

This Week: The Stance and Hold

The Stance

Proper stance is an essential aspect of playing pool, contributing to balance, comfort, and consistency. With correct positioning, players can maintain stability, relax their muscles, and execute a smooth stroke (covered later). Without adequate stance, it becomes more challenging to perform even basic shots due to imbalance and muscle strain.

Maintaining a balanced and comfortable position at the table helps ensure that other mechanics of the game function properly. The key elements of stance are balance and individual comfort, as body type and personal preference often lead to variations in foot placement, degree of bend, and head height above the cue among professional players. However, stances that facilitate a smooth, fluid stroke usually share the principles of comfort and balance.

Fundamental guidelines for a suitable stance include spreading feet wide enough to maintain stability, distributing weight evenly, and positioning the feet parallel except in certain close or extended shots. Variations occur based on shot requirements and individual style, but establishing a consistent stance can help develop a reliable stroke. Stance should allow freedom of movement without excessive stretching or restriction.

Beginners may start with a basic stance: standing upright, one foot from the table, facing the shot direction, weight distributed evenly, both feet turned slightly right (for right-handed players), and a slight bend at the waist. Feet should be comfortably apart, with the chin positioned directly over the cue for unobstructed arm movement. This setup offers a foundation for further adjustment through practice.

The Hold

Rather than referring to the 'grip' on a pool cue I prefer the term 'hold'. Grip is too aggressive for what we are trying to achieve. The hold on a pool cue should be light and relaxed, not tight or forceful. Hold the cue gently with your thumb and first two or three fingers, allowing for smooth wrist action and control. Find the balance point of the cue, then place your grip 3–6

inches down the butt; adjust as needed for comfort and shot requirements. For different shots, move your grip hand up or down the cue to maintain a fluid stroke, ensuring your arm is perpendicular at impact. The cue should not press against your palm, and your grip should remain light throughout the stroke for accuracy and consistency. A gentle, controlled grip leads to better power, finesse, and overall performance in pool.