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October 1999

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the three-, four-, and five-step
styles and reveals which will
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Three Steps Don't Give

■ *Help! I use a three-step approach, and I've been inconsistent this year. My average has declined by almost 10 pins. Would it be better if I changed to a four- or five-step approach?*

I've seen amateur bowlers who became good as three-step players, but in my 30 years of professional bowling I've never seen a successful pro with a three-step approach. To achieve the best your game can be, taking four or five steps would be much better.

The problem with the three-step approach is the timing of the swing to the steps. To get in time with three steps, you need to get the swing started *before* your first step. The problem with this is that the backswing usually is too fast, and you lose the fine sense of feel and control because everything is happening so quickly.

I would recommend you work on a four-step approach. There is a school of

The major disadvantage of a three-step approach is that you have to move the ball significantly prior to your first step (A) and tend to hurry your backswing.

In a four-step approach, the ball and your feet move together (B), and in a five-step approach, you take your first step before you move the ball (C).

thought that three-step players should take five steps because they are starting with the same foot, but I feel it's easier to use four because you start the ball moving at the same time as the first step. With five steps it's easy to fall right back to three steps, because you are accustomed to starting with that foot and it feels comfortable. Once you get the four-step approach down, you can always add the fifth step.

This is a good time for you to make the

Need some help with your game? Bill Spigner welcomes questions from readers. Mail them to: Bowling Clinic, Bowling Digest, 990 Grove Street, Evanston, IL 60201. (Due to the volume of letters, no personal replies will be made.)

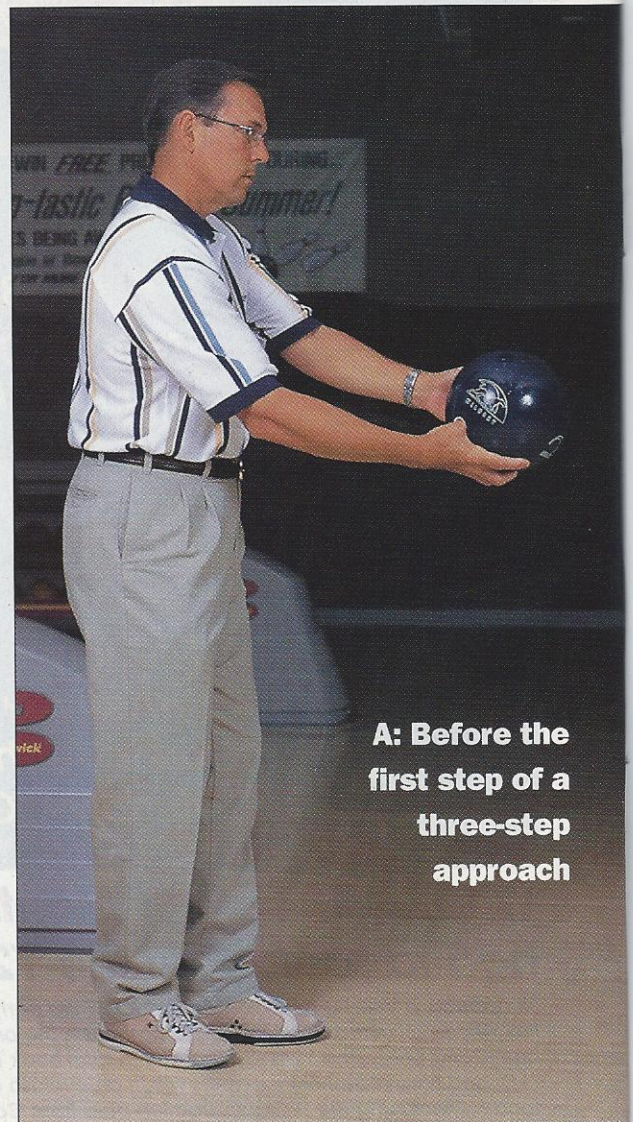
change, because of the difficulty you have had this year. Start out with your stance. When you set up, distribute your weight more to your left foot (for right-handed bowlers; opposite for left-handers). This will free up your other foot to start; there will be less transfer of weight. Take your first step with your right foot, and at the same time start your ball movement. You want to move the ball out in front of you about waist high when the first step is complete.

