Samples – Drills & Exercises
For Pool & Pocket Billiards

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These are some sample pages from the book by
Allan P. Sand, Author
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Drills and Exercises

There is enough material in this book to keep you busy for a few months. Get the book to keep yourself occupied for years. Everything starts off easy, and then gets tougher – and tougher. Take it one drill at a time and keep expanding your comfort zones.

Introduction

Probably the worst experience to live through when holding a cue stick in your hands is practicing. As much as you love the game, there is something about setting up a shot and shooting it over and over (and over) until you just can’t force yourself to continue. You start banging balls around the table with no real focus on accomplishing any kind of improvement.

So, this book could be a waste of time, or it could be an opportunity to take your game from the bar-banger level to the ability to creditably compete in tournaments.

These drills and exercises are based on the concept of progressive advancement. Start with an easy setup, prove that you can make that 4 out of 5 times, and then make it slightly more difficult. Keep on pushing the limits as far as the table edges allow.

Put this book on your eBook reader, smart phone, tablet, or laptop. Bring this to the table along with your paper reinforcement rings (donuts) and you are ready to improve yourself.

This is not a book to be run through a couple of times and then set aside to gather dust in some long unvisited folder on your computing device. Open your online calendar (Google, Yahoo, etc.) and put in reminders every few months to shoot this, that, these, or those pages. In between these scheduled self-testing periods, work with the other Billiard Gods books.

Study this material in two steps. In the comfort of your favorite easy-chair or recliner, review each table layout and thoughtfully consider the ball positions. Could you do the shot at slow, medium and fast CB speeds? Use the “notes” feature of your reader to add assumptions, possibilities, and considerations.

To continue developing yourself as an Intelligent Shooter – you have to get past the “fooling around” stage of your playing career and get serious about becoming a competitive player.

The purpose of the book is to provide a single-source that provides drills to improve almost any skill. Yes, drills are boring. For most people, about all they can handle is 10-15 minutes before they start looking for any excuse to stop practicing. This single source of table...
layouts and setups can chase away boredom for at least another 20-30 minutes.

The secret to effective practicing is to actually concentrate on improving one thing at a time. Generally, you want to practice a missed shot that cost you a game or match. You can set up and shoot that shot 30, 40, even 50 times before your intense learning desire burns out. But the boredom gremlin eventually manages to get your attention.

This book has hundreds of exercises (and when counting variations – a near infinite variety). When your interest on one exercise fades, select another drill, and so on. Start off a practice session with some ball pocketing exercises. Switch over to some drills that concentrate on making the CB dance to your tune. Then, set up some of the self-pacing practice games at the end of the book to self-demonstrate your improved playing skills.

It is very important that you understand that there are many ways for you to stroke the CB. Keeping it fairly basic, there are 39 different CB speed and spin (CB speed/spin) shot variations. If you want to get real good at pocket billiards, you must make a dedicated effort to “own” these shots. This means that making an object ball (OB) that is 1 diamond requires that you know these 39 basic shots.

Don’t let this seeming complexity discourage your learning process. Start with this learning curve using a straight-in shot with the OB 1 diamond from the side pocket, and the CB 1 diamond from the OB in a straight line. Run the shots with these basics:

- Stun at slow, medium, and fast speeds. Observe the results.
- 12:00/half tip at slow, medium, and fast speeds. Observe the results.
- 12:00/full tip at slow, medium, and fast speeds. Observe the results.
- 6:00/half tip at slow, medium, and fast speeds. Observe the results.
- 6:00/full tip at slow, medium, and fast speeds. Observe the results.

And these are five of the 39 shots. If this is all you decide to use for all the exercises in this book, you will still become a very tough player. The next page contains the entire CB speed/spin definitions.
When you are ready to learn some of the side spin shots, work with both the right and left side at the same practice session. You will need to make some aiming adjustments, but that is easily learned by observing the results of each shot and making appropriate changes.

You must also identify your Comfort/Chaos Zones. When the shot gets too difficult to easily pocket, that is where your Chaos Zone begins. For every drill (and CB speed/spin), mark where this is. Later, as your skills improve, you can compare your last Chaos Zone position and identify which skills have improved.
# CB Speed/Spin Matrix

The following table is the matrix of shots to be applied to every shot for every drill and exercise. Some of the slow draw & draw/side spin shots cannot be done because the table cloth wears away at the spin. However, every possibility is shown in this table.

Every shot setup has the following 39 shots that must be practiced and mastered before you can totally “own” that shot. For practical reasons, there are only 30 trustworthy shots that you can truly depend on.

