

**KEEP
YOUR
SWING
IN LINE**

Sometimes the pins are offset—here's how you strike anyway

BOWLING

DIGEST

How to win

when your best isn't working

PLUS

Jeri Edwards
on the keys to
a square
forearm

**Roger
Dalkin**
on his plan
for the
ABC

Learn the
pros' secrets
for picking it
up when their
"A" game lets
them down

December 1997

~~\$4.99~~ Special Offer \$3.99



The Armswing: Many Pa

■ *I've been bowling for five years and have seen my average go from 95 to 159, but I don't feel I've made nearly enough improvement. I've been teaching myself and picking up some tips here and there from coaches and from columns such as yours, and I want to know when the best time is to seek the full attention of a coach.*

Also, I have some questions relating to my armswing: (1) I'm only 5'0", so I take six or seven steps to the foul line. Does taking so many steps prevent me from being able to throw certain types of shots? (2) I've read that a righthander's thumb must be at 10 o'clock in the release. Does that mean my thumb should be at 10 o'clock before I start my shot, or should it just wind up there when I let go of the ball? (3) A friend has told me I don't keep my wrist under the ball and that it prevents me from getting good rotation, and that a wrist device would help. Is that true?

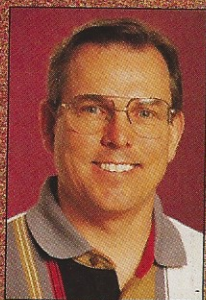
Let's take these questions one at a time.

First, as for when you should find a coach: It's always good to read and talk to others to learn more about playing the game, but it's also very smart to find a good coach who can help you pull all the information together so you can apply beneficial things to your game. As your game develops, having one person who's familiar with your style, someone you can go to whenever things aren't right—or if you feel you've made a breakthrough and want to share it with someone who can tell you why what you're doing is working—is a major plus.

Next, the number of steps you take should have no effect on the type of shot you throw; moving up or down in steps isn't going to change you from, for example, a stroker to a cranker. The important thing, regardless of the number of steps you take, is that your armswing is timed correctly with your legs—the

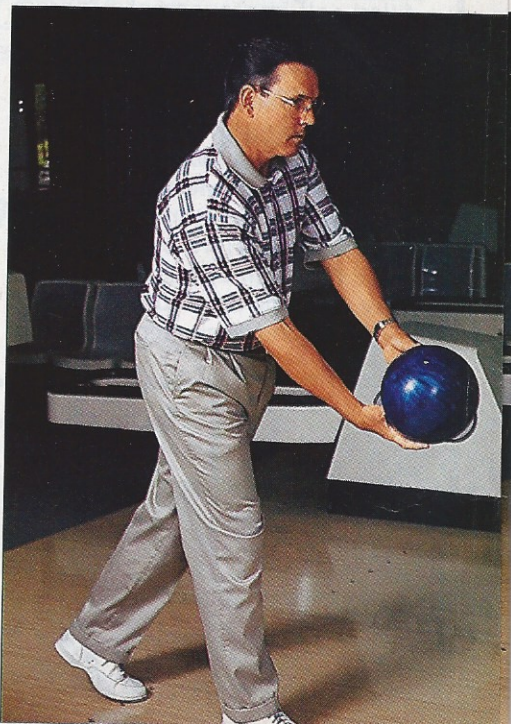
ball needs to be in tune with your final step in order for you to throw a strong, well-balanced shot. Timing is based on a four-step approach: The ball and foot move in the first step, the ball starts to swing in the second step, the ball reaches the top of the swing in the third step, and the ball moves down into the release zone in the fourth step. So, if you take more than four steps, the extra steps should be taken before you move the ball. Any number of steps can be OK as long as your swing is timed correctly with your legs and you can repeat shots, but I will say the easiest way to keep everything in good timing is with four or five steps.

