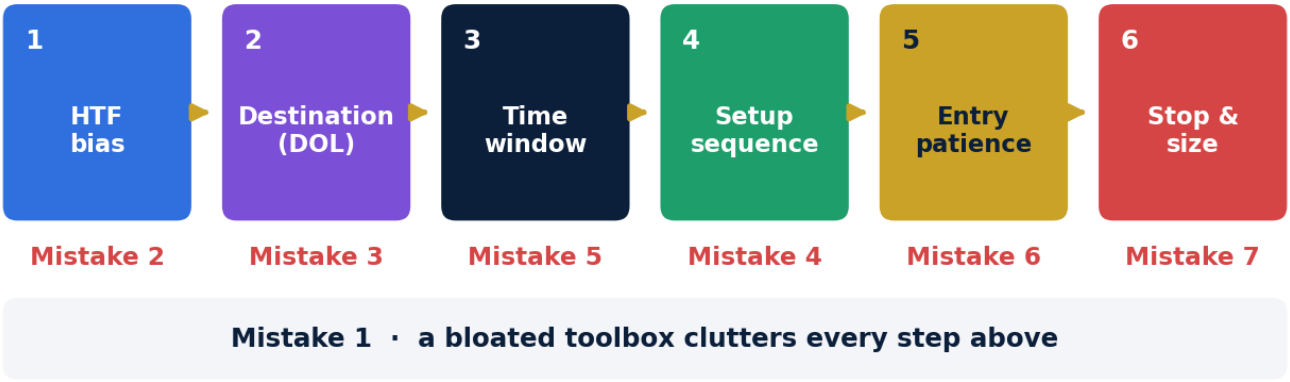


Figure 1 — The execution process and the mistake that breaks each step.

- **Concepts** are individual tools (FVG, order block, MSS). **A framework** tells you which tool to use, when, and why. The cover slide puts it this way: beginners treat ICT as a collection of concepts instead of a framework that explains price delivery.
- Notice that only step 4 is about patterns on the chart. Steps 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 are about context, timing and risk. That is why traders who study only chart patterns plateau.

1 Mistake 1: Stop treating ICT like a toolbox

> **What the thread says**
>
> Week by week, beginners add fair value gaps, then SMT, Venom, Judas swing, breakers, IOFED, MMXM and more. The chart ends up covered in concepts that each tell a different story. When everything is important, nothing is. The fix: master a small group of concepts before adding another. For most beginners that means market structure, liquidity and one PD array, nothing else.

Why this happens

ICT's material is enormous, so there is always a new lecture, a new model or a new acronym. Learning something new **feels** like progress, even when your results are not changing. Many traders also believe their losses come from a missing piece, so they keep searching for it instead of examining how they use what they already have.

Why it hurts

- **Conflicting signals.** With ten tools active, some will always point each way. You either freeze or pick the ones that support the trade you already wanted (confirmation bias).
- **No way to learn.** If every trade uses a different mix of concepts, your journal cannot tell you which ones work. Improvement needs repeatable conditions.
- **Slower decisions.** Execution windows are short. A cluttered chart costs you the moment.

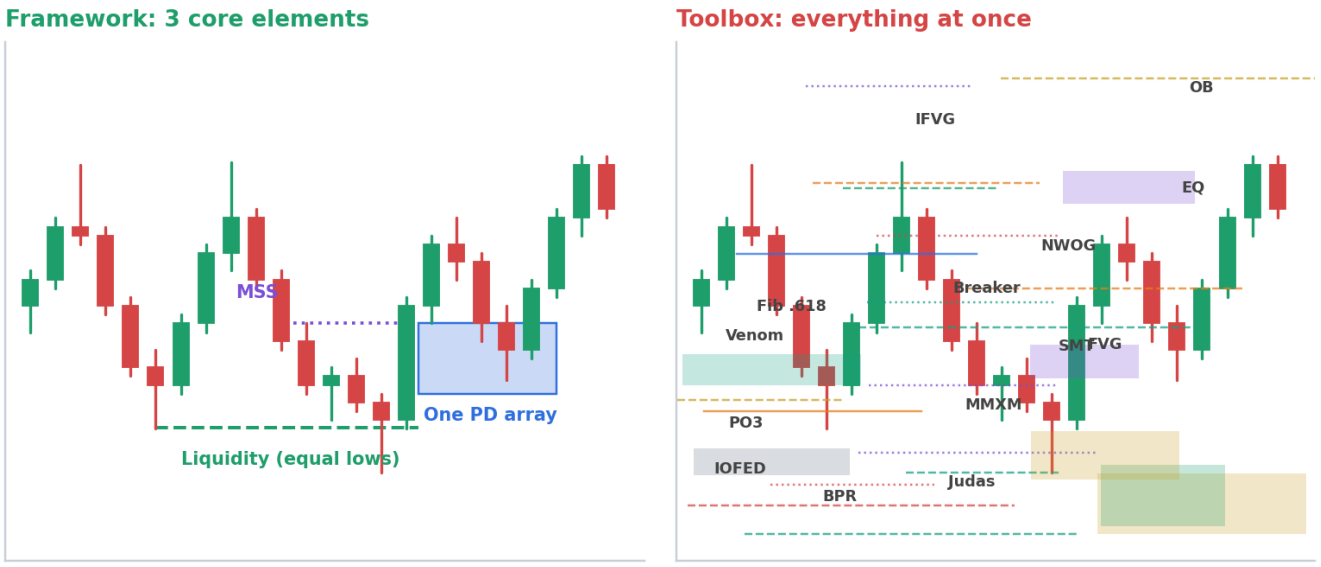


Figure 2 — Same candles, two charts. Left: three core elements. Right: a toolbox approach where every concept is switched on.

