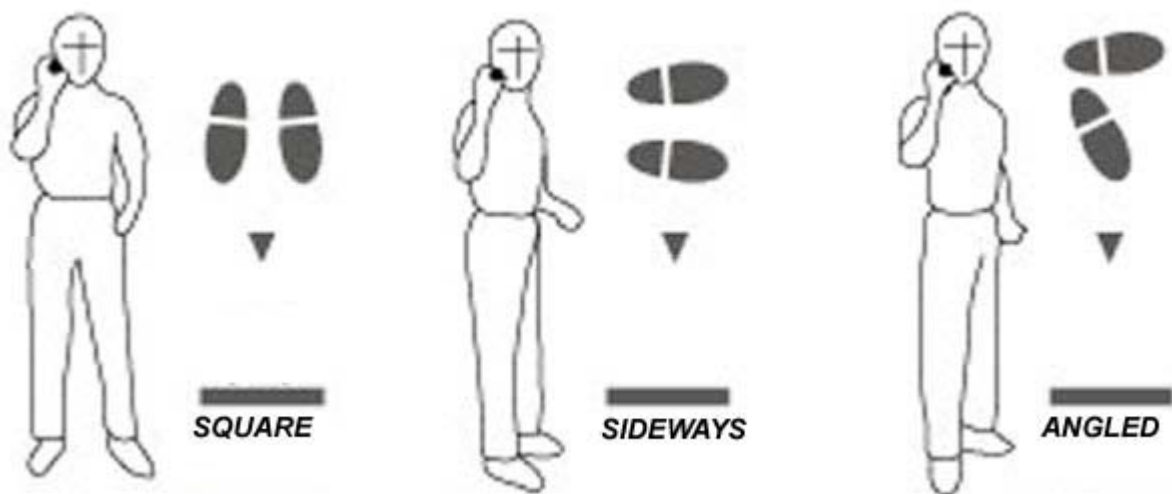


Tips for Accuracy 🇬🇧

In every competitive sport, Accuracy begins with a Solid Stance!

A steady Stance is very important. Don't lean way over the line to get closer to the board as leaning robs the darter of stability. The feet and legs should be positioned in a solid, comfortable, and relaxed stance, with weight distributed to both feet. Excessive leaning places nearly all of the body weight on one foot, tiring the shooter in long matches and damaging accuracy in the short run. The few inches gained by leaning over the line are simply not worth the huge loss of balance and stability. Plus, leaning lowers the shoulder, forcing one to throw upwards, fighting gravity. Leaning also usually means tensing the major muscles of the body to preserve balance. This often results in a jerky release and poor follow-through, since the body is already off-balance.

The diagram below shows three types of stance in common use. Use whichever you find most comfortable and be sure to stand upright. The square stance allows you to aim at all parts of the board without moving your feet, but many players find it hard to get used to. The sideways stance is often used by beginners to get a better vertical line through the twenty and bull. Most players get best results by using an angled stance. Some players use all three from time to time.



Whichever stance you pick, keep your feet planted solidly on the floor, and avoid lunging or lifting the back foot off the floor during the toss to get a harder throw. This can really be a bad habit, as it affects the entire body and throw. Lifting the foot even partway from the floor deprives the body of good balance during the crucial moment of follow-through. The strength required to reach the board with any normal dart is minimal, and for best accuracy should be provided only by the fingers, wrist, and forearm. After the dart leaves your hand, let your hand and arm continue on towards the dartboard.

Imagine that you are bowling.. after letting go of the ball, you still must follow-through! The same applies to Golf, Billiards, Basketball, and most every other sport. Follow-through after releasing the dart, ending up with your fingers fully extended, as though touching the spot that you want to hit.

Missing the board or hitting too low often cause beginners to think that more power is needed. This is rarely true, as one can tell by the fact that the missed darts usually hit hard enough to stick in the wall, which is quite a bit harder than a bristle dartboard. The problem lies with the accuracy of the throw and follow through. Even small children can be taught to throw accurately without lunging or using the shoulders in a throw.

If you feel short of power, stand upright, and keep your elbow up. The upper arm should be approximately parallel to the ground. This allows you to bring your arm back further, without hitting yourself in the face with the dart!

Stand Straight, Elbow Up, and you will effectively double the power of your throw without any extra effort. For one thing, the dart is much higher than when leaning, so gravity does much of the work for you.

The dart should be held in a level position, and maintain as level a stroke as possible. Don't hold the dart sideways, or in any other position than level and pointed at the board. Skill at darts, or any other target sport, means being able to perform the same motion exactly the same way, time after time. Common sense, as well of years of studies in other sports, show that all non-essential motion should be avoided and discarded from the routine.

In Darts, this means that if the dart is to strike the board at a level attitude (nearly always the best), it should be held and thrown from a position as close to level as is possible.

Any other position (such as point-up, point-down, or sideways) means extra motion of all the hand and wrist muscles to correct the initial starting position. Pure wasted effort... and usually futile, since the dart will likely leave the hand at an angle and wobble all the way to the board. And the correcting motion needed to get the dart back pointed at the board imparts inertia to the dart's mass, away from the direction of the target. Then the darts will often stick in the board at odd angles. After a long period of play, when concentration starts to slip a little, this can really be obvious, with darts hitting at all sorts of different angles.

Don't "throw" the darts, instead just gently "place" them in the dartboard with a smooth motion of your hand & fingers. Throwing like a baseball is unnecessary and even dangerous, as a dart thrown too hard may hit a wire or other object and bounce clear across the room to hit someone. Dartboard wires get bent and the bristles crushed from this type of abuse.

Fortunately "baseball throwers" usually stop after a while, either due to the laughter of spectators or the frowns of the bar manager. This method is also hopelessly inaccurate, as all of the major strength muscles and very few of the fine control muscles are used. A dart should never be thrown so hard that the front of the dart barrel touches the bristles. If this happens when a dart is thrown normally, then the dart point is too short and should be changed at a darts shop.

Don't Spin the dart as you release it to add stability. This is wasted effort at best, and spinning the darts can actually make your game worse by causing uneven release. Most darts flights are not shaped to properly induce spin, and the darts fly too short a distance (about 5 feet) for aerodynamic spin to be a stabilizing factor anyway.

Spinning the dart is often done inadvertently, and is a symptom of uneven release. As the hand opens, if the thumb leaves the dart before the fingers, the dart will roll sideways off the fingers, causing the dart to spin. All parts of the hand should leave the dart at nearly the same time to ensure level flight. To achieve this, make opening the hand a positive motion, and open the fingers and thumb rapidly to an extended position, ending up pointing at the target. This will also help keep the flights from touching the fingers as the dart leaves the hand.

As an exercise to get that quick release, imagine dipping your hand in a bucket of paint, then fling it at a spot on the wall. If your hand ends up towards the floor or ceiling, that is where the paint would have gone! Let your fingers end up naturally open and pointing at the exact spot where you want the dart to go.

One final tip

Because stability in your stance is so important, give a thought to your choice of footwear. Remember it's stability not agility that counts, therefore playing darts wearing shoes with spongy thick soles is not a good idea as you may wobble about.