

COACH'S CORNER: OPENING UP THE LANES

**HOLIDAY
GIFT GUIDE**
The perfect
presents
for your
favorite
bowler

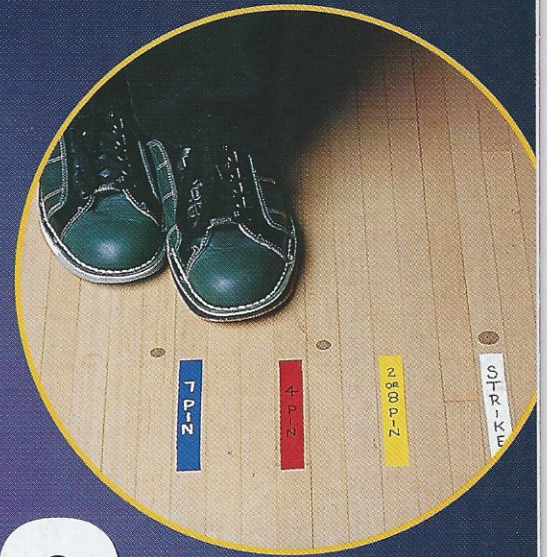
BOWLING

DIGEST[®]

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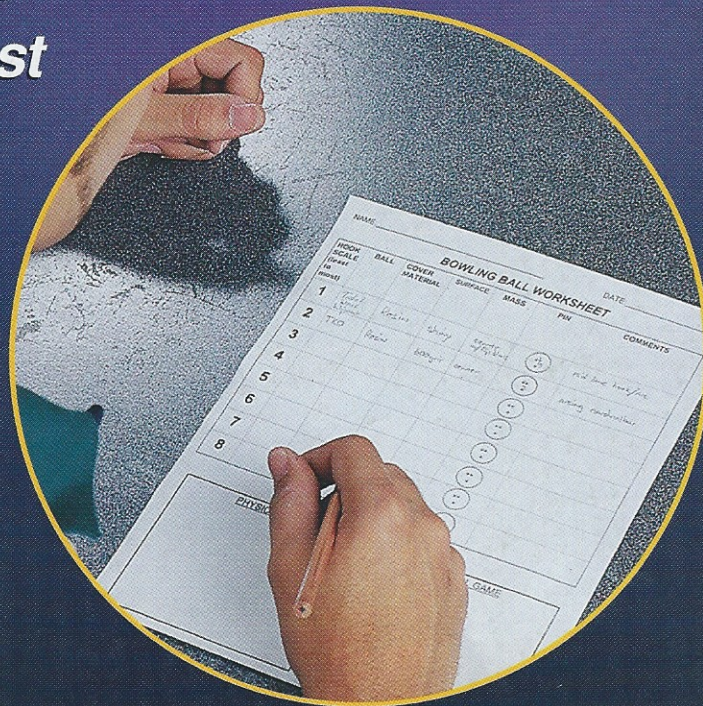
Bowl Better in 1999

*Use these New
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to strengthen your
game and boost
your scores*



PLUS

- Parker Bohn III on joining the PBA tour
- Bill Spigner's Bowling Clinic
- Interview: BPAA president Rex Haney



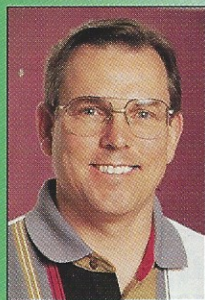
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Know How Cleaning Af

■ *I've been bowling with a reactive resin ball for two or three years. When I first started with it I was very excited, but in the past year I've been struggling with it. Now I hear reactive resin balls are good for only 90 or 100 games. Is this true?*

I bowl twice a week and every other Sunday, and I clean the ball in the ball-cleaning machine. Why should it go to pot? I'm thinking of going back to a hard plastic, which I see quite a few bowlers using.



Bowling Clinic

By BILL SPIGNER

A urethane ball's surface actually is covered with jagged points that cause it to grip the lane...



...but as those points wear down, and oil and dirt fill the spaces between, the ball will lose some of its hook.



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.

First, let's address the length of time a resin ball is good for. Some bowlers believe the resin balls are the best when they are new—the thinking is that resin balls lose some of their hooking power after some use. To a certain degree, this is true.

