

Trick Shots



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By Eddie Charlton

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Introduction to Trick Shots

Whenever I give exhibitions, and that is very often indeed in these days when snooker, billiards and pool are among the most popular games to play and watch, I always finish with a selection of trick shots.

Occasionally, perhaps when some exhibition matches have been too one-sided, an audience may lack the customary tension and excitement that one can feel during matches. But the concluding trick shot exhibition never fails to win them over and send them home happy with an evening's entertainment.

My trick shots can be kind to me, too. I may have fluffed some shots in matchplay, but after I have brought off some amazing trick shots (and amazing is the word for some of the shots in this book), they would refuse to believe I am not the greatest player ever to have picked up a cue!

That is one of the secrets of trick shot making. You can perfect them and get them right every time (well, almost!) even when you are mucking up simple, straight pots. But it is no easy thing. You will have to practise some of them for many hours before you can be confident that you will get it right.

The main point I am making, however, is that slick, spectacular trick shots can be brought off by average players who are prepared to practise them. And what a glow of satisfaction you will get when you set up an 'impossible' shot before your family and friends, and then send the balls unerringly to their destination.

I like playing trick shots, and always enjoy the feeling of having brought off a good shot and amazed an audience.

This section shows trick shots of varying degrees of difficulty, with explicit instructions and a colour photographic guide of how to play them. Some will take the average player a fair while to perfect and there are others where I am, perhaps, showing off and which may be beyond the range of the average player. But do try them all — they are all achievable and the pictures of moving balls and balls in the air attest that there are no set ups here. I would never offer a shot that I could not play myself, but I would not guarantee to get some of the harder ones, such as the Flying White Horse, or the Kangaroo Hop, first time.

There are other shots that I guarantee you will master very quickly, and one or two that you cannot fail to get first and every time provided that you can hit a ball reasonably straight. One such shot is a sneaky push shot where you will clear the obstructing balls with a cannon and keep your cue going to pocket a red. In another, pocketing the ball when planted, you cannot fail to pocket the planted ball if you make contact with the cue ball anywhere but dead centre around the circumference of the red.

Shots like that are in the book because, like all trick shots, they are fun to play and they will give the beginner a glow of success that will lead him to work on some of the harder shots.

Perhaps the best thing about trick shot making is the hours of enjoyment they will give you when you are playing alone. You cannot always get Fred from next door to come and have a game with you, and you may get sick of straight practice, although you shouldn't and Part I has an immensely varied practice schedule that should make practice a challenge. However, I am sure you will never get sick of setting up and making trick shots. My only regret is that, with my straight practice and playing schedule, I don't get enough time to keep all my trick shots up to date. I have seen many hundreds of trick shots, more than I can remember, but I have a working range of over 300 trick and fancy shots that I draw on for play in front of the audience.

Of course I don't succeed with all of them all of the time. I suppose I have about a 95% success rate, but it is part of the fun for the onlookers to see a shot come unstuck. These shots have to be played with a spirit of good humour and a bit of clowning. After the serious business of matchplay, it is nice to have a bit of laughter and give-and-take with the audience.

There are a few shots here that are deliberate deception shots, such as the one when I 'kiss' the blue into the centre pocket. A groan goes up at such a badly missed shot, but I retrieve the situation with my nicely-timed kiss.

Some of the shots in this section I have borrowed from players I have seen presenting them in many parts of the world, some are my own and others I have seen played in Australian clubs or have had suggested to me by club players. There is one shot that was made as a fluke by a raw novice, but was so spectacular that I had to use it again.

Bear in mind that most often trick shots presented can be played on less than full size tables. The angles are the same, although speed of stroke to control distance will have to be adjusted. By quick experimentation you will be able to allow for the difference in table size. Also the shots include snooker, pool, and billiards situations. No one has been left out!

Good trick shot making comes from confidence. If you don't expect to make the shot, it's certain that you won't. Confidence comes from practice and the sure feeling that you should have about the cueing and strength of stroke for a particular shot.

In summary, the three elements for successful trick shot making are:

- ★Correct setting up of the proposed shot.
- ★Correct striking of the cue tip onto the cue ball.
- ★To have the right strength of stroke so that the right speed is achieved.

I have covered all these aspects in my explanations of the shots presented in this book. I have worked to give a complete and yet easily readable summary of the shot and how it is played and feel sure that I have revealed the inner workings of these mysterious and impossible shots.

I look forward to hearing that you have enjoyed them.



1 — Blue Ball — Centre Pocket

DESCRIPTION: The idea of my first trick shot is to move the blue ball out of the cluster of reds on the side cushion into the centre pocket. It is an impossible looking shot, but it is quite an easy trick shot.

TO SET UP: Make sure the 3 reds and blue are all touching one another and all 4 touching cushion.

Front red 6 mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ "') away from red immediately in front of blue and half a ball out from cushion.

HOW TO PLAY: Strike cue ball at 6 o'clock with a medium strength stroke to force blue along cushion and in off red over centre pocket. The draw action on cue ball will force blue ball to go ahead and into pocket.

MAIN POINTS: Strike cue ball at 6 o'clock.