The core trio, explained

Element	What it answers	Examples
Market structure	Which way is delivery moving, and has it shifted?	Swing highs and lows, market structure shift (MSS), displacement
Liquidity	Where is price likely to go (objective), and what fuels the move?	Relative equal highs/lows, previous day high/low, session highs/lows
One PD array	Where exactly do I enter, with a clear invalidation?	Pick one to master first: FVG *or* order block *or* breaker

“One PD array” does not mean the others are wrong. It means you learn one entry tool deeply: when it is valid, where it sits in the dealing range, how you place the stop, and how it behaves in your journal. Later, adding a second tool is a deliberate experiment, not a habit.

How to fix it

- **Write your toolkit on one card:** structure, liquidity, one PD array. Nothing else is allowed on the chart until you have a meaningful sample of logged trades with this set (many trades, not a handful).
- **Add a concept only with a reason.** Ask: what specific problem in my journal does this solve? If you cannot name it, you do not need it yet.
- **Keep the chart clean.** Delete old zones and lines every session. A useful limit is a handful of drawn items at once: the liquidity you are watching, the swing that defines structure, and your PD array.
- **Park new ideas.** Keep a “later” list. Studying is fine; trading with an untested concept is the problem.

Practice tasks

1. Delete every drawing from your main chart. Re-mark only liquidity, structure and one PD array.
2. List every concept you currently use. Next to each, write the journal evidence that it helps. Remove those with no evidence.

Few concepts, applied in the same order every time, beat many concepts applied randomly.

2 Mistake 2: Lower timeframe never overrides higher timeframe

> **What the thread says**
>
> The example follows one idea from the weekly chart down to the 15-minute: a weekly bullish imbalance (labeled “Weekly BISI”) is respected, the daily agrees, the 4-hour shows a structure shift, and the 15-minute gives the entry. A follow-up slide, “Higher Timeframe Is the Boss”, says a clean 15-minute setup means nothing if it fights the weekly or daily narrative. The lower timeframe does not tell you where price is going; it helps you join a move already underway.

What the “higher-timeframe narrative” is

It is your answer to three questions on the weekly and daily charts: (1) Where is price inside the larger range, in premium or discount? (2) Which higher-timeframe PD array is price reacting to? (3) Which major liquidity pool is price likely being drawn to? The thread's example uses a weekly bullish fair value gap (BISI stands for buyside imbalance, sellside inefficiency) as the area that price returned to and held.

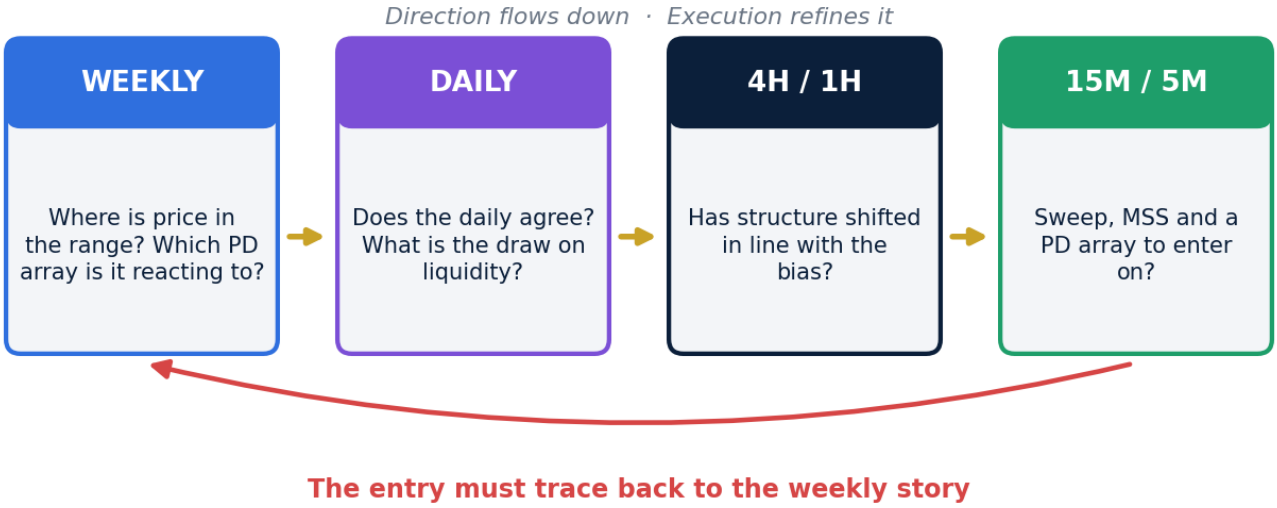


Figure 3 — Top-down flow. The arrow underneath is the rule: the 15-minute entry must be explainable by the weekly story.

