



14 DAYS - THE GREAT POOL EXPERIMENT

HOME TRAINING

100+ HOURS OF TRAINING

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As a way to encourage serious pool players to properly train at home, Tor worked hard to assemble these recommendations for players who are interested in going through his **'14 Days - The Great Pool Experiment' training at home**. Below each topic you will find a video link for each step in his training program.

Stroke Drill (2 Days)

When I first meet with a student we go through a series of stroke drills, even if their fundamentals look solid. I have the student perform the stroke drill at different speeds to see if any issues arise. This drill is similar to the drill where a player places a ball on the spot and shoots the ball toward the middle diamond on the end rail and has the ball return to their tip. The benefit of shooting into the corner pocket is that you can shoot at a high rate of speed.

When performing the stroke drill your focus should be on:

1. **The stance.** Create a stance around the shot line. Make sure the stance is balanced and stable and that there is clearance for the stroking motion.
2. **Aiming.** When aiming, don't just go through the motions. Pick out a spot in the pocket to use as a target. Pause the tip before the final stroke. This is the final step in the aiming process.
3. **Concentrate on a controlled backstroke.** The speed of the backstroke should be slow. Players who are going to strike the cue ball at a fast speed tend to speed up their backstroke which usually results in their transition breaking down.
4. **Focus on a smooth transition.** This is the transition from the backstroke to the forward stroke. When players get nervous they tend to shorten their backstroke and speed up their forward stroke (instead of gradually accelerating). The backstroke will naturally slow down and come to a stop before beginning the forward stroke. If you attempt to create a lengthy pause at the end of the backstroke make sure you keep performing the stroke drill until this becomes second nature. If you're thinking about the pause at the end of the backstroke when playing in competition it may adversely affect your game.
5. **Keep still throughout the stroking motion.** When performing the stroke drill exaggerate how long you remain still during the stroke. Stay still for a count of three on each shot.
6. **Make sure your backstroke is in sync with your speed.** If you're striking the object ball softly then a long backstroke isn't needed. If your backstroke is too long and you're using a soft stroke then this may cause deceleration on your forward stroke. If you strike the object ball with a firm speed then make sure your backstroke is long enough.

If you have any issues in your stroke you may have to perform the stroke drill at least 1500 times. It's important that you keep performing the stroke drill until the new changes become part of muscle memory.

Stroke Drill: <https://youtu.be/qzjousgGLjU?t=18m42s>

Ball Pocketing Drills (3 Days)

This is one of the most important drills for any player. There is no shortcut for becoming proficient at pocketing balls and controlling the cue ball. There is nothing that can compare to shooting the same shot over and over again learning all the nuances of that particular shot using different speeds and english. After practicing the same shot for a number of times you'll reach a point where it becomes difficult to miss the shot. Aiming and controlling the cue ball start to become automatic. But this only happens after the player has put enough time into performing these drills. Zero-X has a series of ball pocketing drills for english, stun and center ball. If you don't want to use these drills then you can create your own ball pocketing drills. First, set up a shot that tends to give you issues. With many players it is a thin cut shot into the side or corner pocket. When first attempting this shot simply the shot by moving the cue ball closer to the object ball. Sticker up each ball using reinforcement labels. Keep shooting the shot until you pocket it. Now watch the path the cue ball takes. Place two balls along this path to be used as a cue ball target. Now, practicing pocketing the object ball and sending the cue ball along this path. Remember, if you send the object ball into a different part of the pocket this will slightly change the cue ball's path. As this shot becomes easier you can start to move the cue ball farther away from the object ball. Give yourself a goal like performing the shot 3x in a row. Then, in the next session, see if you can perform this particular shot 5x in a row. Also, practice this shot using different types of speed and spin and keep track of the cue ball path for each shot. Congratulations! You are now on the road to automatic aiming!

Ball Pocketing Drills: <https://www.patreon.com/posts/ball-pocketing-e-19169270> (if you don't have a Patreon membership this video is available on the '12 Instructional Videos' digital download or DVD.

Half Table Pattern Play (3 Days)

Half table pattern play starts with three balls in one half of the table. These balls can be randomly spread out in this half of the table. The goal is to run the balls out in order using only center, center low and center high. You can pocket the balls into any of the six pockets but your cue ball can't cross half table. By taking away sidespin and the other half of the table for the cue ball you're taking away your safety net. Usually when a player plays an incorrect angle on a ball they can use sidespin to get back in line - or they can send the cue ball around the table to get back in line. Without these safety nets the player has to bear down and really focus on correct angles and speed. The goal is to run five patterns in a row of three balls. So, if you throw three balls out in one half of the table and run them out successfully, then throw three more balls out on the table and attempt to run these balls out. Keep going until you run our five patterns in a row. Then move on to four ball patterns. If you are struggling at three ball patterns then throw two balls out on the table. Keep going until you can run five patterns in a row of five balls. If you really want to challenge yourself you can attempt five run outs in a row of six ball patterns.

