

Experimental Tip # 1: Thumb in First to Reduce Grip Pressure

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Read about an experiment to help reduce your grip pressure. Can you imagine putting your thumb in the ball first? Well, you might be surprised at the results. This can be very effective in playing the extreme outside on short patterns or when you want to create a more consistent reaction.

EXPERIMENTAL TIP # 1: Thumb in First to Reduce Grip Pressure

Sometimes, effective practice comes out of experimentation. As soon as Tommy Jones discussed placing his thumb in his thumb hole before his fingers, I was very curious. What I found was a very effective method to reduce grip pressure and ensuring a cleaner/softer release, especially effective on the outside part of the lane for shorter patterns. So, give it a try. As with every experiment, be patient and watch the ball reaction as well as paying attention to the feel.

The next time you practice give it a try. Throw some regular, fingers in first, shots initially to warm-up. Pay attention to the ball reaction. Then, try the following experiment. I would recommend playing the outside part of the lane but this is not necessary.

- Put your thumb in the ball first
- Next, place your finger in to the first joint (this will feel odd initially). Try to relax as you are shifting your fingers into the holes.
- Now, completely relax your hand with the objective to reducing the finger and hand pressure as much as possible
- Literally, say to yourself, "my hand is relaxed"
- As you begin to work with this, keep the hand relaxed through the push and swing

Let me know how it worked for you. Remember, this is an experiment. What I discovered was a method to keep the hand quiet on more challenging lane conditions leading to a cleaner release and more ball reaction. This will be very effective on short patterns as well as playing drier conditions when you want to reduce the jumpiness of your reaction.