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ENGLAND

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KEY FACTS ABOUT BUYING A SNOOKER OR POOL TABLE





LEGS

Watch out for cracking in the timbers – how to avoid!!

Cracking timbers are common, depending on where you live. Canada is notoriously bad because of the extreme temperature swing between the winter and summer months, as is the case in the Middle East, Dubai as an example. The humidity really can cause problems so it's important to have the room where the table is located maintained at a constant year-round temperature, this normally manages the potential problem. Most manufacturers struggle to prepare the timbers for the extreme cold and heat. The most vulnerable element of the timbers is the legs, this being due to the weight of the table bearing down on the legs.

Legs, the foundation of any snooker table.

If the legs are not properly prepared, the legs will simply crack. Once they crack, it's game over, new legs are the only solution. This is very expensive, if the legs have to be replaced, the whole table has to be de-rigged and then re-assembled from scratch in most cases. This involves 2 Fitters being required to carry out the work.

KEY FACT: Never buy a snooker table if the legs are made from MDF. However a pool table can work with MDF legs.

What makes a solid long-lasting leg?

Over the years, we have experimented with solid wood legs which are turned from one piece of carefully selected Timber, to laminated legs, to bonded and turned legs.

I won't give our trade secrets away, however another reason to be cautious when buying a Snooker table from a certain manufacturer is how they manufacture the legs. Why not ask the question, how are your legs made? See what response you get.

Some makers bond the legs from small pieces of rectangular cut timber, then bond the legs together in a solid block. Subsequently they then turn the leg to achieve the round Leg effect.

KEY FACT: I have already said stay clear of MDF, but also be aware of makers using offcuts in the legs, (mixing different types of woods) bonding together and then turning. This makes the legs vulnerable to cracking due to different timbers expanding and contracting at different temperatures, this being anywhere in the world, not just the regions highlighted before (Canada & the Middle East). Finally, bonding legs has another problem, if the adhesive used to bond the legs is not of the highest quality, guess what, the legs over time will literally disintegrate, first cracking and then popping apart.

As I mentioned, you can buy a Snooker table at a certain price and when it's delivered it could look great, but 6 months, 12 months or 18 months down the road, this may not be the case. That's when you need to be sure that whoever you bought the table from will stand behind any warranty, or more importantly are still in business.

Pool table legs vary hugely, some legs are made from solid woods, MDF, even PVC injection moulded legs are available. All types are generally fine.



SLATES

Slates.

Slates are often the unsung hero of a snooker table, why? You don't see the slate, "out of sight out of mind" seems to be the only logical explanation, however I can categorically tell you slate is another singularly important component in a snooker table.

Why? A full-size snooker table covers an area of 12' x 6' and contrary to some people's vision, the slate is not delivered in one whole piece, it comes in five pieces.

The reasons;

- One whole piece would be impossible to manufacture and transport without it breaking.
- Assuming you could transport the whole slate in one piece, it would be extremely difficult to handle.
- Then there is warpage, yes slate does warp.

That's why it's manufactured in five pieces.

The only country in the world that gets this process right in my opinion 100% of the time is Italy. That's why our slates for the vast majority of our Snooker tables come from Italy.

What can go wrong with a slate? Plenty.

Imagine five pieces of slate having to be joined together during installation, having to fit together perfectly and when I say perfectly, I mean perfectly.

What happens if the five pieces of slate don't come from the matched pieces of slate that make up the set? The thickness could vary, which could lead to different levels- lips forming like little tiny steps. The outcome, when you play on the table, the balls will deviate up the step and down the step and ultimately you will not be enjoying your game or your table. Granted this scenario is rare, for one reason: Fitters, they can paper over imperfections and often save the day.

The other main issue is warpage or bowing of the slate, some slates from different parts of the world are more sensitive than others to warpage. Warpage is really frustrating, simply because it can be quite subtle, you may think initially that the table is not level, so you get the Fitter back to re-level the table, after months of trying to scratch that annoying itch you can't reach, you are told the slate is bowed or warped. The only solution is a new slate.

That's why we choose Italian slates, it's up to 4 x the cost of other slate from other parts of the world, but it is the best.