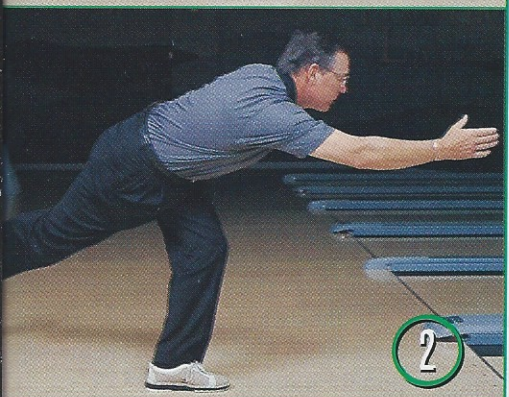
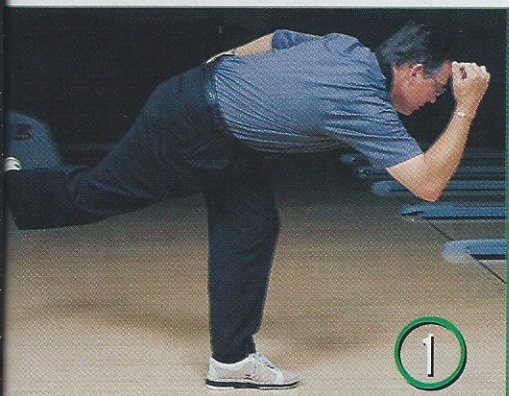
When you get a new ball, the surface will remain new for only a short period of time. I believe that after you bowl with it for a short period of time, the ball will stabilize. One reason is that the lane surface will adjust the surface of the ball. The molecular structure of resin urethane produces a surface that has jagged points, which are referred to as “teeth”; these teeth help the ball grip the lane. It's kind of like having spikes on the surface of the ball. When you bowl these points are gradually broken off, which will slightly reduce the grabbing ability of the ball. Synthetic lanes have about a 600-grit finish, so after bowling on a synthetic lane, the lane will essentially sand the surface of the ball to a 600-grit finish.

Other factors also reduce the gripping ability of the ball; for example, dirt and oil tend to fill up the valleys on the surface of the ball between the teeth. And shining the ball in one of the ball polishers at the bowling center will also reduce its hooking power. These machines wax the surface, which also fills in the pores on the ball's surface. Sometimes that's what you want for your ball, but not for a resin ball.

That said, I don't think anyone can put a definite time frame on how long a resin ball will be good for. Keep the ball clean—talk to your pro shop operator about the various cleaning materials on the market—and understand what you're doing when you polish and sand a ball. Whether you're polishing or sanding, any adjustments you make to the surface of the ball last only as long as the surface of the lane hasn't smoothed off the surface of the ball. I believe resin urethane balls will be good for far more than 90 to 99 games, and care of the ball will definitely extend the life span.

With lane oils and lane conditioning procedures changing all the time, it's easy to say the ball doesn't work anymore. What could be

ffects Your Ball



Bending too far forward in your delivery (1) forces you to pull your arm up short in your follow-through. Keeping your shoulders above your sliding knee (2) allows you to fully extend toward your target.

happening to you is the lane conditions have changed a lot. I would recommend that you get a new ball that will complement what you have. The ball you have is designed for dry lanes—your next ball should be one that will work in medium to heavy oil. This way you have one ball for dry conditions and one for heavier oil.

I'm a junior bowler with a 180 average. I've only been bowling for eight months, but I have a few problems with my game. First, I've always bent down with my back and short-armed my release, and my local pro shop operator tells me

that doing that will give me a lot of hook but no consistency. Is that true? Second, my wrist starts to ache by about the third game I bowl. I've tried a couple of wrist braces, but neither seems to keep my wrist in a flat to slightly curved position. Can you recommend a good wrist brace, preferably one with two or three adjustable positions that isn't too heavy? And last, I recently took my ball to a different pro shop, and they told me my span was too short. Could this be causing my inconsistency, rather than the first question?

Your pro shop operator is correct in saying bending too far forward is not good. When your shoulders get out in front of your sliding knee, you lose leverage. With your weight so far forward, you're in a position to lose your balance very easily. If you are in this position and try not to pull up, yet try to put a lot of lift on the ball, you're bound to be inconsistent because of the imbalanced position your body is in.

