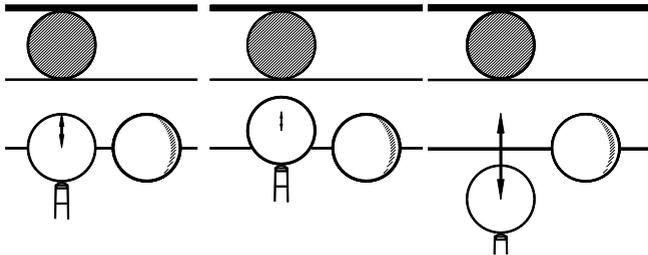


# PRAKTIS DRILLS

**WALLY** sez u should develop touch by tapping the qball off a ball on the cushion, kissing back to exactly the same spot each time. **ERIC** makes this *taptaptap* a little more interesting, Eric reckons that u need to praktis at 3 ranges.



**DRILL 1** The qball & the yellow are  $1\frac{1}{2}$  balls off the cushion, the yellow acts az a guide. Tap the qball onto the red to kiss-back to the same pozzys, ie a  $\frac{1}{2}$  ball forward & back. And keep this taptaptap going for a while. This  $\frac{1}{2}$  ball tap distance/strength iz

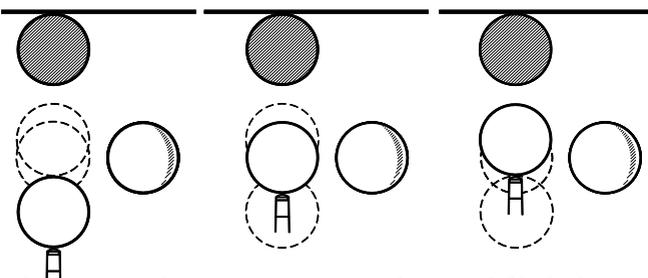
probably just a little greater than the kind of strength needed during a healthy runalong not involving any kiss-back effect. KissAlongs would of course include a kiss-back of some kind but most runalongs do not.

**DRILL 2** This iz a short-range verzion of Drill 1, a  $\frac{1}{4}$  ball forward & back. Soft strength iz needed. This iz probably the strength that learners uze for their cannons, koz learners hit too softly. But what makes Drill 2 difficult iz that u tend to double-hit the qball. Walter lifted his qtip on the follow-throo, to avoid the double-hit.

**DRILL 3** This iz a long-range verzion of Drill 1, ie  $1\frac{1}{4}$  balls forward & back. A big kiss-back iz sometimes needed in a runalong to take the qball well beyond the outside ball. In a game the uzual mistake iz to under-hit.

**CORNER** U will tend to praktis theze taptaptaps near a corner of the table, koz it's eezyr to reech the balls. That's ok, but u should also praktis near mid-cushion where u hav to lean over the cushion & reech out & back severely, gripping the cue short of midpoint, not so eezy.

**CLOSE IN** In fact i reckon that u should always lean over the cush containing the balls, rather than playing over the adjoining cush. Leaning over the cush u will be closer to the balls, with your eyes over the balls, & u will be gripping the cue short of the midpoint etc. Play like this for all of the drills & all of yor praktis runalongs etc. Koz then u will be uzing near'nuff the same bridge & grip & swing for most of your nurserys, rather than chopping & changing. And, anyhow, i think that a close-in style iz the best, once u are used to it.



**DRILL 4 5 & 6** Anyhow, if Drills 123 didn't giv u much trouble, then Drills 456 will. Here the qball stops at 3 pozzys. So now we hav an extra 6 kiss-backs to praktis (ie 9 in all). Three of the total distances in these 9 drills are identical, & it could be sed

that we hav 6 strengths. Mightbe so, strength-wize, but all 9 drills look & play differently. Look at Drill 6, tapping from the  $\frac{1}{4}$  ball offset to the  $1\frac{1}{4}$  ball offset. It's difficult to avoid a double-hit. Lift the qtip.

**THE STROKE** Drills 2 & 6 are difficult. Eric uses a short jab with an uppish finish where the qtip lifts clear of the returning qball. Also this uppish finish helps him to judge strength.