Timeframe	Question to ask	What you leave with
Weekly	Where is price in the range? Which PD array is it reacting to?	A directional lean and the major liquidity
Daily	Does the daily agree? Where is it drawing price?	Bias and draw on liquidity (DOL)
4H / 1H	Has structure shifted in line with the bias?	An area of interest
15M / 5M	Is there a sweep, MSS, displacement and a PD array to enter on?	Entry, stop and target

This sits comfortably with the 15-minute / 5-minute / 1-minute execution structure from the Time & Price lesson: that structure is for *executing* a model, while the bias still comes from the higher timeframes above it.

Why “perfect” lower-timeframe entries fail

The thread describes a familiar story: a perfect bullish order block, perfect displacement, perfect FVG, perfect entry, and then price destroys you. The reason is that a lower-timeframe setup is a small wave inside a bigger one. If the daily narrative is bearish and price is trading toward higher-timeframe supply, a bullish 15-minute setup is a bounce inside a decline. It can look flawless because bounces often do. It just has no force behind it.

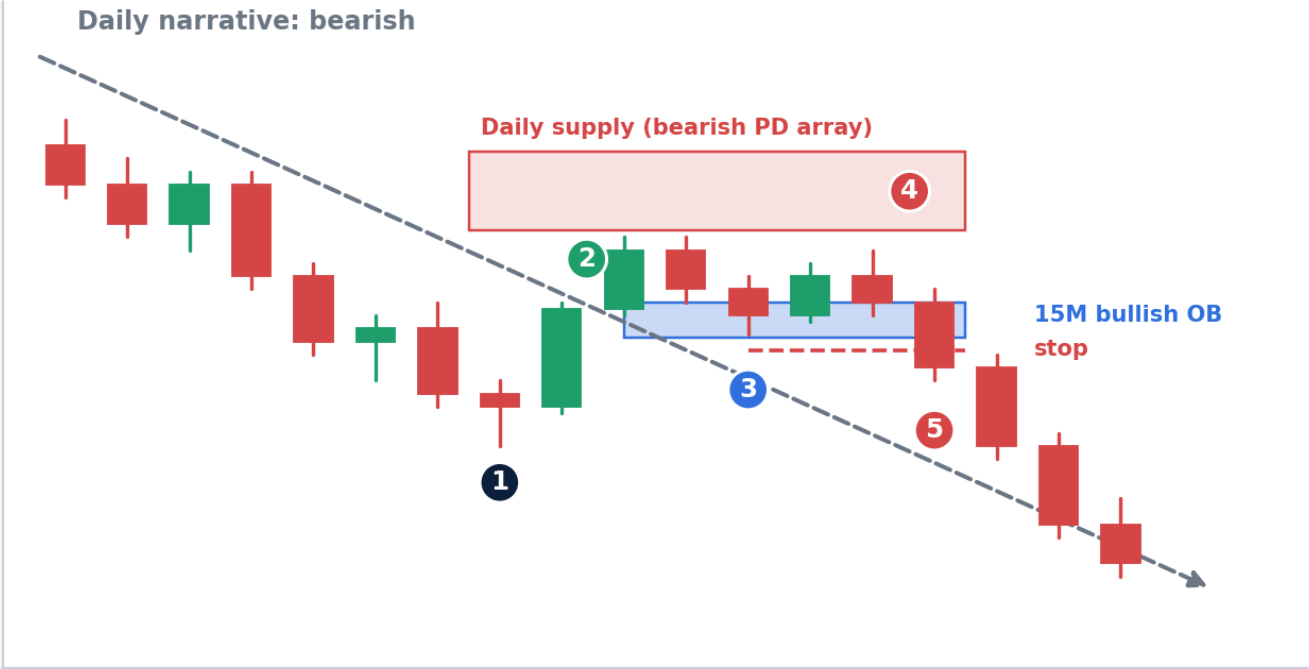


Figure 4 — A textbook 15-minute long that fails because it is trading into daily supply.

1	**Sell-side sweep.** Looks like a classic raid of lows.	2	**Displacement up.** Looks like a clean shift.
3	**OB entry.** A textbook long with the stop below the order block.	4	**Daily supply.** The higher-timeframe level that caps the move.
5	**Stopped out.** The daily narrative resumes.		

“Discount” is relative

Beginners often buy anything that looks cheap on the lower timeframe. But premium and discount depend on **which range you measure**. A discount on the 15-minute can sit inside a premium on the daily. If the larger range says price is expensive and the narrative is bearish, buying a small-scale discount is like buying a sale item in a store that is closing down. This is what the slide means by “stop trying to become the hero buying every discount.”

How to fix it

- **Start every session top-down.** Weekly, daily, then 4H, and write your bias in one sentence before opening the execution chart.
- **Only take entries that agree with that sentence.** If you want to trade against it, the default answer is to skip.
- **When higher and lower timeframes conflict:** either wait for the lower timeframe to align, or treat it as a counter-trend trade with a nearer target at the closest liquidity and a smaller size. Do not treat it as a normal setup.

Practice tasks

1. For your last 10 losing trades, mark the daily bias at the time of entry. How many fought it?
2. Before each session this week, write: “Weekly: … Daily: … Therefore I only look for longs / shorts / nothing.”

