

## Stroke Truing Exercises

The object of these exercises is to burn into your muscle memory the right way to **stroke** the cue. This type of practice is especially important for new players to get right so they don't learn bad habits that have to be corrected later.

1. **Over the spots drill.** Place a striped ball on the head spot with the stripe vertical. Using center ball, stroke the ball over the foot spot to the far rail and back over the spots. Ideally the stripe will not even wobble, but set as your goal to keep the ball rolling on just the stripe. Shoot this shot at least ten times. Try to increase the speed while maintaining cueing accuracy.

2. **One-handed drill.** Place your bridge hand on the rail next to the cue stick (but not touching it) for support and to simulate a regular two-handed shot. Place an object ball half a diamond from the rail. **Stroke** the ball into the far corner pocket. Some details to allow you to check your follow-through and straightness:

- Mark the spot where the object ball is placed, perhaps with a paper reinforcement.
- Mark a second spot about five to six inches beyond the first spot.
- After the stroke, your tip should stop about at the second spot.
- The tip should finish on the cloth showing that the elbow has not dropped.

Repeat this drill until the motion feels natural and all of the requirements are satisfied. Do you finish even with the second spot? Does the tip stay down? Are you accurately pocketing each ball in the center of the far pocket?

3. **Standard cueing drill.** In this drill, you will shoot normal shots, but the important things are to notice where the cue tip finishes and to extend the motion of the previous drill. Place marker spots for the cue ball and object ball as shown in the diagram. The shot should be perfectly straight into the far corner pocket. Also place a "finish" marker six inches in front of the cue ball to help measure the length of follow through again. First try the shot with follow. Remember the **stroke** you practiced in the one-handed drill.

Again, repeat the drill until you are satisfied that the mechanics of the stroke are right. After follow is working well, repeat with stop and draw shots, shooting each kind at least ten times. Are you following through six inches to the marker spot?