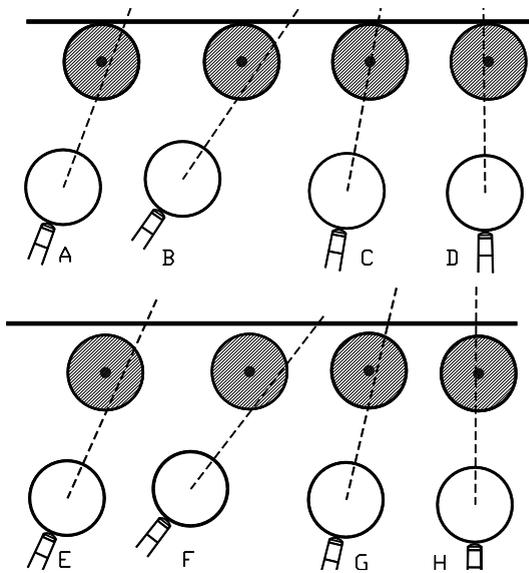
Players will have their own peculiar way of tapping. Where do u place your bridge hand, what length of bridge, how much daylight tween qtip & ball, do u feather a few times, what size backswing, do u pause on the backswing or praps on the forward swing, do u hit the qball hi or low or at centre, etc.

If u are using a boucle bridge (looped finger), u might hav to raise the bridge hand az u hit, to allow an uppish finish. If u use the normal (open Vee) bridge then the cue lifts offa the bridge hand.

If u are gripping the cue forward of the center of balance, u will havta use your grip to keep the qtip down during the shot. Or u might use a boucle (loop) bridge to keep the qtip down. Eric holds the cue so that the first finger of the grip can keep the qtip down, plus hiz loop bridge keeps the qtip down, alltho the first finger forming the loop iz often half asleep, it's more of a relaxed half-loop.

**LOOKING** What do u look at during the stroke? We all look at the part of the qball to be hit while we are making our bridge. After that, some players look at the qball during the whole stroke. Some transfer their focus to the first object-ball during the back-swing. It probly duznt matter. Mightbe your looking should be az for your loozers & pots.

But don't overdo any changing of your focus during the stroke. Don't look from the qtip to the qball to the first object-ball to the second object-ball & back again, all while lifting your fat head, koz here now anything kan happen. Count the miscues.

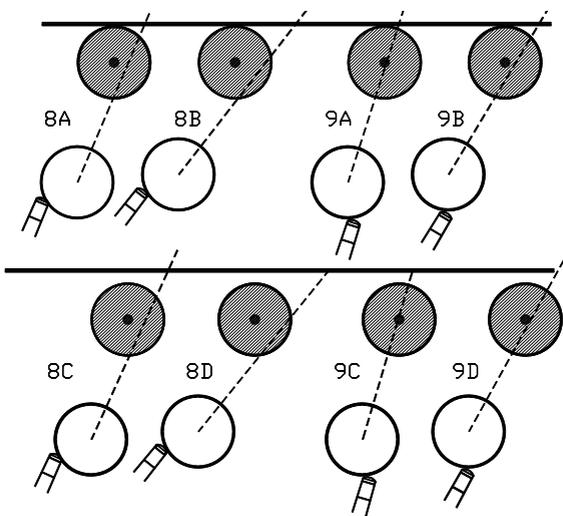


**DRILL 7** Here we kiss the red along the cushion, hitting plainball.

**ABCD** We start with pozzy A, & we try to retain that pozzy every shot. In reality we usually leev something more like pozzy B or C or D, & hence we havta keep varying our contact on red to try to return to pozzy A.

We gradually get better. We learn to judge the needed line of aim relative to the center of the red (az shown). But don't praktis this drill just near a corner, praktis near midcushion, where u havta reech-out-&-back.

**EFGH** If the red leevs the cushion, az drawn in E, F, G & H, then this makes things tricky. The aiming-points that we used in ABCD now need to be wider. And if the clearance to the cushion iz bigger then the aiming-point needstabe much wider (xcept for H, where it haztabe narrower).



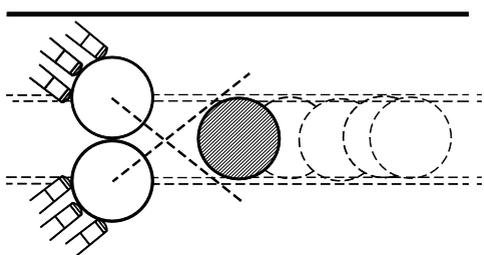
**DRILL 8 & 9** Here we kiss the red along the cushion, using left-side each time (Drill 8) or using right-side each time (Drill 9), trying to retain or return to pozzys 8A & 9A.

**SIDE SPIN** Using side-spin is more difficult than the plain-ball shots in Drill 7. It is difficult to judge the correct aim-point, plus it is difficult to land the qball on that point. The push-off or squirt gives the qball a trajectory line that is hard to judge, plus there is the swerve. These all vary with the amount of side & pace.

