



My 10 best bowling tips

What follows are the 10 best bowling tips I've ever received or given.

1. A four-step delivery is your best choice. The three-step, four-step, or five-step deliveries are adequate when used properly. However, the four-step delivery is generally recommended for everyone, especially since timing constitutes 80 to 90 percent of an effective ball delivery. This delivery is the easiest for the natural timing of the feet to the armswing; it is smoother than the other deliveries in execution; it provides more balance than the three-step; and it is less likely to err in execution than with the five-step, which adds an extra step to be accounted for in the timing sequence.



2. Clean the bowling ball with soap and water to remove the dirt and lane conditioner. This is the cheapest tip I ever received. Soap and warm water are inexpensive and bring out the true coverstock, whereas some cleaners remain in the pores. Bowlers have put their bowling balls in the dishwasher, which I do not recommend for obvious reasons.

3. Swing the arm in, the ball goes out at release; swing the arm out, the ball goes in. This is the best tip on accuracy be-

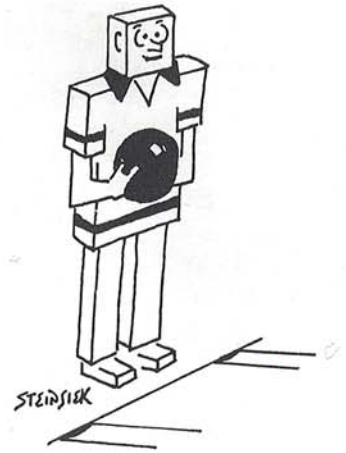
cause the ball follows the armswing, which must be straight and stay within a four-inch groove from the pushaway into the backswing and through the release of the ball and follow-through.

4. Use your strike ball to pick up a multiple-pin spare leave if the headpin is still standing.



5. Don't rush the line. The number one bowler problem nationwide is reported to be rushing the line. To prevent rushing, make the first two steps in a four-step delivery short and of equal length. A verbal cadence such as, "Short, short, and bowl," adds the desired tempo.

6. Throw your second ball first. This is a good idea for the bowler who rushes his strike ball, but it is impossible to do since the initial ball rolled is the first ball. However, there is a lot of wisdom indicated. Some overpowering bowlers would be better off if they bowled the strike ball with the same deliberate execution they do with their spare shot.



7. Be square at the line. To ensure the shoulders are squared with the hips and target for maximum leverage at the ball release, place the nonbowling hand against an imaginary fixed vertical plane at the foul line or point the nonbowling hand at the wall of the bowling center opposite the lane.

8. No drive, no five! You'll often hear this reminder when you leave the 5-pin or a combination thereof on a light-pocket hit. To help eliminate this problem, move your feet at least one board right for a right-hander and one board left for a left-hander on the next shot or add more lift, turn, or wrist in the release.

9. Speed kills! Slow down your shot. A correctly delivered ball must skid through the heads (the early section of the lane), roll in the pines (the middle section), and take or hook in the last 20 feet of the lane. Too much speed makes the ball skid too far beyond the arrows and prevents the ball from rolling or hooking at the appropriate locations on the lane. Also, a fast ball does not encourage mixing of the pins as well as a slower ball.

10. If the ball goes left of the target, move your feet left; if the ball goes right, move your feet right. By adjusting your starting stance in the direction of the target miss, you will accurately center in on your target.

Harlin Matkins is a retired Naval architect, a certified instructor and graduate of Dick Ritger's Bowling Academy for Instructors, and a certified youth and bowling development instructor for Bowl America.

Illustrations by Walt Steinsiek