

AIMING TECHNIQUES

There are several ways of aiming, including the ghost ball theory, measuring your aim with your own cue, and using of one of a variety of aiming practice techniques. Try not to get too caught up in methodology. Pick a system (or two) that works best for you. You might find that different aiming techniques work better under different circumstances or shots, so don't think you need to limit yourself to just one. Each of the aiming techniques we'll share with you involves some form of visualization, and the ones you choose will be a matter of personal preference.

The Ghost Ball

This is the most common—and usually easiest to comprehend—method of aim training in pool. To employ the ghost ball method, you simply visualize a line through the middle of the object ball to the pocket center. Then you place an imaginary (ghost) cue ball at the spot where the actual cue ball must arrive behind the object ball in order to pocket it, as shown in figure 2.3. If you use this method, it won't be long before you can automatically line up correctly without having to consciously visualize the ghost ball. Your memory takes over, knowing that the cue ball must arrive in that exact spot.

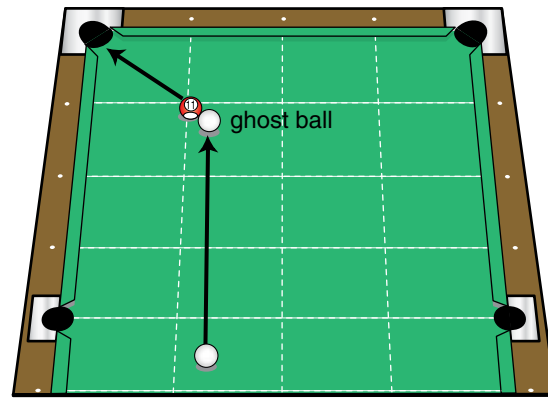


Figure 2.3 Visualize a ghost ball to improve your aim.

Parallel Aiming

A method of aiming popular long ago was to aim with parallel lines, a system that instantly taught players that because both the cue ball and the object balls are round, you cannot aim directly at the contact point. To learn this system, set up two striped balls, as shown in figure 2.4. Set up the striped object ball with the stripe facing the center of the intended pocket. Then place your striped cue ball virtually anywhere on the table that the shot can be made from. If you draw an imaginary line from the center of the cue ball parallel to the line from the center of the object ball to the pocket, you'll see the exact spot on the cue ball that must contact the spot on the object ball in order for the ball to be pocketed.

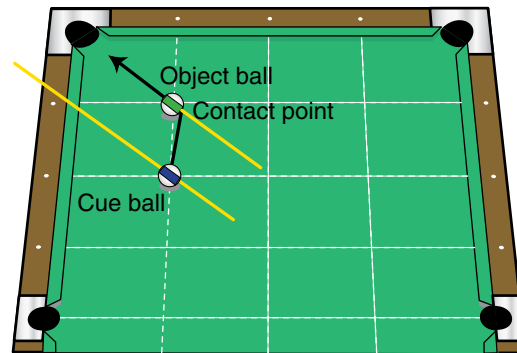


Figure 2.4 Parallel aiming is best learned using striped balls for both the object ball and the cue ball.

Once you have practiced this technique using a striped ball as your cue ball, replace the striped ball with the real cue ball. You'll find it's not at all difficult to see this line, and it will give you an immediate sense of where the cue ball actually must be aimed to hit the object ball at its contact point.