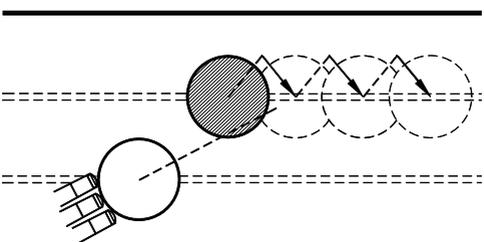
**MARGIN-FOR-ERROR**

The margin-for-error using spin is horrid. The spinning qball after contact might send/throw the red a little or a lot. The throw/transmitted side/friction between balls can vary from say 0.9 of normal (body oil in contact), to say 2.0 (an old impact mark in contact), to say 5.0 (chalk). Here I am talking about the small, soft, light-weight, high-polish, modern krappamyths. The olden days Crystalates & Bonzelines that we had up to about 1972 behaved better.

**KICKKICK** A single impact can suffer a kick, but a Drill 7ABCD kissback involves 2 impacts, & if it gives a kick then it automatically gets a 2<sup>nd</sup> kick in the exact same contact area a millisecond later, ie double jeopardy. So, Drills 8 & 9 improve our feel & touch, & show us that using side is fraught.



**DRILL 10** Here we draw two chalk lines, one ball & two balls from the cushion. Play to bump the red along, keeping it centrally between the lines, while stopping the qball on a line. Use plain ball & running & check. I reckon that check is poison, plain ball is a pain, but running makes it easy.



**DRILL 11A** Here we bump the red on/off the cushion, & try to make it stop on the inside line each time. The qball starts on the outside line as shown but can roam anywhere it likes. Use plain ball or running or check, whichever helps.

**DRILL 11B** Here we repeat 11A, but this time we try to make the qball stop centrally on the outside line each time (instead of allowing it to roam). You will need to use side or stun or screw or pique or masse' (not shown), whichever helps. It's best to keep the balls a half-ball apart, & to contact the red a thin 3/4 ball. A touch of running seems to help. If you fail badly then play shots to nothing to allow you to get back in a shot or two without having to stop to handle the balls. If you get too far away from the red you might still go ok by hitting the red a mile each time (not ideal).

**LAP OF THE TABLE** Set up a tott pozzy, play a nursery-gather, nurse the balls to the corner, turn the corner, nurse the balls to the midpocket, pass the midpocket, nurse to the baulkpocket, turn the corner, & keep going for a full lap.

**KEEP GOING** Each time u make a blunder just keep going. Or play that shot again if u like, but keep going. Eat up az much cushion az u can az fast az u can. Keep going. If the balls are touching then separate them. If u foul then keep going. U get a dose of everything, & u kan burn around the table in 10 minutes.

**NAP** Each cushion iz different, sometimes u are playing against the nap of the cushion cloth, sometimes with. The baulk-area iz tricky koz of the reversed bedcloth nap, ie it's not the same as the top cushion. Likewize the side cushions.

**PLAY 1 MORE SHOT** During praktis, whenever u get into trouble, u are tempted to try some kind of miracle save or miracle gather (that u wouldn't attempt in a serious game). Good. Eric sez allways play one more shot, u might be surprized.

**DIARY** Eric uzed to keep a record of how many RunAlongs he got along the full length of a cushion, uzually 41. Keep a diary of interesting shots/pozzys. Make akurat detailed drawings. Hav a good read before each billiards season.

**WALTER** sed that he made diarys of his early billiards. But Mac asked Dolly if she had any such diarys & she sed no. Dolly did of course hav lots of diarys with newspaper snippets, for both Fred & for Walter, & Dolly allowed Mac to copy some. More recently Bob McNeil got digital copies professionally made & printed theze in hard cover book form, & he might still hav some available.

**BONZOLINES** Buy a nice old set of Bonzelines or Crystalates (Mac haz about 20 matched sets), & get an idea of how Wally & Co used to feel with their nurserys. We should hav some club tournaments uzing oldendays balls, not just for the benefit of cushion crawlers but for all billiards players. With modern **KRAPPAMYTHS**, re nurserys, the qball duznt follow throo very well, & u get lots of touching balls.

**IVORYS** The oldendays big soft heavy hi-gloss ivory balls made short range nursery follow throos & ThickAlongs eezy. Diffikult looking pozzys for us with our krappamyths would hav been unmissable naturals with ivorys.

**LARGER BALLS** Mac haz a set of 63mm (2 7/16ths) Aramiths (Korean). And a 2 1/4" set (American), & a 2 1/8" set. Theze larger balls might help a tyro very early on. But afterwards our 2 1/16" English balls look like little marbles (not good).

**VIDEOS** of nurserys are of course essential for learning. But i hav sometimes watched an old video for the umpteenth time after studying it very closely years ago, & i now see something that i never recognized befor. It iz uzually something that i hav recently discovered for myself on my own table. And it woz hiding in that old video all the time. This shows that u karnt see something if u don't allready know exactly what u are looking for. Believing is seeing. **CATCH 22.**