

10 TIPS FOR POOL PLAYERS TO PREVENT SPREADING COVID-19

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Quarantine and Stay-at-Home orders have been a real drag for everyone. For many pool players it has taken away our league nights, our interactions with the pool hall crew, our favorite past time and our crazy form of personal therapy. We cannot wait to get back to playing pool and living that billiard life!

Things will be a bit different now though as COVID-19 isn't going to just disappear but pool players are resilient. We'll just need to do what makes sense to continue to live our lives while reducing the risks of catching or spreading the virus. With restrictions easing and people itching to get back we have come up with a list of 10 ways that can help you be as safe as possible while playing pool. Here they are!

1. Sanitizing Pool Balls: Manufacturer Recommended Cleaning Process

Clean pool balls are always preferred but shiny and pristine is not necessarily the same thing as sterile. It used to be that we just cleaned our dirty balls so they played better and more consistently but now we have a higher bar to reach. We actually weren't sure what the best way was to disinfect billiard balls, so we reached out to our friends at Aramith. Here is what Yves Bilquin, COO of Saluc recommends:

"To disinfect the Aramith balls, we recommend the use of alcohol (min. 65%), and then it is important to apply the [Aramith ball cleaner](#) to recover regular surface properties. The use of bleach is not recommended."

The pool ball cleaner is really important to give the ball its shine and slide so don't skip that step or you will see the balls reacting differently and gripping more. Use a nice microfiber towel to buff the ball with the solution after applying the alcohol wipe and your balls will be clean and safe.

*Be sure to consult with the pool room staff before cleaning their balls. Most will be thrilled or they might have a [professional pool ball cleaning machine](#) that will take the work out of it.

2. Bring Some Gloves for Racking

If you don't have alcohol/ball cleaner available just use some gloves for wearing while you rack the balls. Bring your own pair of work gloves, or some other thin, dexterous glove, like the kind billiard referees use when they need to rack. You don't know who's been handling those balls before you!

3. Communicate With Your Opponent

This may be the most important part. Talk with your opponent, let them know what you are doing and that you want to keep space. If another person is shooting close to where you need to shoot from you may want to wait until they clear out. Let your opponent know so they don't think you're trying to shark them with slow play.

Handshakes might be out of style for the time being, but good sportsmanship is always awesome! Talk it over with your opponent, and find some other, sportsmanlike way of doing introductions or acknowledging a game well played.

4. Practice Playing With Masks Before a Competitive Match

Speaking of communication, masks are a great form of non-verbal communication. They show that you care about the people around you, and that you appreciate some social distance. Come to think of it, they really help with your poker face, [something we've talked about before](#).

Wearing a mask is one of the best ways to protect yourself and others from germs, but I'm not gonna lie: they take some getting used to. If you're not in the habit of wearing masks, try them on, and maybe run a few racks at home or while warming up. It's weird at first, but you soon get used to it.

5. Use Your Stick As A Guide For Social Distancing

Most health guidelines recommend keeping about eight feet apart to stay safe. Fortunately for pool players, the game has given us an excellent ruler to measure this distance.

A typical pool cue is about 58 inches long, just under five feet. If you hold out your pool cue at arm's length, you'll get an excellent sense of how far apart people should be. Be careful not to get chalk on someone, though!

6. Wipe Down Rails Frequently

You'll probably be touching the rails more than any other part of the pool table. Keep it as clean as possible.

7. Bring Your Own Chalk and Keep it to Yourself

The chalk and bridges at a pool hall are being touched by everyone, they're strongholds for germs even on a good day. There's never been a better time to own your very own chalk. Fortunately we've got you covered, with [a wide selection of pool table chalk](#).

Hold onto your chalk with [a pocket chalker](#). Some chalkers attach your chalk cube to a stylus that goes in your pocket, others go in a magnetic holder, which grabs onto a clip in your pocket. With a chalker, you'll know where your chalk is at all times, which means you'll always know where it's been.

8. Bring Your Own Bridge

Bridges? Where to begin... at PoolDawg.com, we carry a broad array of [billiard bridges](#). We've got everything from bridge-heads that fit on your cue, to retractable bridge sticks that fit into any accessory pocket, to large, dedicated two-piece bridge sticks.

Whatever kind of bridge you choose, a bridge of your own means one less accessory you'll have to share with everyone else.

9. Wash Your Hands... A Lot

Keep your hands washed! Keep 'em clean, keep 'em pristine!

You know the drill: the hottest water you can stand, lots of soap, for at least 20 seconds. That's about as long as it takes to sing "Happy Birthday" twice, or, since we're rockin' pool players, one chorus of "Werewolves of London."

Keep a small bottle of hand sanitizer with you as well, for those times you can't get to a sink.

10. Show up to the Pool Hall Early

A lot of places will have new and lower limits on how many people will be allowed into a place at one time. Make sure that you aren't one of the people left out in the cold!

DISCLAIMER:

It must be stressed that you should *always* follow CDC guidelines, and any health rules and regulations from government authorities.

Also, you should always consult with your pool room's management before cleaning their equipment.

Hopefully these suggestions are helpful for you! We can't wait to see you all back at the pool room playing your favorite game with friends, having fun, and being safe!