

**COACH'S
CORNER**

**HOW TO
BEAT A
SLUMP**

BOWLING

DIGEST

December 1996

EARL ANTHONY

**On his game,
his hopes, and
his reasons for
coming back**

Jeri Edwards
on grips,
rolls, and
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Bill Spigner
on playing
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A Beveled Hole Will Ease

■ *A hand surgeon recently told me I have a growth over the tendons in the web of my bowling hand, in the area between my thumb and index finger. Ball contact in this area causes a numbness in the tip of my thumb. Have you heard of this condition, and do you have any suggestions for what I should do? (The doctor did not recommend surgery.)*

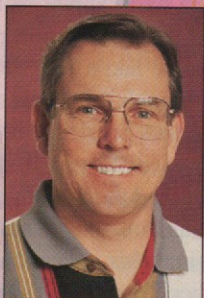
Your problem is not unusual, but it can have a very detrimental effect on your game. The growth over the tendons in your bowling hand probably feels like a little bump, and it moves whenever it's touched. When the top edge of the thumb hole comes in contact with the webbing between your fingers, that webbing is pinched—and this is where the problems start. Many bowlers experience a shooting pain that goes all the way up to their elbow; others experience numbness after the pain.

The best thing you can do to ease your discomfort is bevel the top of the thumb hole in order to relieve the pressure applied to the sensitive area of your hand. The idea is to carve a small slot in which the tendon can rest. Work closely with your local pro shop operator on this project. Tell him or her exactly what you are feeling; together you should be able to come up with a bevel that will work for you.

Start by having your pro shop operator mark the base of your thumb—directly on the affected tendon—with a wet, yellow grease pencil. Next, insert your fingers and then your thumb into the ball. Squeeze your thumb slightly, then remove your hand from the ball. This should leave a yellow mark on the ball precisely where the tendon rests. Your pro will use a rasp or coarse file to carve in a flat slot on the marked area only. (The slot should be just wide enough for the growth to rest in.) Once the slot is carved, the edges should be rounded off by sanding them.

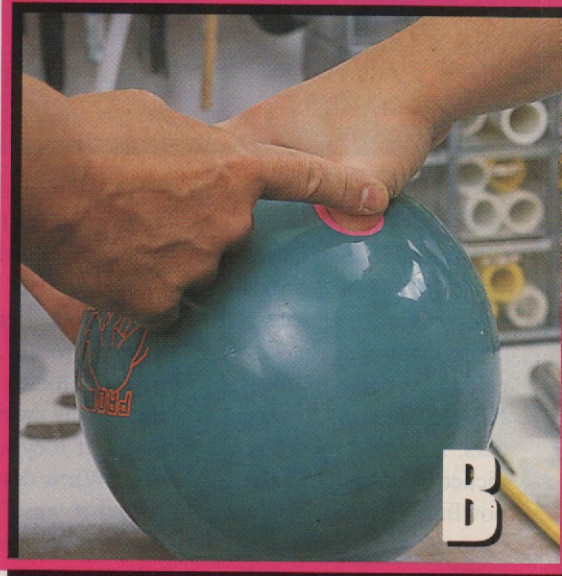
Next, pick your ball up, insert your hand, and, without taking any steps, swing the ball by your side. Make sure your hand and wrist are in the same position they're normally in when you deliver the ball. If the thumb hole has been suffi-

Need some help with your game? Bill Spigner welcomes questions from readers. Mail your questions to: Bowling Clinic, Bowling Digest, 990 Grove Street, Evanston, IL 60201.

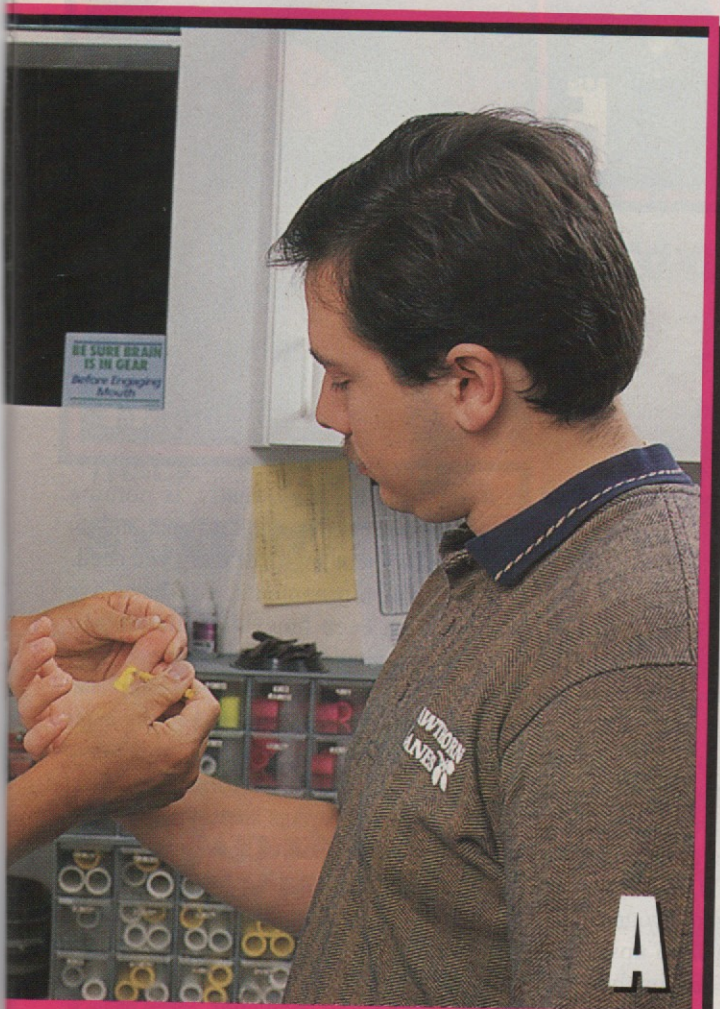


Bowling Clinic

By BILL SPIGNER



Hand Pain



A

A In order to carve a protective groove for a sore tendon, your pro shop operator should first mark the area with a grease pencil.

