1. **RULE NUMBER ONE!** There are no shortcuts to top quality embalming.

2. **Pre-Embalming analysis:**
   a. Visually observe the body and determine what potential problems may exist. (edema, jaundice, overdose, delayed embalming, donor case, trauma, obese, emaciated, positional concerns, post mortem staining, drowning, cause and manner of death, etc.) and also anticipate what problems may present themselves as you proceed.
   b. As you consider the facts at hand, you can then begin to assemble your embalming plan of attack.

3. **Thorough disinfection and washing of the body**

4. **Body positioning:** Try to place the body in a normal, comfortable position.
   a. Raise the legs/feet.
   b. Shoulders flat and not raised too much (such as in shrugging). The arms/hands should be in appropriate comfortable looking position, for your region of the country. There is no right or wrong position.
   c. It may be necessary to raise the neck/head.
   d. Tilt the head slightly to the right.
   e. For difficulty in positioning, try commercial ‘duct tape’. It has a multitude of uses in the embalming room.

5. **Shaving.** ALWAYS ASK! It’s easier to shave after the embalming, than it is to recreate facial hair.

6. **Feature positioning:** Probably the single most important aspect, often overlooked. You must have an eye for detail. Remember from our mortuary college days, ‘The Canon of Beauty’. The face is vertically divided into three planes horizontally and is five eye widths wide.
   a. Eyes: Closure, allowing the upper lid covering 2/3 of eye while the bottom lid covers the lower third. Pay close attention to the inner canthus and take extra measures to insure it is closed properly.
   b. Closure of mouth. Observe the ‘weather line’ on the lips. Or the very visible sign of color change at the junction of the wet and dry portions of the mucous membranes. It should not show. But, don’t close it too tightly causing a pucker. If using cotton as filler, treat slightly with a humectant to stop the ‘wicking effect’ and drying the delicate tissues of the lips.
   c. Corners of mouth should align vertically with the center of the eye.
   d. Recreate the recognizable facial features (primarily the nasolabial fold, oris sulci, oris eminence) smaller areas are easily treated and recreated with tissue building after the embalming, but tissue building should not become a substitute for proper feature positioning.
   e. The nose may require some attention: If the body had a sheet drawn tightly over the face, the nose may be pushed down and needs realigned, or if an emaciated case may need cotton place into nostrils to restore proper appearance. Again, be cautious, you can over do it!
   f. Pay close attention to positioning the hands and arms. Comfortable appearing position, make sure fingers are in proper alignment.
7. **Arterial injection**: Following positioning the body in a comfortable appearance, setting the features and contemplating your pre-embalming analysis, it’s time to prepare for the arterial injection.

8. **Water temperature.** Warm, why?

9. **Pre-injection**: Water conditioner/co-injection and water to equal a gallon. This prepares the cellular complex to accept and respond to our primary arterial embalming solution and allow for proper diffusion. (Exceptions to using water with pre-injection would be bodies with edema, jaundice, OD to name a few) Start with a gallon of your pre-injection, inject approximately half a gallon into a closed circulatory system, allow it to remain a few minutes before you begin to inject the final half gallon. Before injecting the final half a gallon, add 4 ounces of arterial fluid, this adds color and aids in accessing your distribution. Then open your drainage point as pressure begins to build with your last half gallon of pre-injection. If you find problems areas, which are slow to clear, try another half gallon of pre-injection and restrict drainage to aid in forcing fluid to the difficult area.

10. **High pressure embalming machines** are a great asset to embalming rooms. Don’t be afraid of high pressure, it’s the ‘rate of flow’ that causes the problems.

11. **Mix your arterial solutions one gallon at a time.** This allows you to make changes and adjustments to your approach to achieve the highest quality results. Use cosmetic enhanced fluids or dyes. The natural look of color from the injection lessens the need for cosmetics. Do not skimp on fluids…no one likes leaks, odors or surprises in the casket as the family is coming in the front door.

12. **Massaging the body** with water and soap and moving the limbs throughout the embalming aids in stimulating circulation and diffusion while injecting.

13. Thoroughly aspirate and use two bottles of cavity fluid on normal cases.

14. **Clean the hands** and nails/nail beds thoroughly as well as nostrils, ears, scalp and hair. DO NOT COMB HAIR STRAIGHT BACK on every body, hairdressers despise this practice.