The higher timeframe writes the story. Lower timeframes only reveal where to take part in it.

3 Mistake 3: Stop searching for entries before finding liquidity

What the thread says

This mistake “alone wastes months”. Beginners open the chart asking “Where is my order block?”. Professionals ask “Where does price want to go?”. Liquidity creates the objective; the PD array creates the opportunity. Without an objective, every order block looks valid. Find the destination first, then build the trade backwards. The example shows a sell-side raid, an MSS and an order block, then a run to buy-side liquidity.

Why every order block looks valid without an objective

A chart contains dozens of candles that could be called order blocks, FVGs or breakers. If you start by looking for one, you will find one, and in hindsight it will always seem to have worked. An **objective** acts as a filter: only the zones that sit on the path toward the destination matter, and only in that direction. Zones pointing the other way are noise.

How to find the destination (the DOL)

- Start with the higher-timeframe bias from Mistake 2: which side of the market is more likely to be targeted?
- On that side, find the nearest **meaningful** liquidity: relative equal highs or lows, previous day or week high/low, session extremes. The more obvious and untouched it is, the stronger the draw.
- Check the path: is there an opposing PD array in the way? If so, the target may be further than it looks, or the trade may not be worth taking.

Build the trade backwards

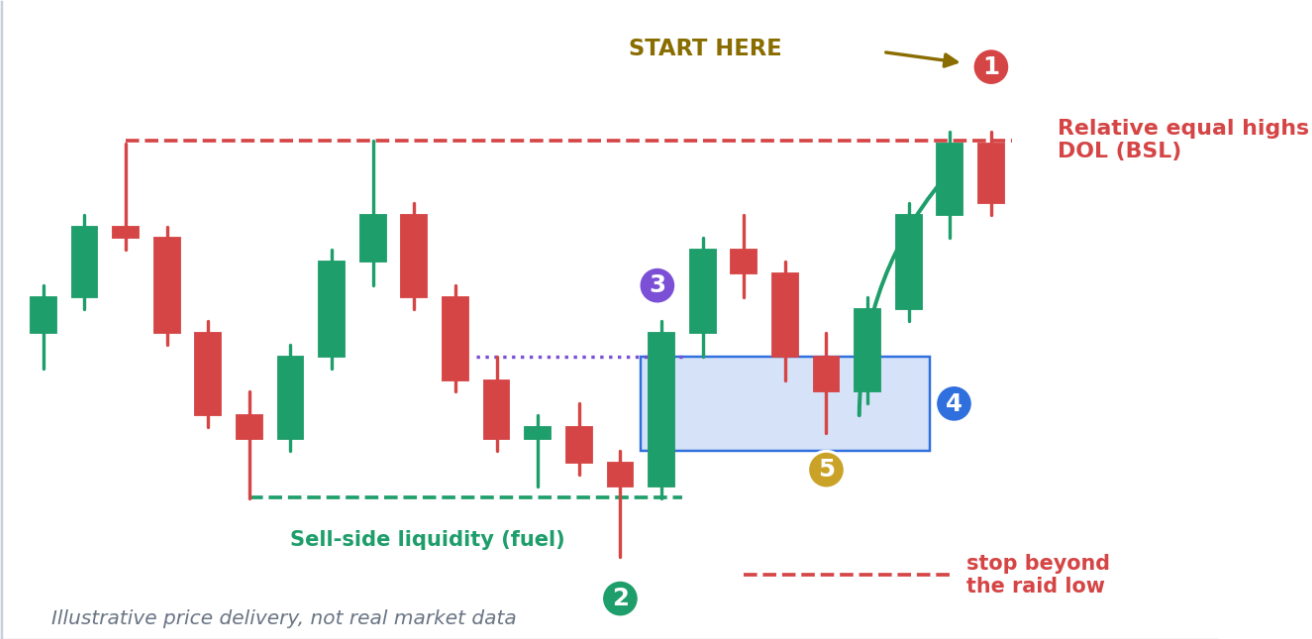


Figure 5 — Start at the destination and work back to the entry. The order you think in is 1 to 5; the order price delivers in is 2, 3, 4, 5, then 1.

1	**Destination (DOL).** The buy-side liquidity price is likely drawn to.	2	**The fuel.** The sell-side liquidity that needs to be taken first.
3	**The shift.** MSS and displacement prove delivery has changed.	4	**The location.** A PD array (here an FVG) in the discount half of the range.
5	**The entry.** Stop beyond the raid low, target at the DOL.		

A useful side effect: knowing the destination also gives you the **reward**. If the distance to the DOL is smaller than the stop you need, the trade is not worth taking, however pretty the order block.

Practice tasks

1. Open a chart and mark only liquidity first: the two or three highs and lows price is most likely to target. Do this before looking for any PD array.
2. Then write one sentence: “Price is likely drawn to ___ because ___.” Only after that look for an entry.

Liquidity creates the objective. The PD array creates the opportunity. Find the destination first.

4 Mistake 4: Every setup needs a narrative

What the thread says

Most traders memorize patterns; very few understand sequence. A high-probability trade is not “liquidity sweep, buy”. It is six linked steps: higher-timeframe bias, DOL, liquidity sweep, MSS plus displacement, PD array, execute. Remove one step and the probability drops. ICT is not pattern recognition; it is narrative recognition.

