

# Handling Clinic – Tutor’s Notes

## Explain to Pupils...

- A good handling technique leads to better bell control which in turn leads to better striking. The lessons you will have today are based on handling skills proved by many ringers over many years.
- When sitting out, watch other ringers. Some make it look easy and, generally, they are the ones you should copy.
- At all times when ringing, try to relax. Tenseness, especially tense arm muscles, wastes energy and makes good bell control difficult.

## Initial Assessment

Each pupil swings a silenced bell. Assess individual skills/faults. Coach individuals as required in the following sequences...

## Where to stand

The rope should hang an extended handsbreadth from your nose, you should be facing the centre of the rope circle

(If you stand too far back from the rope you lose leverage. Facing the centre of the rope circle you can watch ALL the other ropes.)

## Stance

Stand with your feet about 12” (30cm) apart to give stability. Some ringers prefer to have one foot slightly forward

## The Backstroke

Ideally, the bell will balance when your arms are at a comfortable full stretch. This gives a ‘marker’ or reference point. To achieve this you may need to move your hands slightly up or down on the tail end. (Demonstrate.)

With the bell set at backstroke establish where the individual pupil should grip. Restore the bell to handstroke set

Establish a correct grip, right hand above left hand, hands close together.

(N.B. If the learner has already been taught ‘left handed’ it may be better to accept this. It’s a matter for individual decisions.)

Hands extended fully down – ‘Where a Scotsman wears his sporran’

**Explain:** This is where your hands should be after EVERY pull, thumbs pointing to the floor

## Stage 2: The backstroke pull

Bell set at backstroke. Have the pupil ease the bell up to balance and return to set – get the feel of a balanced bell.

On the backstroke pull the hands must move down in a straight line, as if sliding them down a broom handle. To do this, move the elbows back as the hands come down

(An exercise for pupils who have difficulty: With a bell DOWN, tutor keeps the rope taut with his/her foot, have the pupil move hands down the rope (full length of pull) without deflecting it.)

**Advise pupils:** Pull gently and pull all the way through; at the end of each pull turn the wrists so that thumbs point to the floor, hands at the 'sporran'.  
Tutor catches sally and sets the bell. Advise pupil re strength of pull.  
Repeat as necessary, encourage smooth rhythmic action

### **The Handstroke (bell set at handstroke)**

**Advise pupil:** As with backstroke, the bell should balance with the arms at a comfortable full stretch. Thus you must catch the sally in the right place. Stand correctly, rise on tip-toe, catch the sally as high as possible. This is where you aim to catch the sally, every time. Relax

Now ease the bell from set to balance as you did at backstroke. This is what you should ALWAYS do on the call, 'Treble's going', to be ready for the pull-off into rounds

### **The pull-off**

**Explain:** Pull through with BOTH hands. As you let go of the sally, continue the hands downward to the 'sporran', bringing right hand to left hand for the correct tail-end grip. Balance and set the bell at backstroke. Take note that this ability to balance the bell at backstroke becomes very important later on. (At this stage emphasise the 'Thumb only' grip ready for catching the sally with ALL the fingers)

### **Returning to handstroke**

Balance and pull off. Hands down to the 'sporran', thumbs down, opening ALL the fingers. Keep hands low down, slightly parted. As the sally rises move the hands up, matching their speed to sally movement to give a smooth catch. Let the sally lift your hands, balance and set

Repeat part or full sequence to suit individual needs

### **A Recap – or – 'Things for pupils to remember'**

- Throughout the sequence, keep hands close together on the body centre-line. Waving hands make for waving ropes – untidy, and dangerous in small towers!
- Strength of pull. Over-pulling makes hard work – and can cause late striking. Adjust your pull so that the bell will JUST balance; anything more is wasted energy. Bells can vary enormously in how hard you have to pull but, with experience, you will learn to adjust to any bell.
- On lighter bells you may have to pull harder at handstroke than at backstroke. This is due to the weight of the rope. (Work it out!)

When you progress to ring at the back end, remember that heavier bells are mostly rung short of the balance. Now the correct strength of pull will swing the bell to the correct height (near to the balance) so that it responds easily to the next pull