<table>
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<th>Slow CB speed</th>
<th>Stun</th>
<th>12:00 (1/2 tip)</th>
<th>6:00* (1/2 tip)</th>
<th>10:30 (1/2 tip)</th>
<th>1:30 (1/2 tip)</th>
<th>7:30** (1/2 tip)</th>
<th>4:30** (1/2 tip)</th>
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<tr>
<td>12:00 (1 tip)</td>
<td>6:00* (1 tip)</td>
<td>10:30 (1 tip)</td>
<td>1:30 (1 tip)</td>
<td>7:30** (1 tip)</td>
<td>4:30** (1 tip)</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:00 (1/2 tip)</td>
<td>6:00* (1/2 tip)</td>
<td>10:30 (1/2 tip)</td>
<td>1:30 (1/2 tip)</td>
<td>7:30** (1/2 tip)</td>
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<td>Stun</td>
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<td>1:30 (1/2 tip)</td>
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<td>1:30 (1 tip)</td>
<td>7:30** (1 tip)</td>
<td>4:30** (1 tip)</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:00 (1/2 tip)</td>
<td>6:00 (1/2 tip)</td>
<td>10:30 (1/2 tip)</td>
<td>1:30 (1/2 tip)</td>
<td>7:30** (1/2 tip)</td>
<td>4:30** (1/2 tip)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fast CB speed</td>
<td>Stun</td>
<td>12:00 (1/2 tip)</td>
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<td>10:30 (1/2 tip)</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:00 (1/2 tip)</td>
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<td>10:30 (1/2 tip)</td>
<td>1:30 (1/2 tip)</td>
<td>7:30 (1/2 tip)</td>
<td>4:30 (1/2 tip)</td>
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**Notes:**

* Slow speed at 6:00 (reverse spin) is only useful with the CB close to the OB. Otherwise the cloth will wear off the spin and the CB will begin rolling forward.

** At slow & medium speeds, 7:30 and 4:30 speeds are unpredictable. Not recommended

As you gain more experience, you will develop an intuitive skill in determining the correct speed and spin for the CB. This develops from observing the results of hundreds of attempts.

As you master the CB positioning skills, you will stroke the CB at precise speeds with precise CB spins.
Your Comfort & Chaos Zones

When pocketing balls, you (and every other player in the world) have shots that are within comfort zones and chaos zones. When a shot can be made 8 out of 10 times (80%), it is in your comfort zone. When your chances of pocketing the ball are around 3 or 4 times in 10 tries (30-40%) or less, it is within your chaos zone. At 50-60%, it is on the edges of what you can do.

When getting position for another shot, you must move the CB into the comfort zone for that ball. Generally, the least amount of CB travel the better. The more you have to force the CB to move, the easier it is to finish with the CB in your chaos zones.

When you consider an offensive shot, these are the two percentages used to calculate whether to proceed offensively, play a more cautious two-way, or shoot a safety. For example, if you can pocket the ball 8 out of 10 times, but only get shape 3 out of 10 times – that shot falls into your chaos zone. (It also indicates an area that needs practice time.)

When you need to play defense, you want your opponent to have one of these tactical playing situations:

- A shot in his chaos zone – the deeper the better.
- A shot (or two) within his comfort zone, but with a positioning problem in his chaos zone.

General Observations

Closely watch how he handles these shots:

- Long distance shots with various angles from straight-in to sharp cuts.
- Medium distance shots and cuts of various angles.
- Cue and object balls very close together.
- Cross-side, cross-corner, and long-table banks.
- CB draw, follow, speed and spin control.

With this knowledge, you can carefully craft selected safety tactics that are to his greatest disadvantage. This ensures much greater table control. And that is what improves your chances to win the game.
Know Your Limitations

It is very important to know exactly where your shooting and positioning comfort zones are and where the edges are. This requires a level of personal truthfulness that many find painful to admit.

Without this reality-check, you could select offensive shots that you “feel” are within your comfort zone, but actually have a much greater chance of failure. If you constantly select these kinds of shots, you are going to hurt yourself by allowing billiard god luck (chaos) to enter your game. This can be a blind spot in your calculations. The more honest you are with yourself, the better your chances of winning against almost any opponent.

Self-honesty ensures you can make smarter playing and shooting decisions more often. Your choices can be rational and the results match your expectations. This self-knowledge can also be used to configure your practice sessions.

Straight-in Shots

Expertise with these shots requires the skill to pocket the OB using 26 of the 39 CB speed/spin variations.

1. Put CB close to OB, pocket the OB.
2. Re-spot OB and move CB back 1/2 D.
3. Upon a miss, move CB 1/2 D closer to OB.

*Proof of competence: Repeat 3 times without miss.*
**Straight-in to Pocket**

**1-1/2 D**

**Object:** Pocket the OB from anywhere on the shaded line.

**Shallow Angles**

**Instructions:** To begin for the first time, use the stun and medium speed (see CB Speed/Spin Matrix). Expertise with these shots requires the skill to pocket the OB using 26 of the 39 CB speed/spin variations.

**Drill:** Put CB close to OB, pocket the OB. Re-spot OB and move CB back 1/2 D. Upon a miss, move CB 1/2 D closer to OB. *Proof of competence: Repeat 3 times without miss.*
**Object:** Pocket the OB into the nearest pocket from anywhere on the shaded line.

