

The Education Column

8. Back to Basics: 3-and-2

This series of eight articles suggests ways in which teachers and ringing masters can help learners who have achieved bell control to make the transition to simple method ringing. The articles present various ideas and practice methods, not intended to be in sequence of increasing difficulty.

This final article of the series takes a step backwards to look at a common handling problem and an exercise to treat it.

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This is the concluding article of this first series of *The Education Column*, and I want to move backwards rather than forwards, to look at a handling problem that is widespread among people learning to ring. Generally speaking, finding out about handling errors and how to deal with them is best explored in person or via a video. I particularly recommend attending a Module 1 course run by ART. In fact I recommend all the ART modules – you are likely to meet all the exercises we have discussed in this series if you attend these modules, and indeed I had never heard of one of the exercises (Penultimate) until I attended a Module 2 course.

However, the particular handling problem I want to look at this week can be discussed in an article like this, and helpful exercises exist to cure the problem. This common problem comes about as a side effect of having more control of the handstroke than the backstroke.

What are the symptoms?

When a student can ring a bell safely on their own, they move to ringing with other bells, whether rung by other humans or via a simulator. When they ring rounds, their timing will sooner or later become inaccurate. They may be ringing too early or too late, but more often than not it will be too early, after they either let the bell drop or bump the stay. They need to get back to the right place by delaying, and most learners try to achieve this delay by letting the bell rise up to the balance (or at least closer to the balance) at handstroke rather than at backstroke.

What they do is ring a backstroke with a pull long and firm enough to allow the bell to rise, catch the sally for the next handstroke, and then achieve the required delay by letting the bell rise to or near to the balance before pulling the rope down for the next handstroke. While this may well succeed in getting their bell in time with the rest of the band, the problem is that they tend to be able to make this correction only at handstroke, and not at backstroke. They seldom attempt the correction at backstroke, when their grasp is on the tail-end, allowing the bell to rise just before the start of the backstroke pull. Of course at first *any* correction is fine, but we don't want to cause problems later on by training a ringer who can confidently let the bell rise to the balance only at handstroke.

Another symptom of the same problem often occurs as the student learns to dodge, perhaps ringing Plain Bob Doubles. Even if they are confident about what the work is and when to do it, their dodging may be badly struck. If so, it is often the 3-4 DOWN dodge that presents the bigger problems of accuracy.

At the 3-4 UP dodge (Diagram 8.1), which is generally better struck, a significant alteration is needed to bring the dodging backstroke into third place down SOONER than the plain hunt rhythm; after this quicker backstroke, reverting to the slower plain hunt speed happens at handstroke.

But at the 3-4 DOWN dodge (Diagram 8.2) the equivalent alteration needs a DELAY at the dodging backstroke into fourth place, requiring the bell to rise near to the balance at the backstroke. Many learners find this difficult to achieve accurately – it is exactly the same problem that we have

*The UP dodge requires the bell to ring **sooner** at the backstroke.*

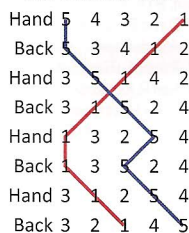


Diagram 8.1

*The DOWN dodge requires the bell to ring **later** at the backstroke.*

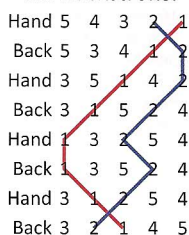


Diagram 8.2