

How To Clean Your Bowling Balls

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In this tip, learn the four-part cleaning process (every shot, daily, deep, resurface) and when to use it. This will help keep your bowling equipment in top condition. If you are dedicate to excellence, then you need to follow this tip.

Today's bowling ball surfaces are very different from those in the past. Today, you have the choice of many coverstock materials: plastic, urethane, solid reactive, pearlized reactive, particle pearl, solid particle, epoxy, etc. Each surface has a different roll characteristic. As a bowler, you probably have a plastic bowling ball. This surface is very hard. Oil stays on the cover. When the ball rolls down the lane, a plastic ball will skid very far. As it picks-up lane oil, the oil stays on the surface and much of it is transferred down the lane when it hits friction or the dry part of the lane. But, other bowling balls are different than plastic.

Reactive Resin bowling balls actually have many holes, little caverns, in the cover. These holes help the ball to skid more. And, a special additive inside the cover actually helps to absorb oil into cover into these caverns. This keeps the surface drier when it leaves the oil. Thus, you normally see a skid + snap reaction with a reactive bowling ball. But, here is the bad news. Oil absorption is accompanied by a weakened ball reaction. After 50 to 75 games, you will notice that the backend reaction of this bowling ball is diminished. To restore the ball reaction, you have to clean the ball frequently.

For comparison, a particle bowling ball has small beads added to the coverstock material. This is why the particle ball tends to arc more. The beads on the cover dig into the oil and provide more traction. Consequently, a particle bowling ball is like a snow tire. These cover stocks require a significant amount of maintenance, far more than bowling balls did in the past. But, it isn't a difficult process. Simply put, you must give your bowling balls a bath to retain their original reaction.

One part of this cleaning process is what I refer to as a deep clean. A little known secret is the fact that you can actually use liquid dish detergent to deep clean your bowling balls. Seriously! To complete a deep clean, use a dish washing detergent with a degreasing agent in it. Simply check on the label and be sure it is has a degreaser. Most do. Since the detergent, used to clean you dishes, has a degreaser in it, the soap can literally help remove oil from the cover. You should conduct a deep cleaning of your bowling balls after every 75 games. For most bowlers, this will be a monthly process. For those of you who train three or more times each week, this could be as frequent as every two weeks.

1. Begin by filling a bucket with warm water and a teaspoon of the detergent. Be sure that the water is only warm and not too hot, hot temperature can damage the cover.
2. Place the bowling ball in the warm soapy water and let it soak for 15 minutes.
3. After 15 minutes, wipe the ball dry with a dry clean towel. Drain the water and repeat the entire process two more times, for a total of three baths. You will be truly amazed at how much ball reaction was restored with this deep cleaning process. Like all champions, if you want to be great you must pay attention to the details. As I always say, greatness is in the details. Happy bowling with a newly restored bowling ball!

Ball Maintenance Process Be sure to wipe the ball off prior to each shot. This helps with roll consistency but also keeps the oil from absorbing into the cover.

After each bowling session, use a cleaner to clean your reactive or particle bowling balls. Some good cleaners include Knock Out and Ebonite's Powerhouse.

After 75 games, clean the ball with liquid detergent as discussed in this article. Do this again at 150 and 225 games. In addition, it is time to wash your bowling towel as well. Wow, does that stink!

After about 250 games, it is time to resurface or purchase a new bowling ball. Visit your pro shop to discuss the options.