

# Playing Pool - The Missing Manual

Free Drills



# Thank you!

Thank you for downloading my free drills booklet. I hope that it's a good start for your pool training.

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**[www.playing-pool.com](http://www.playing-pool.com)**

And you should read my book of course, in which I give you 20 easy rules to play better pool:

**[www.playing-pool.com/book](http://www.playing-pool.com/book)**

By the way, the drill booklet isn't a single work of its own. It's a bonus for my book "Playing Pool – The Missing Manual". This is why the techniques and information behind the drills listed in this booklet are not explained in detail.

# Drill 1: Stroke practice



This drill is your standard drill to practice a whole variety of things. The actual drill is very simple: Set up all 16 balls on the head string and shoot them one after another into the corner pockets. The first eight go into the left pocket, the other eight into the right pocket. You play each ball directly with the cue, without a cue ball.

The shot is actually pretty simple, and therefore it's a perfect drill to integrate new features into your technique, such as slowing down your backswing, always taking the same position before the shot, shortening the bridge length etc. Do this drill at the beginning of each training session, at least two sets, and focus only on one thing for each set. After weeks or months of doing this you'll integrate important new features into your game.

## Drill 2: Speed



This exercise helps practicing your feeling for speed. As I made clear in the book, speed is the first and easiest tool to play position with the cue ball.

Play the 1 ball with a speed that it runs one table length across the table, coming to a rest close to the foot rail. The 2 you play two table lengths up to the head rail. The 3 runs across the table three times and the 4 four times. We call these variations Speed 1-4. Try to play speeds in between, like Speed 2.5 for example.

# Drill 3: Straightness



With this drill you practice shooting straight without accidentally applying side spin (“English”). The task is to play the cue ball straight forward without touching one of the colored balls. The colored balls are two ball-widths apart. Shoot the cue ball with Speed 2, which means until it comes to rest at the head rail. If you manage to do so regularly, you can try to play with a higher speed. At Speed 3 or 4 the cue ball has to go through the gap 3-4 times. You'll see that it's pretty difficult to play the shot without any english.

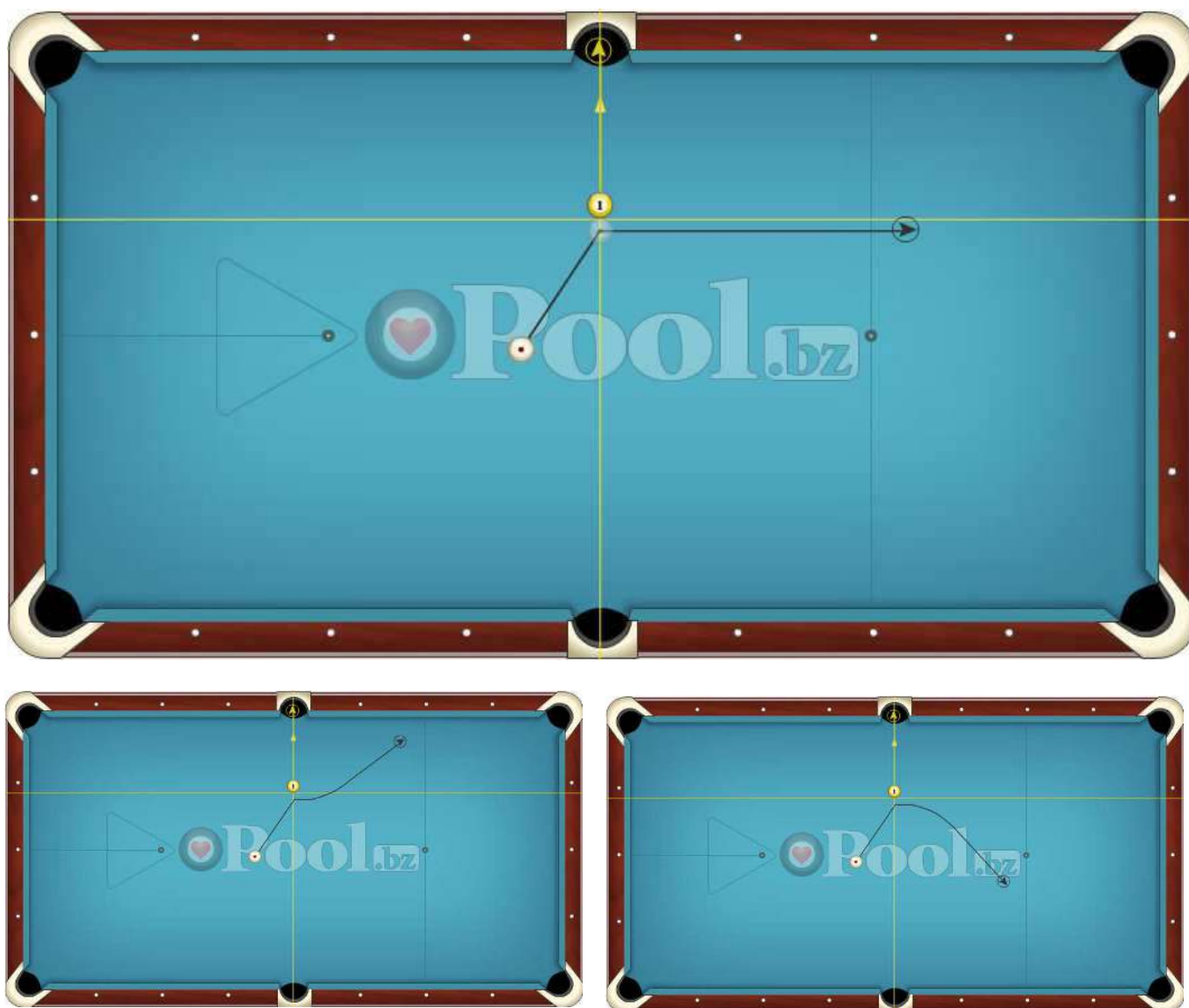
# Drill 4: Straight follow shots, draw shots and stop shots



