

Jumping with the Pendulum Method

by Tom Simpson © August 2005 – All Rights Reserved – PoolClinics.com

The two primary techniques commonly used for ball-jumping today are Dart Method and Pendulum Method. This column presents an approach to the Pendulum Method. We call it "pendulum" because you hold the cue as in the standard fashion, swinging in a nice pendulum arc below your elbow.

Dart Method is the easier technique when you need to hop over an obstacle that's close to the cueball, i.e., when you need to make the cueball jump short & high (see previous column). However, for long & low cueball trajectories or just clearing the edge of a nearby ball, Pendulum Method is more appropriate.

The three most common errors players make when trying to jump with this method are:

1. **Tilting the swing plane** – When elevating the butt of the cue, many players shoot with the forearm of their stroke arm swinging in the *horizontal* plane (sideways), because they don't know how to elevate and remain vertical. With a tilted swing plane, your tip is going to swerve side to side through the swing. Very tough to make a precision hit on the cueball.
2. **Gripping too tightly** – Requires you to muscle the ball, instead of letting the stick do the work. Destroys your fluidity.
3. **Hitting too low on the cueball** – Players think they have to scoop or lift the cueball to get it to jump. Wrong. You have to send force into the core of the ball, or just below the core.

Almost everyone has difficulty elevating the butt of the cue accurately, especially shorter players. The swing plane tilts out to the side, making it tough to see down the line of the cue, tough to make the tip hit the intended spot on the cueball, and tough to have the stick pointed accurately down the shot line at the moment of impact. The big challenge is how to elevate and still see and stroke in the vertical plane. Below are some photos and a description of a standard procedure. Note the vertical alignments. This will make an enormous difference in your success and accuracy with jump shots as well as other elevated shots.



At address/impact



At the back of the swing



Front



Rear

Try this procedure. As you elevate the butt of the cue, focus on keeping the cue in the vertical plane (hanging directly below the elbow, with little or no sideways tilt in the forearm) and...

1. **Choke down.** Note the grip position near the joint (see photos).
2. **Step in.** Move your whole body closer to the shot, i.e., move your feet in.
3. **Bend your front arm.** Allow your bridge arm to bend and get out of the way as you bend forward to elevate. The elbow can tuck against your torso or swing out to the side, whichever feels more natural to you. Make your bridge as stable as possible.
4. **Move your head forward and down** toward the cueball, staying over the stick. Bend your upper body forward enough to give you adequate room to swing your grip hand. If you don't go forward like this, you will not have room to stroke.
5. **Stop at address.** Bring the tip close to the cueball and come to a full stop. Make a final check of your aim and your tip position on the cueball. Imagine a BB at the core of the cueball. Aim at or slightly below the BB. Have someone stand off to the side and tell you when you are aimed at the core of the ball. Don't aim higher or you may trap the cueball between the tip and table. Most players aim too low and don't realize it.
6. **Hit by stroking only the forearm.** To ensure you hit the cueball exactly where your tip was at address, allow your upper arm to remain quiet. Hit with authority, but do it with a very light grip.
7. **Stay down.** Unlike typical flat shots, it is advisable to keep your eyes on the cueball during the hit. You should only have one moving part, i.e., the forearm. If you're jumping up, you're moving other things and you're doing it during the hit stroke. Not good. Stay down.

Depending upon how far away and how high an obstacle you plan to clear, you may be elevating anywhere between 10° and 35°. For slight hops, such as clearing the edge of a ball a diamond away, you might want to try using your full cue, instead of the shorter jump configuration shown in the photos.

You must believe and expect the shot to work. If you don't believe it, you might grip tightly, muscle the shot, and lose the fluidity and straight stroke that allow the more difficult jump shots to work. If you do grip tightly, you can still make the shot, but you may have to hit a bit harder. Try both ways.

Come view a Pendulum Method video clip at PoolClinics.com/products.html, and jump into contention!