Pattern versus narrative

A pattern is a snapshot: price swept a low. A narrative is a story with cause and effect: *price is drawn higher, it needed fuel, it took the sell-side, structure shifted, and it is now returning to a location where I can enter with a defined risk.* The first is something you saw. The second is something you can explain, test against the chart, and review afterwards.



Figure 6 — A pattern is one step. A narrative is six steps connected in order.

Step	Question it answers	Evidence you need	If it is missing
1 HTF bias	Which way is the bigger story pointing?	Weekly/daily structure and reactions at HTF PD arrays	You may be trading against the larger flow
2 DOL	Where is price likely going?	Clear liquidity on the bias side	No target, no way to judge reward
3 Liquidity sweep	Has the fuel been taken?	A visible high/low traded beyond, then a reaction	You enter before the manipulation and become the liquidity
4 MSS + displacement	Has delivery really shifted?	Aggressive candles that close beyond a short-term swing	You are guessing a reversal
5 PD array	Where do I enter with tight invalidation?	An FVG, IFVG, OB or breaker in the right half of the range	Poor location and poor risk-to-reward
6 Execute	Do my rules say go?	Pre-defined entry, stop, target and size	Hesitation or chasing

How to use this in practice

- **Say the story out loud (or write it).** “Daily bias is bullish. DOL is the equal highs above. Price has swept the equal lows with displacement and an MSS. I'm waiting for a retrace into the FVG, stop below the sweep low, target the equal highs.” If you cannot complete the sentences, you do not have a setup.
- **Grade your setups.** A suggested approach: six of six steps present is a full-quality setup; five is a reduced-size or skip decision; four or fewer is a skip. Check this against your journal over time rather than treating the thread's “drops dramatically” as a measured number.
- **Find your weak step.** After 20 trades, look at your losers. Which step was most often missing? That is where to focus your study.

Practice tasks

1. Write a six-step narrative for five of your past trades. Which step was missing in the losers?
2. Before your next trade, send yourself the six-line narrative. No narrative, no trade.

A sweep is a fact. A narrative is a plan. Trade the plan.

5 Mistake 5: Stop forcing trades outside institutional delivery

What the thread says

The same setup carries different odds depending on the time: a fair value gap at 2 PM is not equal to one at the New York open. The thread says institutions inject volume during specific windows, which is when displacement happens, liquidity gets engineered and the best executions occur. The example chart marks the Asia, London and New York sessions with their kill zones. If nothing appears inside your execution window, your job is to wait. Professional trading is mostly waiting.

Why time changes the odds

What you can observe directly is that **activity and range are concentrated in certain windows**: around the London open, the New York open and major US data releases, and thinner at other times. Displacement needs participation. The same FVG formed in a quiet period tends to have less follow-through and more chop. (Whether those moves are driven by “institutions” in particular is the framework's interpretation, but the clustering of activity itself is easy to see on any chart.)

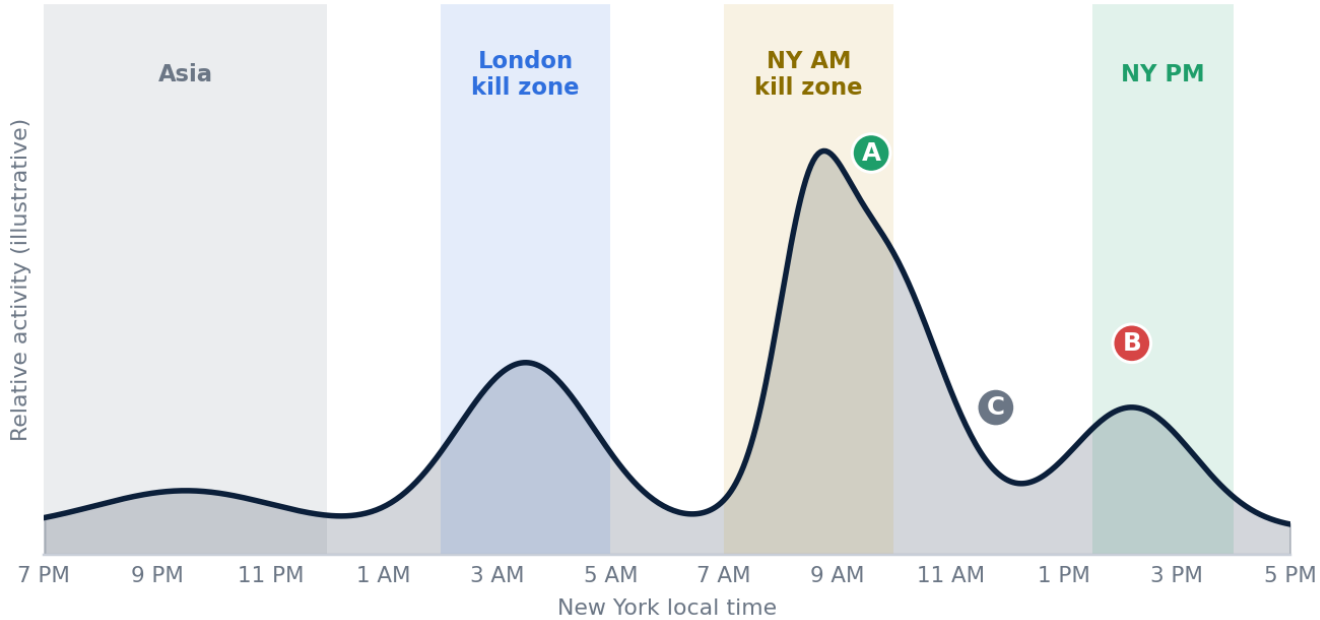


Figure 7 — An illustrative picture of how activity tends to cluster through the New York day. The curve is a sketch, not measured data.