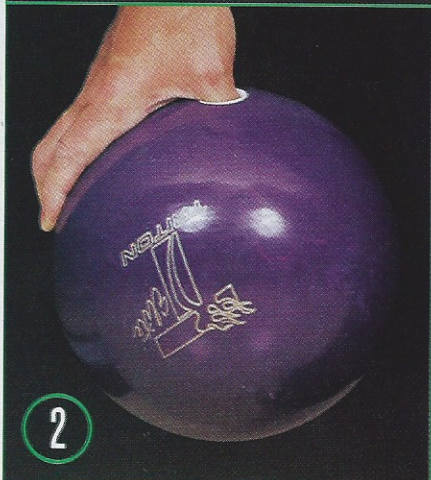
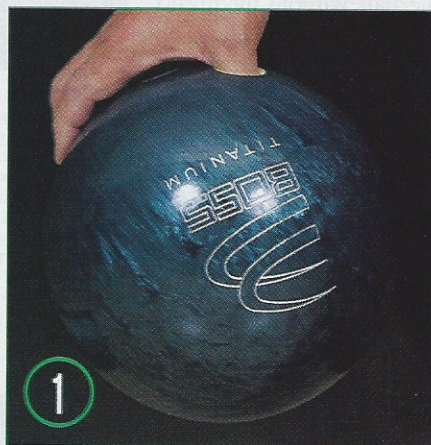
If you continue to bowl with your back bent way forward, try to release the ball with less lift; think of the hand following the ball down the lane instead of up toward the ceiling. However, if you want to change to get a big follow-through, you'll have to change the angle of your back. You'll need to get your shoulders to finish directly above your sliding knee—that way you'll be in a more balanced position and will be able to use the arm and shoulder to help the fingers lift the ball.

As far as a wrist device goes, you've already tried two of the better products on the market. There are many other good products available, but I think

you'll be chasing your tail if you're looking for a wrist device to be the solution to your problems.

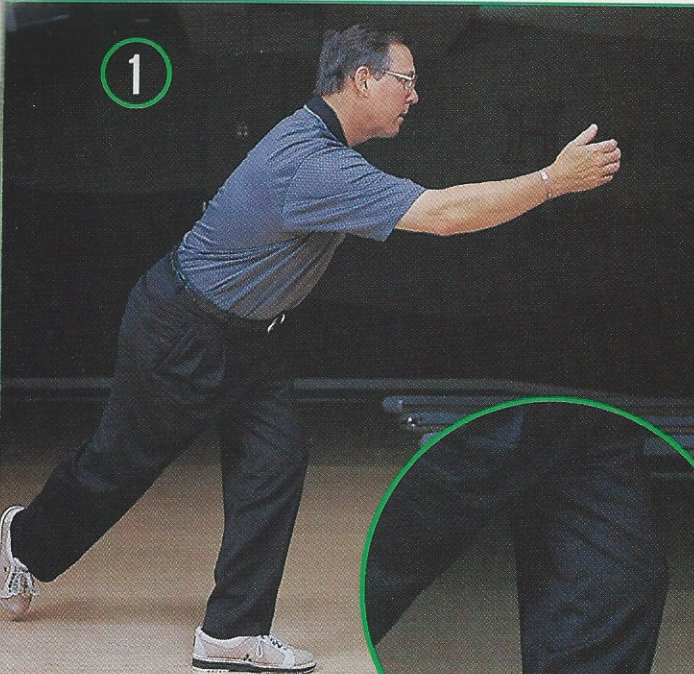
A short span on your ball may cause you to squeeze the ball hard to get a firm hand and wrist position, which could be the cause of your wrist pain. Since you're young enough to be a junior bowler, you're probably still growing. You should get your grip looked at every six months until you have stopped growing.

Another cause of your wrist problems could be how you're trying to throw the ball. For instance, if you're cupping your wrist and trying to crank the ball, that could hurt your wrist. You've already used wrist devices that are designed to allow you to get more on

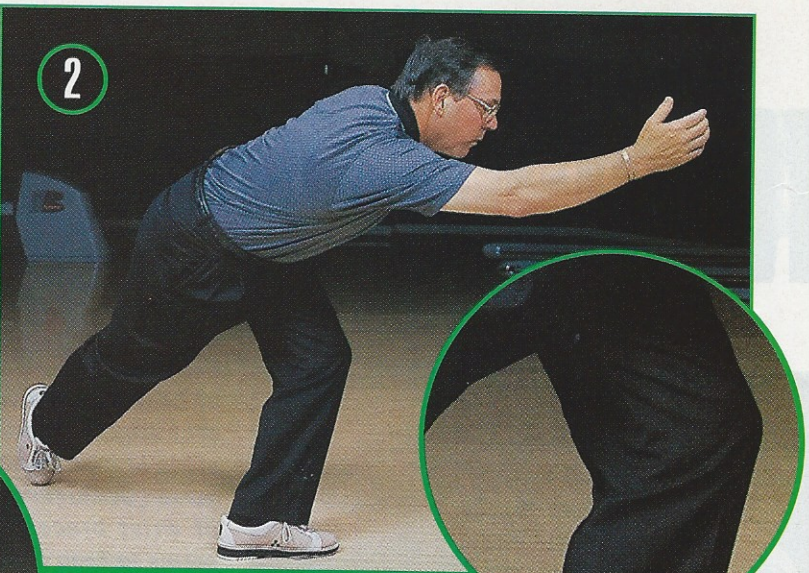


A span that's too short (1) causes you to squeeze the ball in order to hold it. When your span fits correctly (2), your hand is contoured to the surface, and your grip is firm but not tight.

