

# Ask Allison

by Allison Fisher

## A Gripping Effect

**H**i everyone, and thanks for writing to me with your questions. You can contact me via e-mail through my website at [www.allisonfisher.com](http://www.allisonfisher.com). Below you will find a question from a reader that I have answered in detail.

**Please, can you explain in more detail how to hold the cue and talk about the grip?**

First, when I teach pool, I talk about having a pendulum action. When addressing your tip to the cueball, the back hand should fall at a right angle (90 degrees) with the cue. The reason for this is that when you swing the cue backward and propel it forward, the tip will be striking the ball with good acceleration and continue accelerating through the stroke. If you hold the back hand inward on the cue instead of straight down, you will lose the acceleration and end up without a smooth stroke. On the other hand, if you hold behind the 90-degree spot, you will be accelerating too soon and start slowing down when making contact with the cueball, thus losing energy on the ball.

Now, to the grip or not, as Gerda Hofstatter and I refer to it at our academy in Charlotte, NC. At any point through the stroke, the big danger is to grip the cue too tight. Remember, the cue does the work, and we are just there to guide it. Many people have a tendency to add more pressure to the cue when they have a tough shot or are nervous. The muscles in the arm tense up because often we look at a shot and have already decided that we don't like it. Start looking forward to the shot as a challenge. The most important thing is to make sure to let the cue stay as level as possible and relatively loose throughout the stroke.

At the beginning of every shot I settle in to a comfortable position and address the ball. At this point my whole hand is on the cue. Depending on the speed of the shot, what I am about to execute will vary what I do with my back hand. If I am going to play a short touch shot that does not require much energy on the cueball, I keep my whole hand on the cue because my backswing is very lit-

tle. Now, if I need to impart a lot of energy on the cueball for a long draw shot, I have different hand movement. In order to keep the cue as level as possible, I have to open my wrist in a backward-forward motion, not sideways. When addressing the cueball, I have my hand on the cue, and as I draw the cue back, my wrist opens up. My last two fingers may be touching the cue but have no effect. Instead, the front of my hand may feel a slight pressure between the thumb and index finger with my middle finger and index finger guiding the cue. At the back of my stroke when the cue is as far back as I want it with the wrist open, I now start my

follow through accelerating forward. As I do this, the fourth finger now comes back on the cue, and the front of my hand between the thumb and index finger is loose. My lower arm and my back hand at this point is forward of the right angle originally created at the beginning of the stroke when addressing the ball.

There are many different ways that players hold a cue, and there is no right or wrong, as long as the cue comes through in a straight line. What works for me may not work for someone else. The important thing is to be able to identify what you do and how it feels to you. The more you know and understand your own mechanics, the quicker you improve and your level of consistency grows. ♦

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*Considered by many to be the leading lady in women's pool today, Allison Fisher started her illustrious pool career by winning the World Snooker Championship at the age of 17. She continued playing snooker and living in England for the next ten years, accumulating a stunning array of titles. In 1995, Allison relocated to the U.S., where her domination continues on the women's pro tour. She currently resides in Charlotte, NC, and has recently become a BCA-certified instructor. Her countless collection of awards, titles, and championships have made Allison one of the most popular and well-respected players in the game today.*