

CHAPTER 17

ADVERBS

Every writing manual says get rid of all your adverbs.

Like using passive voice, adverbs signal a greater need to find an action verb. For example, rather than writing that the girl slowly walked along the path, let's think of an action verb to describe her pace. Is she meandering? Sauntering? Snaking? Rambling? Moseying? Ambling?

As Ariel Gore (2007: 84) writes, "You didn't become a writer because you wanted to tell me that your brother 'retorted angrily.' You became a writer because you needed to show me the veins bulging from his neck, or how the wood of the door frame felt against your skull the night you went crazy. Tell me *that* story."

When editing your manuscript, identify all the adverbs you use. Try to replace them with actions verbs. Maybe you can't *quite* cut all of them. That's ok. But try.

Write It Up

1. Read through a passage that you've written from your own research. Identify all adverbs. Rewrite those sentences, using adjectives and action verbs to replace the adverbs.