

Keys to Success: The Physical Game

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Saturday, 23 September 2006
Last Updated Saturday, 23 September 2006

This article, from the June 2006 Cornerstone, provides insight into the important keys to success associated with the physical game.

Keys to Success: The Physical Game The Foundation (Kegel), The Cornerstone, June 2006

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Bowling is an activity that appeals to the masses for several reasons. One of those reasons is that it can be played for (basically) your entire life. It is a game that a grandparent can play with his/her grandchild. It can be viewed as a "recreation" by those who merely play it for fun. It can also be played as a major "Sport" for those who are talented enough to take it to that level. In order to improve your game to whatever level you are seeking, you must develop some basic, necessary, fundamentals that allow you to be able to be consistent and repeat good shots. Each and every fundamental that you develop will help you to improve your average. A quick review of any top Professional (male or female) will reveal strong "Physical Game" fundamentals.

Those basic Physical fundamentals are: **The Set-Up:** A good set-up will put you in a starting position that allows you to be consistent with your first step. Your knees should be slightly bent to assume a solid, athletic stance. **Pushaway:** When pushing the ball away, it is highly recommended that you take your first step at the exact same time. You need your legs to help you support the weight of the moving ball.

Armswing: You should allow the ball to swing freely from your shoulder in a pendulum type arc. The weight of the ball should dictate the height of your backswing, with no muscling of it.

Release: It is recommended that you start with your hand under the ball in an attempt to help support that weight. At point of release, the thumb comes out first and your fingers lift the ball out onto the lane. The amount of turn imparted usually does vary greatly among all bowlers.

Timing: As you push the ball away into your arm-swing, your footwork should match each part of that swing, i.e., push-away = 1st step; downswing = 2nd step; back-swing = 3rd step; down-swing = 4th step and release. The legs must help with each and every part of your swing. **Balance:** Balance MUST be developed throughout the entire approach to the foul-line, AND after you deliver the ball. If you can't control yourself, you can't possibly control the ball.

Head Still: In order to have consistent accuracy, you MUST be able to keep your eye on your target. If your head is moving around, then it is like trying to hit a "moving" target. **Knee Bend :** Having a good knee bend at point of release is essential for maintaining proper leverage. A good knee bend enables you to have more power and also helps your balance.

Follow Through: "Following-Through" to your target is a must. If you have good balance, you will be able to maintain your follow-through as your ball travels down the lane and hits the pins.

Square to Target: At point of release, your body should be square to your target. If your hips are square to your target at point of release, chances are that you WILL hit that target. As mentioned in a previous column, we highly recommend that you find a qualified Coach to help you. Another set of eyes can be of enormous help when trying to improve your game