

## THE CARE AND FEEDING OF A FINE POOL CUE

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A pool cue is like a fine musical instrument or a luxury custom car, they're well-made; they CAN be abused, but they shouldn't be! I say they can be abused, because you can hit the hell out of them, you can really just stand there and bang on them all day long and they're going to take it, BUT - you can do damage; you can do damage to a fine car or musical instrument, so treat it with respect and it'll treat you the same way. Also, like a car or musical instrument, you ought to take care of it. Get it taken care of by someone who knows what they're doing - not just any shade tree mechanic, because they can butcher it real fast. And that hurts. I think it will hurt you if you have to pay the repair bill.

I want to start at the tip of the cue and work my way down and tell you my feelings on how things ought to be done in taking care of a cue.

First of all - there are a lot of different tips, different hardnesses, and you'll find from experience which works best for you. There are American made tips, French made; leather composition, you can only find through experience what you like. But, one of the most important things is the contour of the tip. Some people say it should be the contour of a nickel, others say a dime. I think the dime is the right contour. You get better action on the ball if you maintain them that way.

On the sides; any piece of leather is going to flatten out as it's hit on repeatedly. So you've got to do two things:

First, take your finger, spit on it, wipe it around the edge of the tip and then on the table rail just polish it back up. What this does is case hardens the side of that tip. It will help prevent flaring out. Still it will leave the top of the tip the way you want it so it will hold the chalk. Some people use files and scuffers to keep that real fluffy look - I never touch it. As long as I can get the chalk to stay on there, that's all I want. I don't want to mess it up. Anytime you start fooling with it, you run the risk of tearing open the pores of the leather and making a sponge out of it. You can't hit the ball good with a sponge. Keep your leather firm, shaped right, and hold your sides down. Second, these things will flare out - you may not be able to come by here and get it shaped, so here's the way to shape it. Take a piece of masking tape or scotch tape and wrap it around your ivory ferrule. Take some sandpaper and form a little cup and then start rotating the shaft around and sanding that little flare off. You have the tape on there because if you have an ivory ferrule you don't want to be sanding a taper into that ivory ferrule. All you're doing is