The answer to your question about thumb position is that righthanders should start and finish with their thumb at 10 o'clock. When you start with your thumb in the 10 o'clock position in the stance, your hand should open slightly by the time the ball gets to the top of the swing so that the thumb reaches about 1 o'clock; by the time your hand reaches the release, your thumb should be back at 10 o'clock. This action puts the fingers at about



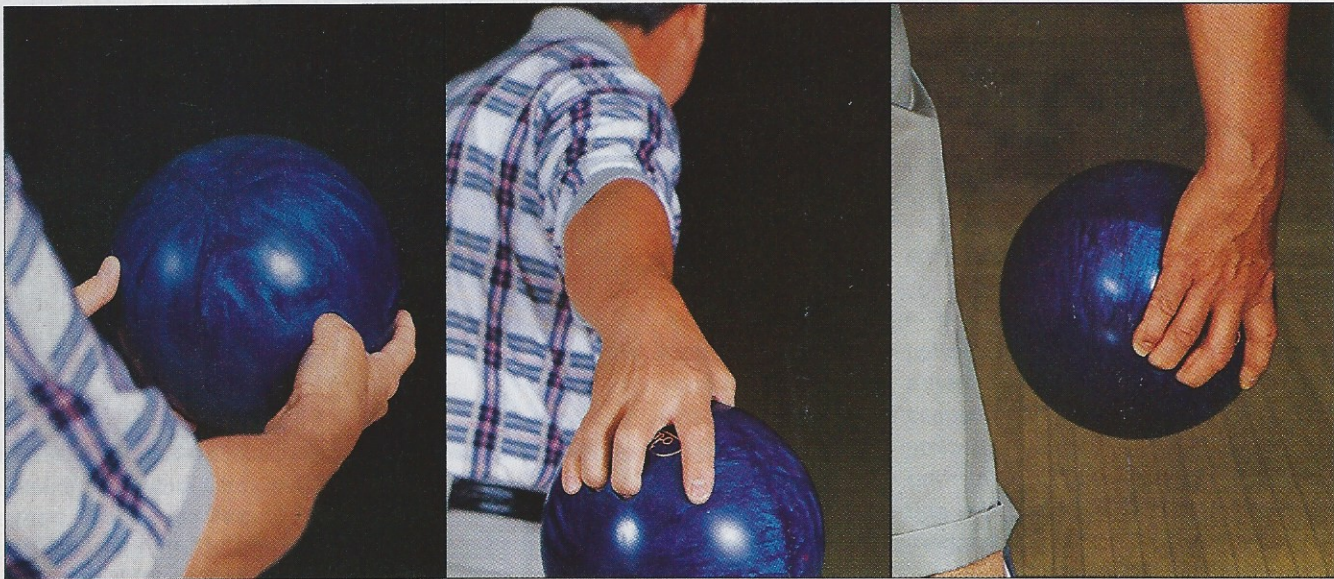
Bowling Clinic

By BILL SPIGNER



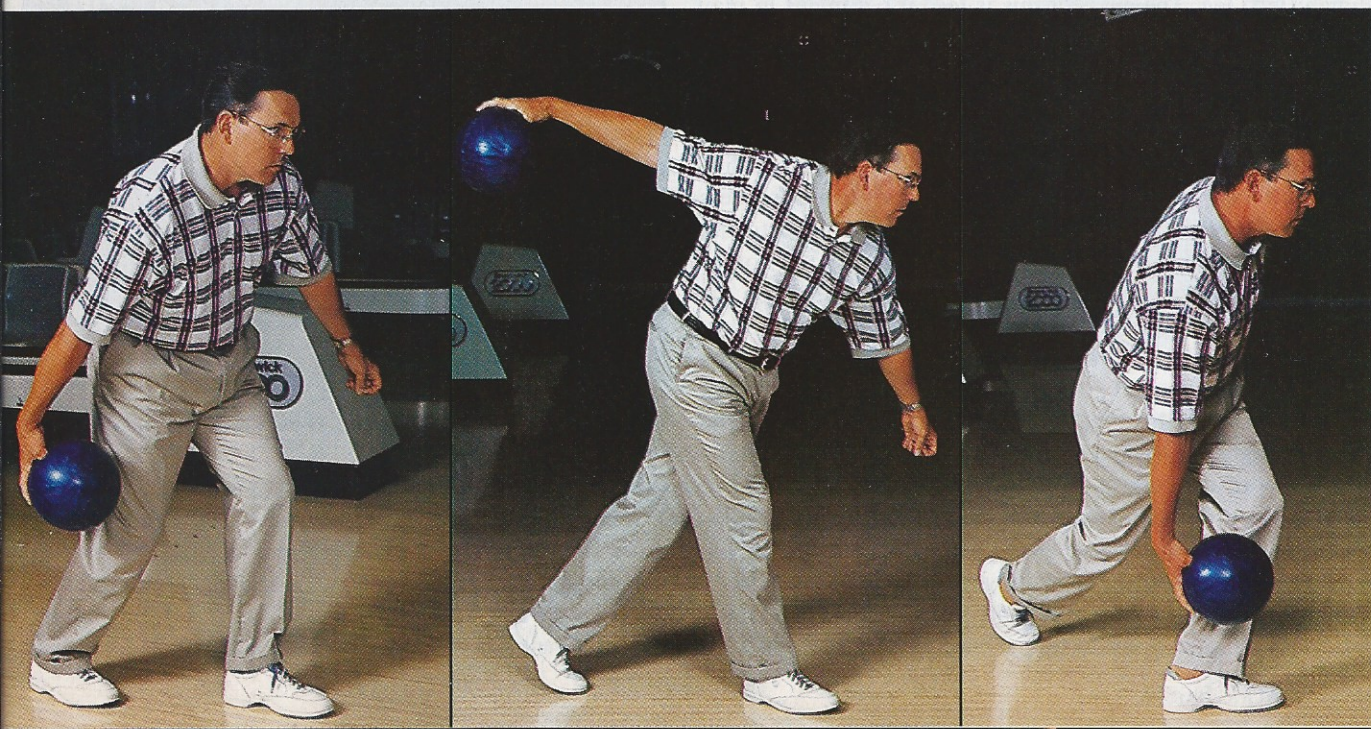
Need some help with your game? Bill Spigner welcomes questions from readers. Mail your questions to: Bowling Clinic, Bowling Digest, 990 Grove Street, Evanston, IL 60201.

ts, but One Smooth Path



Righthanders should have their thumb at about 10 o'clock [facing straight ahead] in the stance; the hand should rotate clockwise so that the thumb is at about 1 o'clock at the top of the backswing, and it should rotate counterclockwise so that the thumb is back at 10 o'clock and the fingers are at about 4 o'clock at the beginning of the release.

Timing is based on a four-step approach, even if you take more than four steps. The ball and foot move in the first step, the ball begins to swing back in the second step, the ball hits the top of the backswing in the third step, and the ball moves down into the release zone in the fourth step.



4 o'clock, which will produce the right amount of side roll on the ball to get it to hook. (If you look closely when watching the top players compete, you'll see most of them have their fingers at about 4 o'clock at the release.) Once the fingers get to the 4 o'clock position, the upward lift will put revolutions on the ball.

Finally, concerning wrist devices: It isn't a bad idea to use one, as long as it's the right one for you to get the action on the ball you need to compete. Start with a simple one—one that's meant simply to keep your wrist in a firm position—and move to a more specialized one only on the advice of your pro shop operator.

■ I'm a righthander, and every so often I kind of side-swipe my right leg with the ball on the downswing. This causes me to hesitate in the release, affecting my follow-through and, thus, hurting my shot. Why does this happen, and what can I do to keep it from happening again?

There are a few things that could cause you to hit your leg on the fourth step. Most likely, your timing is off: The ball probably is coming down from the top of the swing before your last step has started. If this happens, the ball is getting into the release zone before you clear your right leg behind your sliding (left) leg. The cure for this is to make your timing later by delaying the movement of the ball on your second step. Delaying the ball movement at the beginning of the approach will allow your legs to get a little further ahead of the swing, allowing your right leg to clear out of the way of the downswing.