**Progressive Shooting Angles**

**Instructions:** To begin for the first time, use the Stun and medium speed (see CB Speed/Spin Matrix). Expertise with these shots requires the skill to pocket the OB using 26 of the 39 CB speed/spin variations.

1. Begin the drill with the “stun” position from the CB Speed/Spin Matrix. When you identify your Comfort/Chaos Zones for “stun”, repeat the process for the other CB speeds and spins.

2. Place the CB on the center spot and shoot at the OB that is 1/2 diamond from the side pocket.

3. Upon pocketing the OB, move the CB 1/2 diamond to the left along the center line.

4. Repeat until a miss, and then backup 1 Diamond and advance from that position.

5. After hitting the beginning of your Chaos Zone on the left side, repeat the steps on the right side.

6. When done, write a note about the Comfort Zone for this left and right edges of your Comfort Zone for the 1/2 diamond.

7. Repeat the process on the OB that is 1 diamond from the side pocket.

Apply each of the 39 CB shots listed in these shots.
**OB to Side Pocket**

**Object:** Pocket the OB into the nearest pocket from anywhere on the shaded line.

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**OB 2 D to Pocket (1 D from rail)**

**Object:** Pocket the OB into the nearest pocket from anywhere on the shaded line.
Wrist Stroke Mastery

Can you make the CB only travel an inch (2-3 cm)? When straight rail billiards and balkline billiards were international sports, a carefully mastered nudge shot could rack up thousands of points. The winners of these hours-long matches were determined by who had the best CB control within fractions of an inch (<2 cm).

There are safeties that call for VERY precise and small movements to be successful. Some of these movements require that the CB or object ball move a distance of a quarter ball roll or less. This level of ball roll mastery enables some very interesting opportunities in the right circumstances.

Your normal stroke with the forearm back and forth movement does not work. You just can’t get the definite control necessary to make a short roll shot work. You must develop a movement that only uses your wrist to move the stick forward a fraction of an inch.

Here is how to make it work.

1. On the table, place the stick in your closed bridge fingers. Close your hand into a fist. Clench the cue so that the stick can barely slide back and forth.
2. Place your bridge hand about an inch (2 to 3 cm) from the CB. Keep the cue as level as possible.
3. With your stick hand in the normal position near the butt, grip the stick more firmly.
4. Move the stick back and forth using only your wrist. Get used to the resistance from the bridge grip.
5. When ready to trigger the shot, let the stick come forward a very short distance into the CB. The tip should barely penetrate the CB.

Remember, you are controlling the stick with your wrist movement. Do NOT move your forearm. This requires some serious practicing. You must get comfortable shooting with this limited movement. You can actually do lag shots using only the wrist stroke. Experiment – play several games, intentionally only using the wrist stroke.

Nudging Practice Procedure

Use the exercise below and learn to move the CB over precise distances.

1. Place a donut (paper reinforcement ring) where the CB starts.
2. Put the Post-It sheet about a diamond away from the CB.
3. Shoot the object ball onto the sheet. Repeat until mastered.
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4. Move the sheet closer and master that distance.
5. Continue working on finer and finer control.

Repeat this once a week. Before a competition, a couple of slow roll practice strokes are all that is needed to remind your muscle memory.

**Nudging**

**1 ball:** CB into OB and both balls return to original position. **2 ball:** CB off the OB with the corner pocket blocked. **3 ball:** OB to the rail and up stop to block the corner pocket.
Come Back Home

**Object:** Shoot the CB into the OB. The OB goes to the rail and comes back to hit the CB.

Stun the CB

**Object:** Pocket the OB and stop the CB dead - at all speeds.
Progressive Rolling

Object: Pocket the OB and follow for indicated diamond distance (1, 2, 3 diamonds).

Draw to Me

Speed: Slowest possible and fast speed. Use a donut or small piece of paper as the target. Draw the CB within 1 ball diameter of target.
CB Management

Other drills will improve your skills in CB control. However, there is far more to getting the CB to move around at your command and will. Getting position

These are an excellent selection of exercises that will focus on CB control over short, medium, and long table distances. Some are designed to help you select a precise path, other exercises help you master where the CB stops.

When you have started to gain control of the CB, your self-confidence improves significantly. Situations that used to confuse and confound you become routine circumstances that are easily handled.

It is well worth the effort to put some serious practice effort into these exercises. The surprise you observe on your opponent’s face as you get out of a difficult layout is worth the effort. After observing a few of your escapes, your opponent will treat you with greater respect.

**Control Path of the Cue Ball (Easy)**

**Object:** Draw or spin the CB back from the OB in the paths indicated.
Double 3 Ball Groups #2

Options: Any ball, any order. In order. Reverse order. Alternating balls, going up and down table.

Double Ball Setups

Options: Any ball, any order. In order. Reverse order, Alternating balls (around the table).
## Translations of Other Books

These are links to descriptions for the books that have been translated to other languages:

- Advanced Cue Ball Control
- Cue Ball Control Cheat Sheets
- Drills & Exercises

All books are available on Amazon (printed) and ebook (PDF).

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