A **FVG near the New York open.** High participation, better chance of follow-through.

B **FVG at 2 PM.** Lower activity and a different environment; treat with extra caution.

C **FVG in the midday lull.** Even quieter; the setup may simply stall.

The windows to know

Window	NY time	Notes
Asia	7:00 PM – 12:00 AM	Builds a range; its high and low become liquidity later
London kill zone	2:00 – 5:00 AM	Often raids Asia highs/lows and can set the day's extreme
NY AM kill zone	7:00 – 10:00 AM	Includes the 8:30 data window and the 9:30 equity open
NY PM	1:30 – 4:00 PM	Afternoon delivery; fewer high-quality setups for many traders

These are the commonly taught New York windows. Exact boundaries vary between lectures, so use the version from the ICT material you follow, and keep it the same for at least a few weeks so you can judge your results fairly.

How to “mostly wait” without going stale

- **Choose one or two windows** that fit your life and trade only those. Outside them, the chart is for analysis and journaling, not entries.
- **Do the preparation in advance.** Mark liquidity, write the bias and set alerts before the window opens, so you are reacting to a plan instead of searching.
- **Set limits.** A maximum number of attempts per window and a hard stop time keep boredom from turning into forced trades.
- **Count no-trade sessions as a success** when no valid setup appeared. Record them in the journal.

Practice tasks

1. Tag your last 20 trades as inside or outside your chosen window. Compare win rate and average R for each group.
2. For one week, trade only inside one window. Note how many valid setups you actually saw.

The setup is only half the story. When it appears matters just as much.

6 Mistake 6: Chasing price means someone else got the better entry

What the thread says

You were not late because price moved; you were late because your emotions moved. FOMO tells you “it won't come back”, so you buy the candle. Then price retraces, stops you out, and continues exactly where you originally expected. Missed trades do not hurt your account; emotional trades do. If your model requires a retracement, wait for it, no exceptions.

What the chart is teaching you

After a strong displacement, price usually leaves an **imbalance** behind, such as an FVG. Models built on this idea expect price to return to that area before continuing. Entering at the top of the move, instead of at the imbalance, changes two things at once: your stop has to be further away (or tighter than the retracement), and your target is closer. Both worsen the trade.

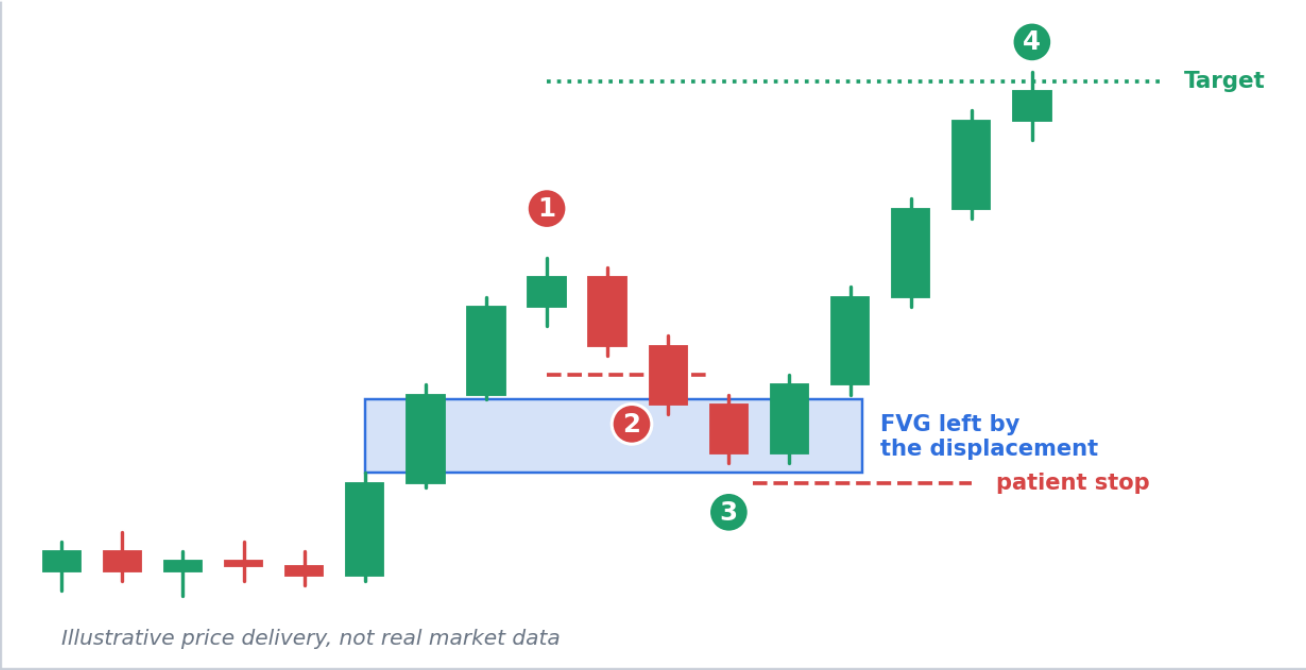


Figure 8 — The same move, two entries. The chaser is stopped by the retracement the model expected. The patient trader enters inside the FVG.