That's why Riley gives you a 25-year warranty.

Some slates from different regions are harder or softer in their composition, that may not be terribly significant to you sitting down reading these Top tips when buying a snooker or pool table, however it becomes significant when a ball is mis-cued and because the slate is softer, over time chunks of slate become dislodged and you end up with a mini crater in the middle of your table.

In short, Italian slate out performs slate from other regions, if you can afford it, buy Italian slate.



STEEL BLOCK CUSHIONS

Steel cushions were created to enhance the response of the cushion which ultimately improved the standard of play in Snooker from their invention back in the 1960's.

What does a steel cushion do better than say a standard wood cushion?

If you think about it, wood lives and breathes long after it comes out of the ground and is machined into a piece of furniture or a snooker or pool table. Wood in the right environment will last for hundreds of years as a finished product.

Remember the one aspect with wood that is a cause of some of its unpredictability and is its main nemesis, is moisture. Wood products when manufactured into a finished product are kiln dried, sealed with lacquers, painted even laminated to help prevent moisture getting in, however the operative word is preventing. You will never stop moisture penetrating wood 100% of the time.

Moisture comes in many forms, the form I am referring to is moisture in the air. Why? Moisture is in most cases caused by climate, weather patterns and artificial solutions to extreme hot and cold temperatures.

For example, when it's cold, we fire up the heating, when it's really hot, we turn on the air conditioning. Both are a nightmare for wood, one form puts moisture into wood, the other takes moisture out, which means wood will expand or contract ever so slightly.

Wood needs a certain amount of moisture content to live and exist in the form intended when used in the manufacture of a finished product.

For your sofa, dining table or picture frame, you will not really notice. For your snooker table it's more obvious, why? The cushions, if they expand or contract, this is when you get a variation in cushion bounce.

Even at the world-famous Crucible theatre where the world championships are held have major problems with atmospherics. Big crowds creating masses of heat, air conditioning or heating used to regulate the ambient temperature desired. When people enter the arena, the temperature is a certain measure, when people leave, the TV crews pack up for the evening, the heating gets turned down, the tables then contract ever so slightly. The net result when play starts the following morning, the cushions and cloth don't respond for the first couple of hours the way they should, why? Because the cushions have contracted (tightened up) overnight, the cloth will be sluggish (fabric contracts due to the cold). It then takes a few hours of heating, to make the cushions and cloth expand back to where they were the night before. We all know it's not an exact science, are cushions going to expand and contract to exactly the same levels each time there is a fluctuation in temperature? No they will not. This contraction and expansion the cushions go through is counteracted in the main by the steels fixed to the cushions.

The steel cushion lengths, sit between the wood cushion and the rubber where the ball impacts. The steel acts as a protective layer between the wood cushion and the rubber giving a consistent, reliable true response off the cushion. You may ask how this improves the bounce when you use steel cushions rather than wood cushions? Simple, atmospherics have to be significantly more extreme to impact steel in the same way as wood. This is because the thermal coefficient of steel is much lower than wood and therefore does not expand or contract at anywhere near the rate wood does at the same temperature.

The net result, steel cushions ensure the cushion bounce is spot on every time, not just some of the time.



MADE IN ENGLAND
WWW.RILEYENGLAND.COM

BEWARE OF FRAUDS

Beware of frauds – Key Facts to Know.

It may be hard to believe, but Riley snooker and pool tables are copied and counterfeited all over the world. Even in our own back yard, in England. We are constantly being forced to take infringement action against companies and or individuals selling Riley branded tables, well allegedly selling Riley tables;

KEY FACT 1: Riley only sell tables through authorised dealers who appear on our website as official authorised dealers or we sell directly to you from our U.K. Office. If you are not in contact with Andrew Baker, Sharon Doyle, Richard Lacey, Richard Crocker or Stefano Pucello then it's not us.

KEY FACT 2: On occasion other companies will advertise Riley tables through eBay or Amazon or even through their own website offering re-conditioned, or second-hand tables. In the majority of cases these are fake tables. The easy way to check if a table is genuine is to ask for the serial numbers on the top of the legs or the inside of the frames.