Half Table Patterns: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d0GMuQgFzXA&t=2s>

Full Table Patterns (6 Days)

When I work with students the full table pattern play is where the student really learns about the principles of pattern play. They learn how important it is to use rails, pocket lines, and angles. One issue that many players share is that they feel their game is inconsistent. What I frequently discover with students is that their game is actually very consistent, it's the patterns they face during practice or competition that are inconsistent. Some nights you may face 8-Ball patterns that allow for a loose cue ball, meaning if you are missing your position areas there is always another ball nearby that you can shoot and continue your run. But, on other nights (or even on the same night) patterns may arise that demand a tighter control of the cue ball which may result in missed shots and shorter runs.

I created a skill level test for players to determine their true skill level. This video can be found here:

Find Your True Skill Level: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AgdrAwaaCBU&t=408s>

This test is very demanding since you have to call the pockets for each ball in the run. You also have to run the balls in order. What I notice is that when students perform this test they find that they're very consistent. By that, I mean if they are a skill level 3, chances are that isn't going to change from day to day. Without proper training the player will be a skill level 3 a month from now, and probably a year from now.

Another issue that players run into is blaming their stroke for missed shots during practice or competition. In some instances it may be a faulty stroke but the majority of the time it's not having confidence in either pocketing the ball, or in pocketing the ball and controlling the exact path of the cue ball. For example, recently a friend said that on some shots his stroke comes across the cue ball or they'll abbreviate their stroke resulting in a punch type stroke. I asked the player to set up one of the shots that gave him an issue. He set up the shot and I asked him where he was trying to send the cue ball. On this shot he was attempting to cut the object ball into the corner pocket and send the cue ball to an area by the side pocket. I then told him to forget about cue ball positioning. Just put all his focus on just making the ball. Since the shot was relatively easy he pocketed the ball over and over again with no imperfections in his stroke.

I then placed a small paper target near the side pocket to represent where he was trying to put the cue ball when he first came across this shot in his league match. On the first shot his stroke looked much different than when he was trying to just pocket the ball. He had head movement and his cue stick raised slightly after striking the cue ball. His transition was also imperfect. I then had him shoot this shot a few more times. As I studied how he was striking the ball, I noticed that he was choosing the harder way to reach the side pocket. He was attempting to control the cue ball's path using a stun shot instead of using a rolling shot with proper sidespin. Once I showed him this shot everything started looking smoother again.

As he gained confidence his stroke looked good and he was even staying down. It's not that his stroke was letting him down, it's that since he was lacking confidence in his ability to control the cue ball, his conscious was overriding his subconscious when it came to his stroke. He was manually trying to steer the cue ball when striking the object ball in an attempt to control the cue ball.

This is why full table pattern drills are so important. Not only do students learn about the principles of pattern play but they also increase their shot repertoire. The first thing we'll do is throw two balls out on the table. Once they come to a stop *we sticker up both balls*. Now we'll determine the best way to shoot the first shot and gain position for the second ball. Before shooting the first shot we'll place a target on the table (*small piece of paper*) to represent where the cue ball will be for the second ball. The goal is to land on or near this target. If the player is missing the target by quite a bit we then stop the pattern and focus on this shot since it looks like it might be a **problem shot**. Once the player has this shot down, we continue the pattern.

We'll now try to run this particular pattern 3x in a row. Once the player gets through this pattern 3x in a row we'll throw two balls out on the table again and sticker them up. We keep doing this over and over again, and along the way we're going to find problem shots that the player has within their game. One benefit of this drill is to locate and remove problem shots as we move from pattern to pattern. ***So this drill isn't just about running out patterns it's about increasing your shot repertoire.***

In this video we discuss the principles of position play:

12 Instructional Videos: <https://www.zerex-billiards.com/12-pool-instructional-videos>

In this video we go review several 9-Ball patterns:

9 Ball Patterns: <https://www.patreon.com/posts/9-ball-layouts-28949637> (if you don't have a Patreon membership this video is available on the Zero-X website:

<https://www.zerex-billiards.com/product-page/70-9-ball-patterns-digital-download-ebook>