

# Good Mechanics, Step One

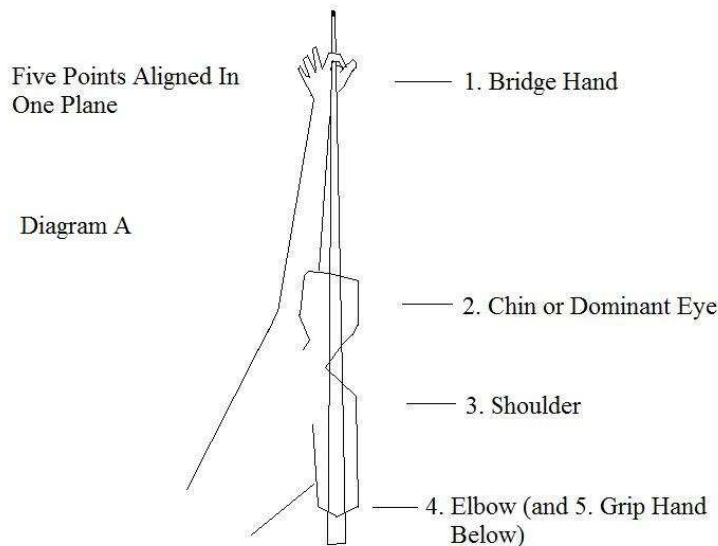
*By Roger Long*

In my last article I talked about certain mechanics being very helpful in the maintenance of good fundamentals, and good fundamentals being the certain properties that make for a good, consistent stroke. For review, I'll identify the "fundamentals" once again. They are: Straight Alignment, Level Cue, Staying Down, and Following Through.

Now let's take a closer look at what I mean by straight alignment. (The diagrams below assume that the grip is right-handed, so just reverse everything if you are left-handed.)

**Diagram A** depicts what instructional books and videos mean when they say that alignment should be "in one plane". This is what you should want your alignment to look like if you could see yourself from an overhead view. It shows five points of alignment: the bridge hand, the chin (or dominant eye), the right shoulder, the right elbow, and the right hand. These should all be aligned together. The first four points should remain locked in place while the grip hand and lower arm execute the stroke.

When this alignment technique is properly employed, it will provide the most accurate shot achievable because it eliminates all except the essential body movements; the grip hand will simply be pulled straight back, and then will be pushed straight forward.

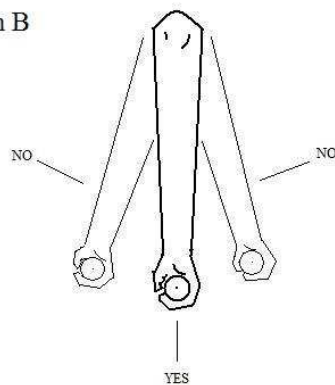


**Diagram B** shows a back view of the lower arm alignment. This is the arm position that you should use in conjunction with a pendulum stroke. If you line up everything; bridge hand, chin, right shoulder, right elbow, wrist, and hand, all in one vertical plane, all you will have to do is

pull the stick straight back, and then let it go straight forward. Nothing moves except the forearm and hand. That is the simplest way to achieve a straight stroke.

It should be easy to see that if the lower part of the arm is angled in towards the body, or out away from the body, while everything else is lined up and held in a vertical plane, then, during the stroke, the grip hand would have to swing in an arcing motion, causing the tip of the cue to waver from side to side.

Diagram B



In the next article, we'll look at a couple more mechanical practices that can help you develop better fundamentals.