1



2



If you're recovering from an injury to your sliding knee, you may want to use a more upright posture in your delivery (1), which will create less stress on the joint than the flex in a typical slide (2).

the ball without having to work hard at it. If you continue to use a wrist device, let it work for you, and do the job it was designed to do.

■ *My preferred sport is bowling—I try to bowl 40 to 50 games a week—but I recently ruptured the lower patellar ten-*

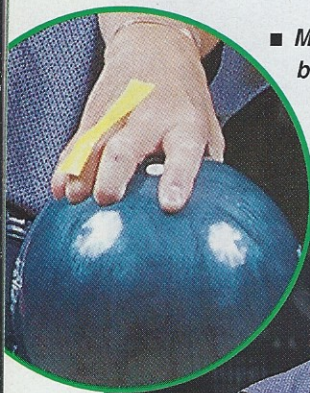
don on my sliding leg while playing basketball (the first time I'd played in three years). What changes in my game will I have to make when I return to the lanes? I've been told I'll have to adjust my approach, perhaps shortening my stride.

I'm not qualified to give medical advice; given the location of the injury, don't put a lot stress on the knee until

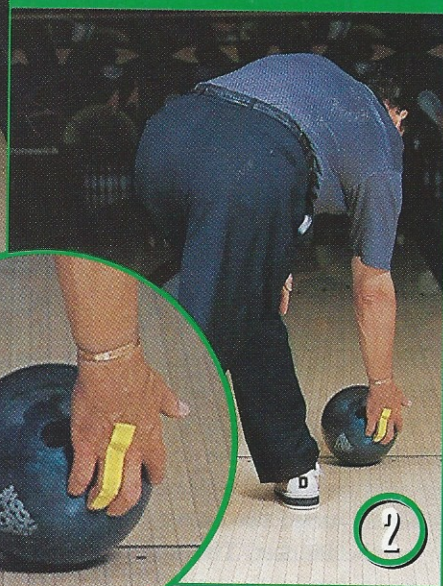
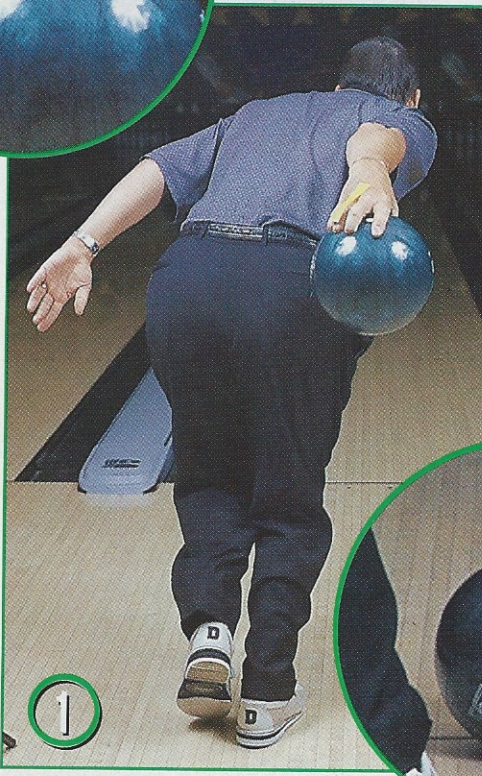
your physician gives you the go-ahead.

Once your doctor says you can start bowling, I would recommend that you start off slowly. As an initial adjustment, start further up on the approach and take shorter steps. You'll also want to use less knee bend than normal, which will help minimize the stress on the knee. Third, try to apply very little force to the swing and release, so your knee doesn't have to provide the support for a strong release.

Again, I wouldn't press to get back to bowling until your doctor says the injured area is fully healed. It's not worth reinjuring the tendon, which could keep you out for a lot longer period of time.



"Leading your downswing with your ring finger" [in yellow] helps you maintain your hand position behind the ball (1) and keep your hand and swing in line with your target (2).



■ *Please explain the concept of "leading your downswing with your ring finger."*

This is a mental reminder you can use for help with your release and accuracy. Leading with the ring finger means that from the top of the swing through the release, you picture the ring finger pointing toward your target. This can help two things: (1) keeping your hand behind the ball, and (2) keeping your hand and swing traveling in the direction of your target—the ring finger is the last finger to exit the ball—which can help your accuracy. ●