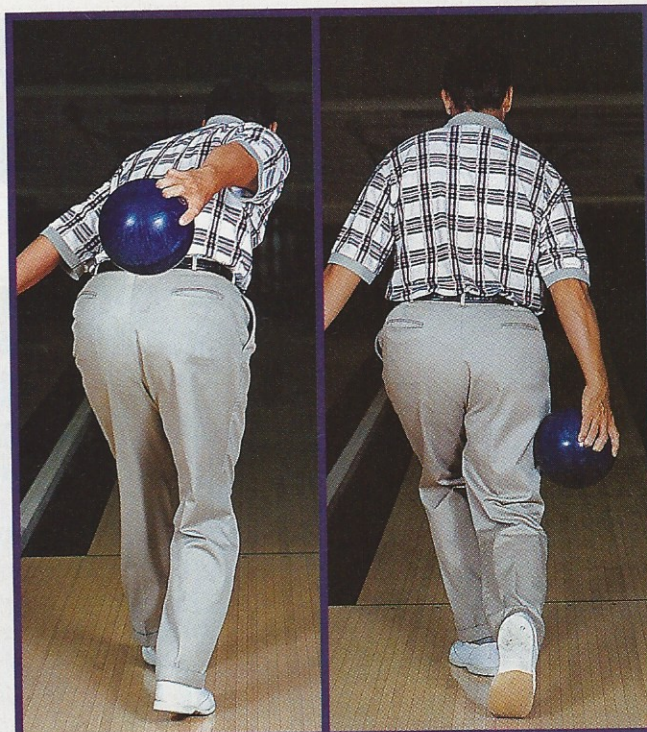
Another possible cause is that your swing could be going way behind your back in the backswing. Unless you can get your lower body out of the way of the swing, the ball could graze your leg. The problem with this type of swing is that your body has to do a lot to get out of the way of the path of the swing so the ball can drop straight from the top of the swing into the release zone. You should try to change the path of your armswing. Hold the ball a little more to the center of your body in the stance.

When you move the ball, keep it in front of your right foot so your swing goes slightly away from your body in the backswing. If you do this, more than likely the ball will move slightly inside at the top of the swing, but not as much as before. A slight loop in the swing is good, provided the swing starts slightly out and loops back in on the downswing. But if the ball goes in behind your body too early, it has to go around your body in the downswing; the swing will pop out away from your body, causing many problems in the long run. A swing that goes behind your body makes it difficult to be accurate and consistent. Without accuracy and consistency, it's difficult to play lanes correctly.

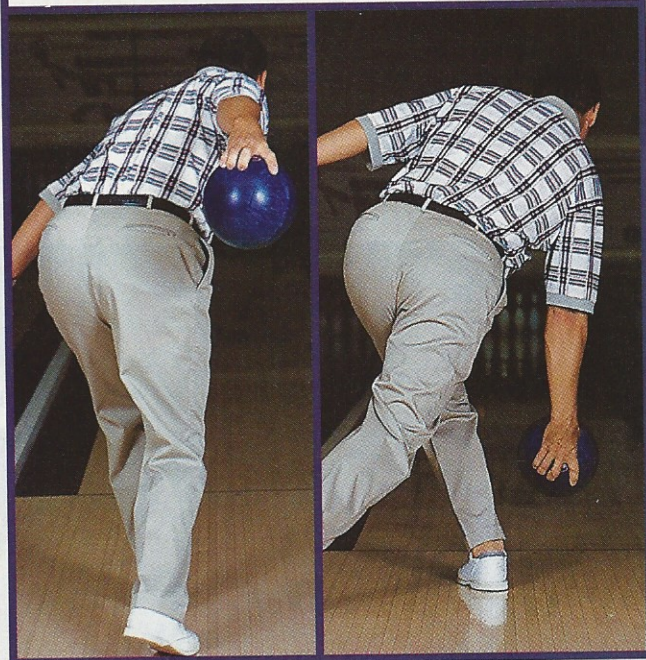
Also, look at your hips and shoulders. If your hips are parallel to the foul line and your shoulders are parallel to the floor, your lower body will be in the way of the downswing. Your hips need to be open as the ball enters the release zone; how open depends on how strong a ball you roll. You might be open from about 10 degrees all the way up to 30 degrees. Straighter players' hips should be a little less open than crankers' because of the path the ball has to travel: Crankers

roll the ball away from the pocket, so their body has to face the direction the ball is going to travel.