Simply contact [Andrew Baker](#) and ask him to verify if the serial number is genuine, we have a log going back decades of every table ever sold and yes each table had a unique serial number.

KEY FACT 3: If you buy a table from one of our authorised dealers, when the table is delivered, you should receive a Warranty certificate, and you can also check to see if the cushions and frames have our unique Hologram applied.

Again if you are unsure, please contact [Andrew Baker](#) and he will confirm if the table is a genuine original table.

KEY FACT 4: If the table you have purchased or are about to purchase is new and does not feature on our website then contact us to verify if indeed the table is genuine. [Contact Us](#)



WATCH:
CLOTH INSTALLTION
Click For 10 Minute Video

TABLE FITTERS

Top Tips: It's All About the Fitter!!!

Most buyers of snooker and pool tables fail to appreciate the importance and significance of the Fitters involvement in assembling and installing a snooker or pool table.

I have already covered in my Top Tips various references to the Fitter and the function of the Fitter and the difference the Fitter actually makes.

KEY FACT 1: Always use the Fitter supplied by the manufacturer, that way there can be no argument if the table is installed badly. Many companies will hide behind the fact they did not install the table, particularly in faraway destinations. It's worth paying the higher price for the Fitter provided by the company to actually install the table.

KEY FACT 2: You may be tempted to use a Fitter locally and not the Fitter provided by the company supplying the table. Don't...

A properly trained Fitter is the difference between a properly installed table and a nearly properly installed table.

Some of the problems you are likely to encounter if a properly trained Fitter is not used;

- Pocket leathers badly cut and don't fit flush to the pocket area.
- Legs when assembled being overly tightened, resulting in timbers cracking not necessarily immediately but up to 3 months after installation.
- Legs and Frame not being assembled correctly, under tightened resulting in the table once the slates are applied moving, in effect swaying or wobbling. This is not only a safety issue but will deteriorate further over time if not addressed immediately.
- Slates being properly installed in the correct order, slates are produced to an exacting standard and need to be installed in a specific sequence, they cannot be mixed. Inexperienced Fitters can mix the slates resulting in levelling issues due to the wrong piece being out of sequence.
- Slates, even Italian slates can sometimes get chipped in Transport, if dealt with correctly there is no need to replace the slate, fully trained Fitters know how to repair and if need be fill the slates using the correct materials to ensure the slate is 100% level once installed. No lips, no ridges, no pot marks.
- Cloth, see the video link above. Applying the cloth is an art and takes a minimum of 2 years' experience to perfect or approximately 100 installations under close supervision. Pulling the cloth too tight can lead to significant problems as can the opposite, not pulling the cloth tight enough. Likewise, the cloth has to be eased during installation, tightened and re-tightened due to the fact the cloth is 100% wool and when stretched it then slackens off and the process has to be repeated to insure the cloth is properly installed. Inexperienced Fitters can render a table unplayable due to the cloth being too slack.



TABLE FITTERS

- Marking the cloth out, the D area. We have even known some Fitters to mark the cloth out incorrectly due to the fact they do not have the correct mould, tool to do the job. The net result, a new cloth is required.
- Levelling the table is where the real art is, the wrong Fitter will leave your table in a condition not fit for purpose. They will blame the floor, if it's wooden they will say you will never get the table 100% level, if it's a concrete floor they will say the floor it's self is not level, both of which are not true.

Our fitters have never left an installation where the table has not been level, well not in my time in any case.

KEY FACT 3: Riley Fitters like tea in large quantities, it works wonders, they seem to work all the more quickly, efficiently and to a higher standard.

KEY FACT 4: By employing a Riley Fitter, you will see the difference with your table, I guarantee the enjoyment, pride and satisfaction will be all the greater than if you had not used a Riley Fitter. I will leave you to decide.

[CUSTOMER TESTIMONIALS – SEE THEM HERE!](#)

[TABLE INSTALLATIONS – SEE THE GALLERY HERE!](#)

Best of luck in your search to find the right snooker or pool table. I sincerely mean it and if you need any advice, we are only too happy to help. Even if you don't choose Riley.

[Contact Us](#)

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EIGHT CHAMPIONS - ONE TABLE



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