

# Take It Easy

During or after ringing one often hears the comment that X 'Makes it look so easy'. Why should this be so? The most likely reason is that X is ringing with the minimum effort needed to put the bell in the right place for the next pull. Watch the ringers that don't make it look so easy and in many cases you will see that they put a lot of surplus energy into their ringing. (Watch for white knuckles as they grip the sally!) If you pull harder than necessary you waste energy twice – firstly because you pulled too hard and secondly because you have to work to stop the bell at the end of the swing. If you are ringing heavy-going bells then of course more energy is needed to keep the bell up, but in most towers today (especially if the bells are on ball-bearings) it is surprising how little energy, at least in rounds, is needed

## So what to do about it?

- First and foremost – relax! Not easy for learners, but work at it. All the time that your arms are stiff they are taking energy from the bell thus you have to pull harder to compensate. Let the rope carry your arms up freely; only check the movement as you feel the bell coming up to the balance. This takes practice and you must develop confidence in your bell control
- Adjust the strength of your pull. If the bell falls back, pull a little more; if you have to check hard to stop the bell over-balancing, pull a little less. When you get it right you can feel the bell 'float' up to balance point and you can hold it there with a very small effort. This makes ringing much more enjoyable! With lighter bells the weight of the rope has a noticeable effect and you may need to pull slightly harder at handstroke than at backstroke. (When you pull at backstroke the weight of the rope is helping you.) On many bells, the force of letting your arms fall with the rope from backstroke is ample to balance at handstroke, provided that your arms are relaxed on the upswing
- Ringing round the back end, especially with heavier bells, a different technique is needed compared to the smaller bells. Now you may have to ring your bell slightly below the balance to keep in time, and the strength of pull becomes even more important. When you get it right you will feel the bell come to a stop as you are starting the next pull. If you crunch with the bell in front, pull a little harder to swing the bell fractionally higher. If you are striking late, let the bell drop a little. You will feel the result when you get it right – even the heavier bells respond easily to your guidance
- When hunting or ringing a method you need to ring faster or slower than in rounds, slower when hunting up, faster when hunting down. If you think one or two pulls ahead you can save a lot of effort. If the next pull will be quick (e.g. you start hunting down) then pull less so that the bell will drop a little ready for your quicker pull. Conversely, if you are going to hunt up then pull harder (just a little) to be sure that your bell will balance. But you must think ahead – at least one pull ahead. Each pull should position the bell ready for the next pull

## In summary...

- Relax as you ring – you will enjoy it more!
- Adjust your pulling to ring with minimum effort
- Think ahead – will the next pull be faster, slower or the same pace?
- To ring slower – pull a little harder
- To ring quicker – pull a little less

This all takes time and practice – but the results are worth it!!