On the second step, the swing starts. From there you finish the shot, ending up on your



Bowling Clinic

By BILL SPIGNER



A: Before the first step of a three-step approach

You Enough Control

left foot. Initially it will feel very uncomfortable, but no matter how uncomfortable the approach feels, if you started with the correct foot, finish the shot off—don't stop in the middle of the approach. You have to get used to your swing and steps being in a different place relative to each other. Every shot will feel different, but in time they will start to feel better and you will start to understand the distinct feel of good shots. You must have patience, and keep

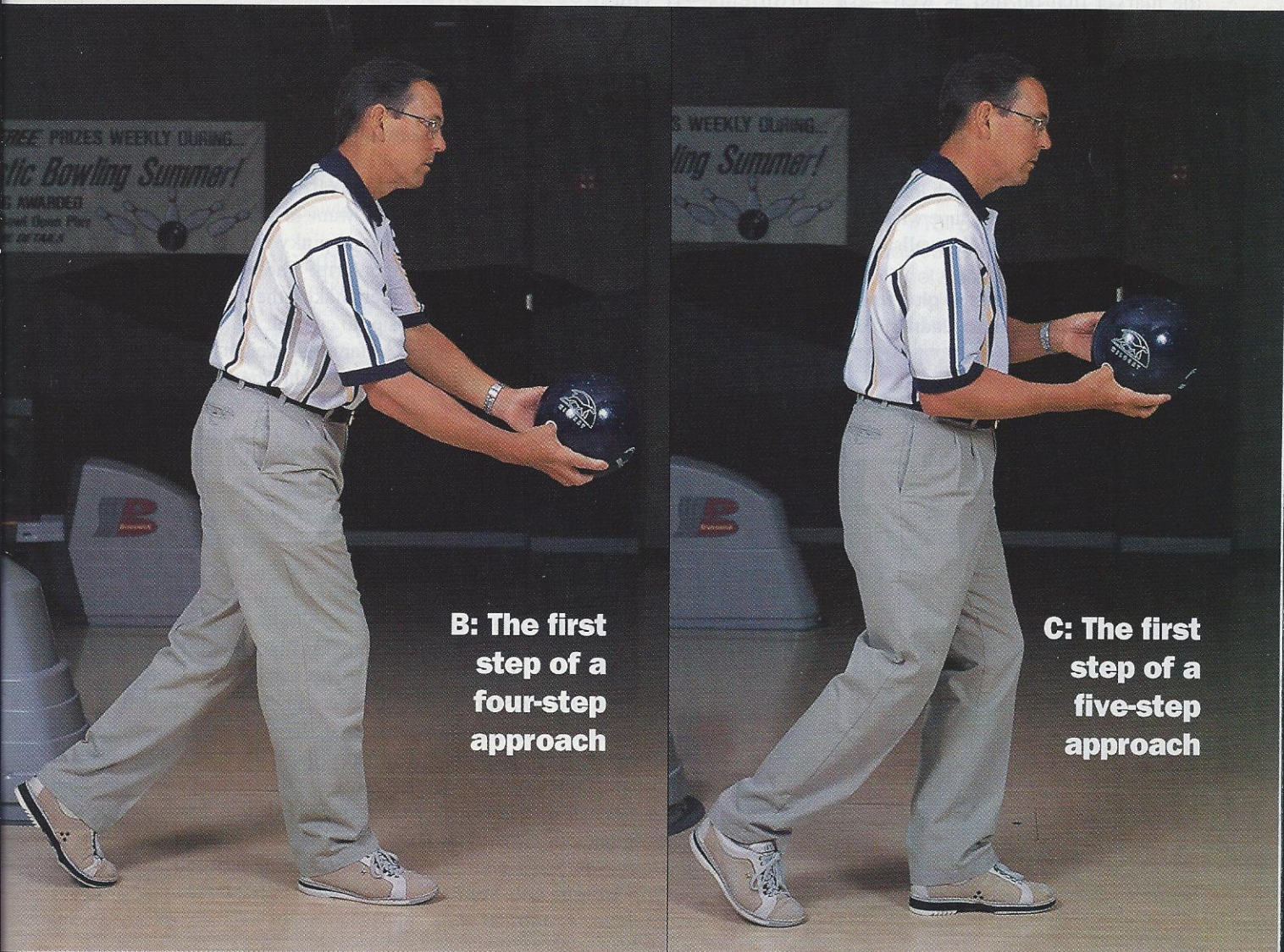
focused. Once you have conquered the four-step approach, you'll find it's much easier to work on other parts of your physical game.

Just remember that it's the right thing to do.

■ **Recently the tape that I have been putting in my thumb hole has started sliding on me around the second game. It's always the very bottom piece, and it makes the whole thing slide—the tape**

becomes goeey and doesn't stick anymore, and therefore I lose the good fit in my thumb hole. What could possibly be causing it? Bad tape? The construction of my ball? Have you ever experienced this, and if so, what is the solution?

