



Benefits of
'The Finger Tip Cueing Exercise':
an practice shown to me by my coach
Frank Adamson.

By Nic Barrow, Founder - The Snooker Gym.

Here are the benefits of the exercise:

- Promotes smooth cueing.
- Forces slightly slower cueing. This increases awareness of how the cue is moving and therefore the optimal way to.
- Relaxed cueing arm.
- Letting cue do the work. Remember that the cue weighs four to five times more than a cue ball so the cue ball finds it very easy to move quickly after being struck by the cue WITHOUT you needing to tighten your arm and try to force the balls around the table with physical strength. In snooker, MORE Strength Equals LESS Power!
- Increased awareness of the exact movement and feeling required for straight cueing and parallel cueing.
- An ability to concentrate fully on what you are doing because there is only the cue and the cue ball to be aware of. It is easier to control the cue without any cueing arm or conscious mind getting in the way of trying to play the shot properly!
- After having done this exercise for a few minutes and then playing with your normal grip hand, most shots (especially screw shots) can be played without excess force, strength and muscle power in the cueing arm and grip. Remember – MORE physical strength equals LESS cue control and power.

Here is the exercise!:

1. Here is how you grip the cue! Note that finger and thumb tips are NOT squeezing the cue, merely preventing it falling to the floor – this is how loose the cue hold is.



2. A close up of the same...



3. Close up of how the grip appears at the end of the backswing...



4. Close up of how the grip appears at the end of the follow through. Note that the finger and thumb tips have NOT tightened through any part of the delivery or follow through!

The objective of the exercise is to simply move the tip of the cue backwards and accurately through and beyond the lowest part of the cue ball. You are not allowed to generate any speed in the cue.

Instead, just pretend that from your elbow to your grip hand is a clock pendulum slowly and easily moving backwards and forwards and eventually swinging through the cue ball... tick tock, tick tock, tick tock...



5. Here is the height you aim and strike the cue ball. The SLOWER you play the stroke the more controlled you will be about striking your target of the lowest part of the cue ball. You may even look at the cue ball as you strike it to increase your sense of control over what you are doing.



6. Here is the length of backswing you can use if you feel in control of the cue pulling it this far back. If you do not, just make the backswing about half this length until you get the hang of the pendulum movement. When you can deliver the pendulum accurately with that shorter length of backswing, you can then practice increasing the distance of controllable backswing.



7. Here is where the grip hand is on the follow through. It has gone through fully into the chest and remains there at the end of the delivery. It does NOT pull back quickly to 'get out of the way of the cue ball'. In fact, if you set this shot up straight and can get the cue ball to come back and touch the tip then you will score an extra bonus point from me! This will encourage a full and proper follow through. Note the skill involved in hovering the red in mid air – this takes years of practice!



8. Here you can see how far the cue ball is screwing back – yet the shot was played with no power, strength or force. This screw back is because a snooker cue generally weighs about the same as 4 ¼ balls. Just this weight alone focused through the tip into one very small part of the cue ball is what causes the gentle backspin.



9. Here is a fuller view of the backspin achieved.... But remember your target is NOT to screw the cue ball back, it is to strike the correct part of the cue ball. The screw back is then a **SIDE EFFECT** of striking the correct height on the cue ball.

The **BIGGEST** difference in how professionals and below century break players play screw shots is their target. The top pro is **ALWAYS** aiming to strike the cue ball at the lowest part, accurately, at the speed s/he has selected before getting down to the shot. The amateur will usually aim to screw the cue ball back - their target then mistakenly becomes the side effect (screw back) but not the cause of it!!!



10. The white has now disappeared due to the backspin. I have pulled the cue back a few inches to demonstrate that I was not cheating with extra fingers gripping the cue, and that in fact my grip remained nice and loose all the way through the stroke.



11. Close up of the grip as it appears at the end of the backswing. Note that the three outside fingers are NOT contacting the cue or even the first finger. They are all well clear and are not allowed to get involved in a last minute tightening onto the first finger 'to force more screw back out of the cue ball'!



12. Close up of grip and finger position in follow through. Note facial expression, which should help the ball in.



13. If you need more screw back, then take your normal match play grip hand which should hold the cue with almost the same lightness as the finger tip grip. The only difference now being that more fingers are in contact with the cue for added control and force application into the cue ball. Note that the thumb is NOT gripping the end of the first finger tightly – rather the thumb and the first finger together gently open along the length of the cue as the backswing is made.



14. Note also from the angled view that the fingers, wrist and forearm are all in one straight line. The mistake many below 50 break players make is to keep the wrist at a 90 degree angle (or square angle, or right angle, or 'T' angle, or vertical angle) to the cue as the cue comes back. This leads to a tension and break in the angle between wrist and forearm, which equals terrible control and feel.



15. The grip hand, still held lightly on the cue, in its cue ball striking position.



16. The grip hand, still held lightly on the cue, in its follow through position.



17. make sure you finish your stroke in a nice pose!



Many thanks go to Nic Barrow, who kindly let us use still images from
‘The Snooker Gym DVD Series’ which you can learn more about here:

<http://www.thesnookergym.com/video.html>

(They are great and we reckon you should buy them!)