1	**Chase entry** at the top of the displacement.	2	**Stopped out.** The retracement runs through the chaser's stop.
3	**Patient entry** inside the FVG, stop below it.	4	**Target.** Price continues exactly where it was expected to.

The numbers behind it

	Chase entry	Patient entry
Entry	80	65 (inside the FVG)
Stop	70 (risk 10)	59 (risk 6)
Target	100 (reward 20)	100 (reward 35)
Reward : risk	2.0 : 1	5.8 : 1
What happens	Retracement trades through 70: stopped out	Retracement enters the FVG: filled; stop is safe

The figures are in arbitrary price units and match Figure 8. Even before the stop is hit, the patient entry offers almost three times the reward for each unit of risk.

The FOMO loop



How to break it

- **Pre-place the order.** A limit order at the PD array removes the in-the-moment decision.
- **Make it a rule.** No market orders on a displacement candle. Say it before the session starts.
- **Reframe a miss.** Missing a trade costs you nothing. Chasing one costs you money and discipline.
- **Expect another.** There will be another setup tomorrow. The market does not run out.
- **Accept the cost.** Sometimes price never retraces. If your model requires a retracement, that is a valid no-trade.

Practice tasks

1. Keep a “missed trades” log for two weeks. Note each trade you did not chase and what price did afterwards.
2. Count how many of your last 10 losses were entries made after a large candle. What was the distance to the nearest PD array?

If your model requires a retracement, wait for it. A missed trade is free; a chased one is not.

7 Mistake 7: Your stop loss belongs where your idea becomes wrong

What the thread says

A common beginner mistake is adjusting structure to fit risk. Professionals do the opposite: structure decides the stop and risk decides the position size. Never move your stop closer so you can take a larger position. The market does not care about your preferred reward-to-risk; it respects structure. The example contrasts a stop sitting just above an old high with a stop below an order block.

“Where the idea becomes wrong”

Every trade is a claim: *price will go to X because Y is true.* The stop belongs at the price that proves Y false. For a long from an order block that is below the block (and below the sweep low if the raid is part of your story). For a short after a buy-side raid it is above the raid extreme. It is not where your account would like it to be.

Why a stop just beyond an obvious level gets hit

Old highs and lows are exactly where other traders' stops and breakout orders gather. That is the liquidity the rest of this lesson has been talking about. A stop placed just beyond that level sits **inside the pool** that price is likely to sweep. In the thread's left-hand example, the stop above the old high is the kind of placement that a raid takes out before price moves in the expected direction.

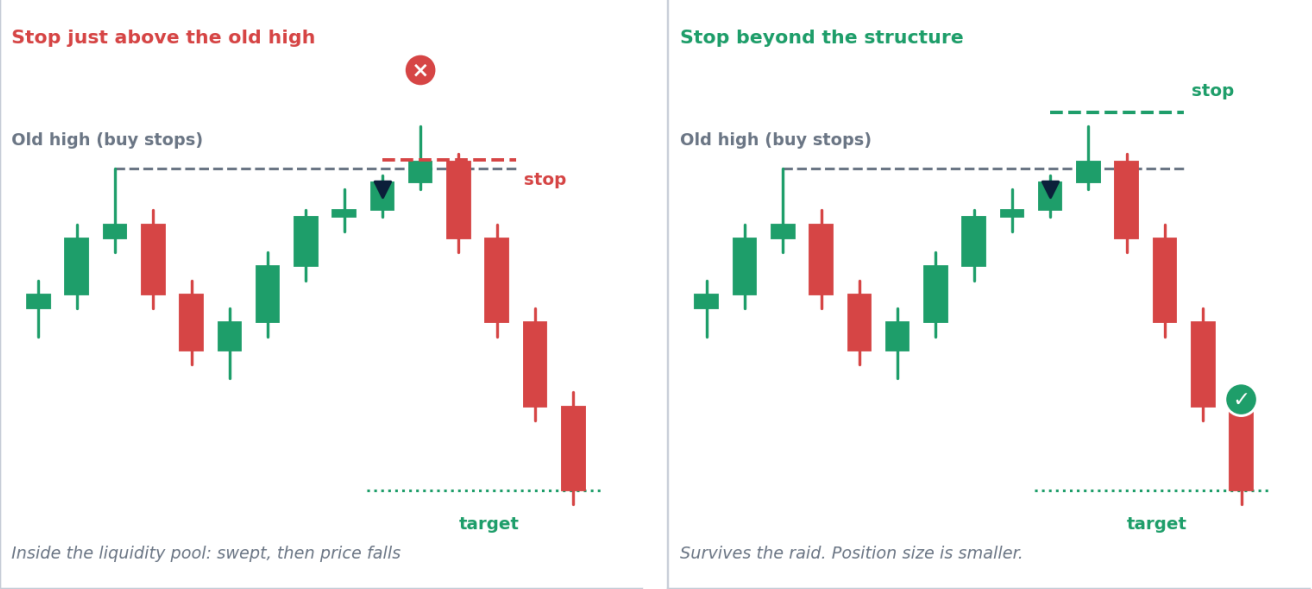


Figure 9 — The same trade (▼ = short entry), the same market. On the left the stop is inside the liquidity pool and is swept. On the right it sits beyond the structure and survives.