This is not an unusual problem, but normally not as severe as the situation you're experiencing. I don't think there is anything wrong with your ball—I would try another box of tape. All grip



B: The first step of a four-step approach

C: The first step of a five-step approach

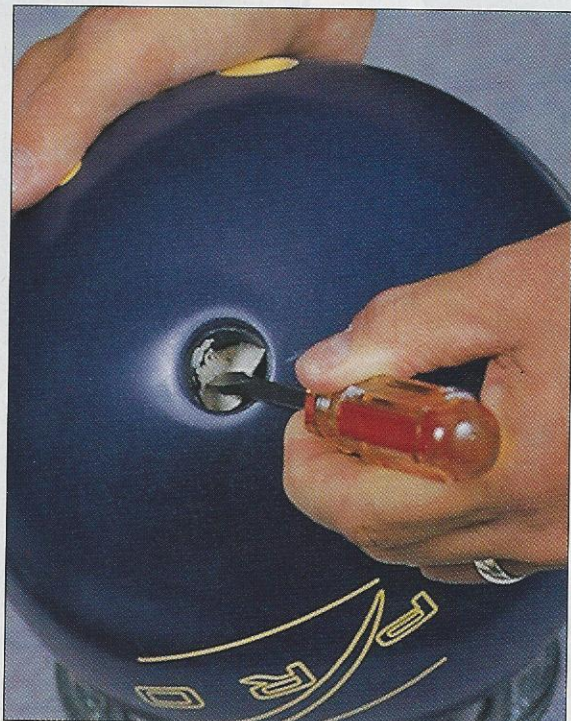
tape has an adhesive on the back of the tape so it can adhere to the hole. Occasionally the adhesive is not right, or if the tape is old the adhesive can lose its gripping strength.

Another cause is if you leave the ball in the trunk of your car during hot weather—the glue melts, and the tape slides in the hole. Also, tape that hasn't been put in the ball yet can lose its gripping ability if exposed to heat.

When you remove the bad tape, glue is left inside the ball, and it can be difficult to remove. You need strong solvents to remove the glue, so be careful. A very good glue remover is nail polish remover. Pro Grip Product by Columbia has a great glue remover, which contains alcohol and other additives. There may be other products on the market that do just as well—ask your pro shop operator for help.

You should change your tape often, for a few reasons. When tape is left in the hole for a long time, the glue will start to lose its strength, and when this happens the tape will slip. When tape has been left in the holes for a long time, the glue will come off the tape when you remove it and remain on the walls of the

Heat or age can loosen the glue under tape. When you remove it, be sure to clean inside the hole.



Today magnets are built into support devices for the forearm, elbow, back, wrist, and feet.

holes. If you live in a hot humid area, or if it's a hot summer, you will have more problems with the tape—in this environment, it's also important to change the tape more frequently.

Finally, check your tape out before you start bowling. You don't want to start bowling, then have problems—if you have to remove some tape in the middle of game, you'll have glue all over the inside of the hole. It's a pain to remove, and if you don't have the right solvent and the pro shop is closed, you might have to hang up the ball for the night. Add a glue remover to your accessories so that you're prepared to care for your equipment at any time. The problems always seem to happen when we are least prepared for them.

■ *I'm an older bowler with tendinitis who had to switch back to an old urethane ball because I could no longer control the reactive resin ball I purchased new in 1997. The reactive resin ball worked well for the first few hundred games, then began to hook way too much, even after I had it resurfaced. It is only 12 pounds and had almost three ounces of top weight before it was drilled. I know top weight is not supposed to be applicable to bowling balls today, but I know my urethane ball has almost no top weight and hooks very little, except at the back end. Both balls are*



drilled fingertip—could the top weight be a factor in the hooking problem? Could I have the reactive resin ball plugged and redrilled with a conventional grip and lose some hook and the tendinitis?

Stay with the fingertip grip. You might want to consider drilling a hole for your pinky finger and use a three-finger grip. The addition of the pinky finger makes the ball feel lighter and easier to control.

As far as the weight balance of the ball, the top weight *does* matter. The lighter the ball and the more imbalance the ball has, the more effect the imbalance will have on the reaction of the ball. With lightweight balls the inside construction of the ball is different than the heavier weights. Top weight has always had an effect on the ball performance. Top weight makes the ball hook more and quicker. I would recommend you have your pro shop operator drill out all the top weight. This will reduce the hook.

As for your tendinitis, there are a number of devices that may help relieve the pain. Magnet technology is becoming more popular and has brought great relief to many people. I use magnets for my back and elbow. The back one has been a great source of relief for me. Of course, you should always consult a physician about magnets or other pain-relief products. ●