B Next, insert your fingers and then your thumb into your ball. Squeeze slightly with your thumb.

C Remove your hand from the ball. The grease on the ball shows your pro shop operator exactly where your tendon is making contact.



C

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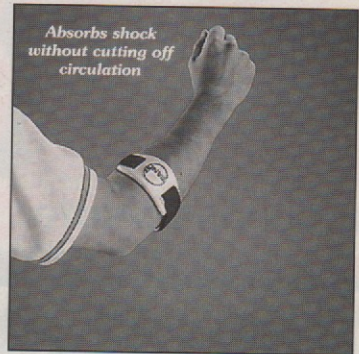
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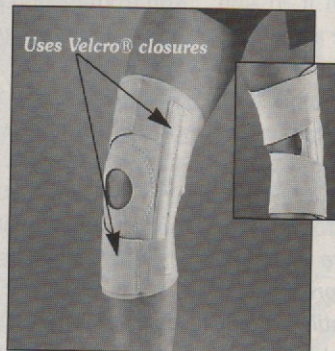
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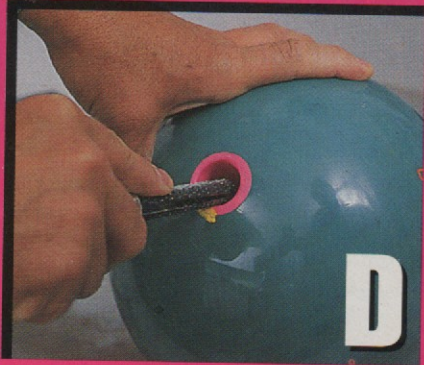


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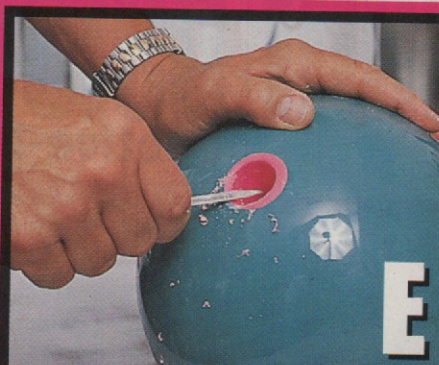
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D Your pro shop operator uses a rasp or coarse file to dig out a groove in the area marked in grease.



E Any sharp edges in the flat slot are rounded off. It should be just wide enough for your tendon to rest in.

F Sanding the entire area ensures a smooth, uniform bevel and a comfortable fit.



G Voilà! Your ball now has a beveled groove that will relieve any pressure on the webbing of your hand.



Being able to carry, really, is nothing more than making small adjustments to get the different angles of entry you need.

At most tournaments, you have five frames on each lane of whatever pair you're playing in a given game. By the end of your first two frames on each lane, you should have a good read of the lanes and an understanding of the best angle to the pocket. Use this information to set yourself up for strikes later in the game.

Also, keep in mind how unreasonable it is to expect to strike every time you hit the pocket. In general, you're only going to strike in spurts—there are just too many factors involved in being able to carry. The key, however often you're striking, is to keep in tune with your ball reaction so you can see the subtle changes in the lanes and in yourself.

Pay special attention to your ball when you're striking—remember how it looks entering the pocket so you can make the correct adjustments when you're having trouble striking. If you're on a pair of lanes you just can't seem to figure out, be content to battle through and get out of the game with the most you can. Don't look for some miracle way of carrying—in the process, you'll probably end up leaving complex spares and splits.

Remember: Hitting the pocket doesn't give you the *right* to strike—it gives you an *opportunity* to strike. Keep an open mind, and learn from each shot. ●

ciently beveled, you should feel no pressure in the problem area of your hand.

It isn't any fun to bowl with pain. I've always believed that if something starts to hurt, you should back off and find a solution rather than bowl through it. If you bowl with pain, you can injure something permanently. Bowling is a game for a lifetime—don't be so concerned with short-term results that you jeopardize your long-term enjoyment of the game.

■ *I've been teaching myself to bowl for the past 20 years; I listen to as much advice as I can. My game is pretty solid—I average over 200—but I still get lazy and miss easy shots now and then.*

I bowl in a lot of amateur tournaments, and I'm starting to cash on a consistent basis. However, I'm still having a problem with my mental game: I can forget my last game, but I have trouble dealing with mistakes during a game. Recently I had seven taps—two 10-pins, and one 2-, 4-, 7-, 8-, and 9-pin each—in a single game, and I wasn't happy at all. What can I do to not get so upset with these things?

Bowling is a game of misses. No matter how good you are, each shot you roll is slightly different. It's very important that we manage our games in a positive way mentally. Don't let adversity distract you from the job at hand, which is to stay focused on the lanes and on yourself.

It's normal to get a little upset when you don't strike on a seemingly perfect pocket hit. We all wish we could carry pins better—the key is learning about why we don't, so we can then make the proper adjustments.

When bowling, the first order of business is to get the ball in the pocket. You need to know that you're playing the lanes correctly so you have some margin of error to hit the pocket consistently. Second, you need to remember that the lanes are always going to be changing, even within a single game—the oil on the surface moves with every ball rolled.

When you compete in a tournament, you generally change lanes for each game. It's likely that every lane you play will need to be approached a little differently, and you must be able to make the proper adjustments to stay in the pocket.