Now you're going to practice the three basic shots for playing position: follow shots, draw shots and stop shots. Place the cue ball at the center of the table and the object ball on the spot where the diamond lines cross, one diamond distance from the side pocket. Hit the cue ball at different spots above or below center now and watch what's happening. Change the speed and observe what effect this has on the path of the cue ball. Try to play a perfect stop shot. Try also to play a follow shot where the cue balls follows the object ball into the pocket. And a draw shot that draws the cue ball into the opposite side pocket.



# Drill 5: Follow shots, draw shots and stun shots with an angle



Now play the three basic shots stop shot, follow shot and draw shot, but hit the object ball with an angle. Change the point of contact on the cue ball, the speed and the angle between cue and object ball and observe the differences. Take a close again at what I wrote about it in the book.

# Drill 6: Focus drill with stop shots and follow shots



I got this drill from my dear instructor friend Thomas Damm, who got it from Andreas Huber. It's pretty likely that this drill has been played for decades in various pool halls all over the world.

Set up all 15 object balls on the middle line of the table. Place the cue ball on the head string. You set up the cue ball before every shot. Always set up a straight shot at the ball you're currently playing.

Option 1: Shoot all the balls as perfect stop shots. The object ball is not allowed to touch the side rails. The cue ball isn't allowed to wobble even the tiniest bit.

Option 2: Play the shot as a follow shot so the cue ball follows the object ball into the pocket.

Try every ball until you make it. This drill is very good to practice fully focusing on the target at the moment of shooting the shot. Make sure to only look at the target and focus 100% at the moment of actually executing the shot. At the same time, practice letting go at the point of no return.



# Practice game: “Accepting gifts”



The former national coach of Germany, Andreas Huber, first showed me this game. With this practice game you practice “accepting gifts” from your opponent in 8-ball matches, when your opponent misses the 8 or one of his last balls.

Varying on your level of play, you play this game with 1-7 object balls of one group and the 8. Set up the balls in an order that makes sense for the number of balls you're playing with. For example, you can set up 5 solid balls and the 8 to form a little triangle (s. above).

Now break the balls. Balls that went down on the break are reset on the foot spot. If more than one ball dropped you can set up the balls on foot, head and middle spot, so you don't have to deal with too many clusters.

After the break shot you get ball in hand. Imagine playing 8-ball against a ghost opponent. Your goal is to run out the table in one go. If you manage this on your first try, you get one point. If you don't, your ghost opponent gets one point. Play as long as either you or your ghost opponent has 7 points and wins the set. If you win the set, you play the next set with one object ball more, if you lose, you play the next set with one object ball less. If you win a set with 7 object balls, you can add one ball of the opposite group as a blocking ball in the next set, and so on.

# Practice game: “X-Ball”



In this practice game you're playing 9-ball against yourself. The basic goal is to run out a rack of 9-ball. Depending on the level of your game you play with a different number of balls. At the beginning of one set you decide with how many balls you're playing, for example 5.

First you set up a regular rack of 9-ball and break. After the break you take balls off the table until as many balls remain on the table as you declared at the beginning of the set (e.g. 5). Take the balls off the table starting with the highest number first (besides the 9!) to make sure you don't pick any favorites. After doing that, you get ball in hand and you try to run out the table in one go. Standard 9-ball rules apply.

If you manage to do so, you get 1 point. If you don't, you lose 1 point. You play until you have +5 (=win) or -5 (=loss) points. If you lost the match, you play the next match with one ball less, if you win the set, you play the next set with one ball more.

# Practice game: “Equal Offense”



You set up all 15 balls. Standard pool rules apply. You break like in 8-ball. After the break you reset pocketed balls on the foot spot and the foot string behind. Now you have ball in hand. Your goal is to make as many balls as possible without missing. Each ball counts 1 point. According to the level you're playing at you're allowed to miss up to two shots per game. A game is over if you missed more shots than allowed or after you pocketed all 15 balls. After a game is over, count the balls you made, enter the number on the result sheet and rack for the next game. Per rack a maximum of 15 points is possible.

Depending on the level of play you're allowed to miss a certain number of shots: Level 1: end game after third miss. Level 2: end game after second miss. Level 3: end game after first miss. Level 4: end game after first miss and try to make 20 points. In level 4 you play straight pool: When one ball is left, setup the other 14 balls and continue playing. Target per game is 20 points.

You start Equal Offense with level 1 and play ten racks in a row. If you manage to make 120 points in ten racks, you advance to the next level. In level 4 your goal is 170 points in ten games.