The hips are a very important factor in getting the ball to travel in the direction you want it to. If your hips close so



If your armswing goes behind your back in the backswing [above], it's difficult to get your lower body out of the way, and the ball could graze your leg. You need to keep your swing path clear of your body so the ball can enter the release zone unimpeded.



that they're parallel to the foul line, your shoulders also will close, causing the ball to go inside your target. When this happens, most players think they must have pulled the ball with their arm—but they'd be smart to look at their hips and shoulders as the primary culprits for missing inside. If your hips and shoulders are parallel to the foul line, you can't get your arm to swing perpendicular to the floor. If you swing on a slight inside-out path with this body position, you can hit your leg on the downswing unless your swing pops out away from the body, which you don't want it to do anyway.

■ *Over the years, the house I bowl in has been known as a "lefties' house"—thus, anytime a lefthander like me has a good night, the perception is that it's because it's a lefties' house, not necessarily because he's a good bowler. I've talked to a regional pro about this, and he says that it seems no matter where*

he goes the situation is the same. Could you shed some light on this subject, based on your experience on the pro tour?

Controversy over lane conditions always has been there and always will. I've always taken the position that you will get what you deserve in the long run. Bowling is a very difficult sport, in no small part because of the mental frustrations associated with playing lane conditions. No one can hit all lane conditions all the time. Bowling is a game of great patience; it's important to work hard on each shot you roll so you'll be in a good mental position to take advantage of things and perform at your best when all the pieces fall together.

Lefthanders often have not gotten the respect they deserve (not just in bowling, but in many sports). I think that's unfortunate and unfair, because bowlers have no control over the conditions they play on. Sometimes the lanes favor the

lefthanders, but sometimes they favor the righthanders. In today's bowling environment, lane-maintenance people have to worry not only about the lefties vs. righties situation but things like the crankers vs. the straight players, as well. It's very difficult to have equitable lane conditions all the time. The lanes may favor a certain shot right after oiling, but as play continues the conditions can and will change as the oil moves and a track develops in the oil. That's why you have to work hard on each shot—you never know when you'll have the opportunity to excel.

Personally, I recommend you do the best you can to block out the negative comments. When someone isn't doing well and he starts complaining about lane conditions to anyone who will listen, all he's trying to do is distract other players from executing their own game plan. In the long run, the best players win the most, regardless of which arm they roll the ball with. ■



Your source for quality bowling apparel and accessories.



The finest in quality and fashion, Bowling World continues to create the winning looks that keep you ahead of the game.

- ◆ Shirts, Jackets and Towels
- ◆ Customized Shirts and Embroidery
- ◆ Embroidered Applique Designs
- ◆ Awards and Gifts
- ◆ Bowling Jewelry

**For Our Free 16 Page Catalog
Call Toll Free
1-800-760-8090**

P.O. Box 2145 • Norcross, GA 30091-2145 • Fax 770-300-9228

Skor-Mor GUIDE

Get More Strikes - Spares

Improve your average—have more fun bowling!!! The Skor-Mor Guide (with 3 Velcro® adjustable straps) ties your Hand-Wrist-Arm to a rigid backbone—keeps your wrist straight and your hand behind the ball. Gives you better ball rotation and controlled hook for more pin action. The Skor-Mor is light, keeps hand dry—no sweaty palm.

U.S. Patent
3467379

FITS EITHER HAND
Regular Model
10" long, in medium & large.
Pro Model
8" long, in junior, medium, large. (Girls, women usually take junior or medium.)

Free Brochure



\$19.95

Postpaid

FAX BACK 701-225-6944
FOR FREE BROCHURE
Fax 701-227-4915

SKOR-MOR CO., Box 346-D, Dickinson, ND 58602
Phone 800-635-2695 Visa-MC & AmEx accepted

Please send _____ Skor-Mor(s) at \$19.95 each, postpaid

Size _____ Regular Model Pro Model

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Day Phone # () _____