Structure decides the stop. Risk decides the size.

Once the stop is set by structure, you control risk through **position size**:

Position size = (account × risk %) ÷ (stop distance × value per point)

Worked example on XAUUSD. Account $10,000, risk 1% = $100 per trade. For many brokers one standard lot of gold is 100 oz, so a $1 price move is about $100 per lot. (Check your own broker's contract size.)

Structural stop distance	Loss per 1.00 lot	Position size for $100 risk
$4	$400	0.25 lot
$8	$800	0.12 lot
$12	$1,200	0.08 lot
$20	$2,000	0.05 lot

A wider stop does not mean more risk. It means a smaller position. Risk stays at $100 in every row. The beginner mistake is the reverse: wanting 0.5 lot, shrinking the stop until $100 fits, and ending up with a stop inside the noise. Remember to leave a little room for spread and slippage, particularly near news.

Rules to adopt

- **Decide the stop before you enter,** from structure, and do not widen it afterwards.
- **Never move the stop closer to increase size.** Change the lot size instead.
- **Treat reward-to-risk as a filter, not an input.** If the structural stop and the distance to the DOL give you less than your minimum, skip the trade rather than squeezing the stop.
- **If the stop you need is too large to size sensibly,** look at a lower-timeframe PD array or skip.

Practice tasks

1. For each of your last 10 trades, write down the structural invalidation and the stop you actually used. Were they the same?

2. Count the stops that were hit by a sweep and then price went your way. Where could a structural stop have survived?

Structure decides the stop. Risk decides the position size. The market respects structure.

• Putting it all together

One checklist, seven mistakes. Run it before every trade; if a box cannot be ticked, you wait.

	Pre-trade check	Mistake
☐	Chart is clean: structure, liquidity, one PD array only.	1
☐	I have written the weekly and daily bias in one sentence.	2
☐	I know the destination (DOL) and the distance to it.	3
☐	I can tell the six-step story out loud, in order.	4
☐	I am inside my chosen execution window.	5
☐	My entry is at the PD array, not at the end of a displacement candle.	6
☐	The stop is at structural invalidation; the size is calculated from it.	7

A four-week plan

Week	Focus	Output
1	Simplify (Mistake 1) and start top-down (Mistake 2)	Clean chart template; daily bias sentence
2	Liquidity first (3) and narrative (4)	Written six-step story for every trade
3	Windows (5) and patience (6)	Trades only inside one window; missed-trade log
4	Risk (7) and review	Size calculated from the stop; review journal for the weakest step

Self-check questions

Question	Answer
What does “structure” mean in this lesson?	A fixed order of questions asked before every trade.
What is the core trio for beginners?	Market structure, liquidity and one PD array.
Why can a perfect 15M long fail?	It is a small wave inside a larger bearish (or bullish) story.
What do you find before looking for an order block?	The destination (DOL).
Why is “sweep, then buy” not a setup?	It skips bias, target, shift, location and plan.
Why does the time of an FVG matter?	Participation and range differ by window, changing follow-through.
What decides the stop? What decides the size?	Structure decides the stop; risk decides the size.

Glossary

Term	Meaning
BSL / SSL	Buy-side / sell-side liquidity: resting orders above highs / below lows.
DOL	Draw on liquidity: the pool price is likely being drawn toward.
MSS	Market structure shift: a close beyond a short-term swing showing delivery changed.
Displacement	Aggressive, one-directional movement that shows intent and often leaves an imbalance.
FVG / IFVG	Fair value gap (a 3-candle imbalance) / inverse FVG (a gap price has closed through).
BISI	Buyside imbalance, sellside inefficiency: a bullish fair value gap.
Order block (OB)	The last opposing candle before a displacement, used as an entry reference.
PD array	A premium/discount array: a reference such as an FVG, OB or breaker used for entries.
Premium / discount	The upper / lower half of a dealing range, relative to equilibrium.
Kill zone	A time window with typically higher activity (for example the London or New York AM window).
SMT	Smart money technique: a divergence between correlated markets.
IOFED	Institutional order flow entry drill: a lower-timeframe refinement of an entry.
MMXM	Market maker buy/sell models.
Judas swing	An early false move against the day's real direction that raids liquidity.

Remember

Concepts such as SMT, IOFED, MMXM, Judas swing and breakers are all legitimate parts of ICT. Mistake 1 does not say they are wrong. It says to learn them one at a time, after the core trio is solid.

Source: a social-media thread titled “10 Mistakes Making You Unprofitable” (author not shown in the supplied images). Explained in our own words with original, illustrative charts. Educational only, not financial advice.