Bowling Attire

Athletes must wear appropriate clothing to train and complete successfully. Inappropriate clothing can impact an athlete's ability to bowl and, in some cases, may be a safety hazard. Almost any type of clothing is acceptable in a bowling center. Comfort and freedom of movement are the determining factors in selecting what to wear when bowling. Because bowling involves a lot of movement, loose fitting apparel, especially across the shoulders and under the arms, is best as long as it does not interfere with the motion of the arms and the legs. Remember, just keep it loose.

Although bowling does not require uniforms, you may want to have all bowlers in the program wear the same bowling shirt or, if you form teams, have each team wear different shirts. Wearing a specific shirt for bowling often instills a sense of pride in the athlete and may provide the athlete with motivation to train even harder.



DRESS LIKE A WINNER! --- PLAY LIKE A WINNER!

Bowling Shoes

Bowling shoes are required and are made for both right-handed and left-handed bowlers. Each pair of shoes is designed to allow sliding and braking, one shoe for each purpose. The shoe on the sliding foot- typically left for right-hand bowlers and right for left-handed bowlers—is soled with leather or similar material that will permit athletes to slide easily to finish their delivery. Since the task of the non-sliding foot during the approach and at the finish is to provide traction and braking, the shoe on that foot has a sole made of rubber or another high-friction material. Most bowling centers provide rental shoes which have a padded toe sole on both shoes for use by right- or left-handed bowlers.





Coaching Tip

- ❑ Coaches need to periodically check the athlete's shoes and ball to ensure they still meet the athlete's needs. Make sure that shoes are neither worn down nor have holes in them. In addition, make sure that the ball is free of chips and fits the bowler.

Bowling Equipment

It is important for athletes to be able to recognize and understand how equipment works and impacts their performance for the specific events. Have your athletes name each piece of equipment as you show it, and give the use for each. To reinforce this, have athletes select the equipment used for their events as well.

Athlete Readiness

- Understands where to locate shoes and ball
- Asks appropriate person for correct bowling shoe size
- Selects appropriate weight for a ball
- Wears clothing that is comfortable and provides freedom of movement
- Returns bowling ball and shoes to appropriate places after game

Bowling Ball

A properly fitted bowling ball is essential. The most important factors in finding the right ball are appropriate fit and proper weight. The fit or the grip of the ball is determined by the size of the finger and thumbholes and the span between them. The most common grip is called the conventional grip and will be used by most athletes. This grip allows the bowler to insert the two middle fingers up to the second joint, and the thumb completely.



The fingers and thumb should fit relaxed and loose inside the holes and also touch the inside of the ball all the way around. The athlete should test the fit by lightly swinging the ball at arms length. The "span" between the finger holes and the thumbhole allows full extension of the hand between the second joint of the fingers and the thumb when placed in the holes. This conventional grip is found in most "house balls"- balls that can be used for free at most bowling centers. Although this is the least expensive means of bowling, house balls are very generic so that both right- and left-handed bowlers can use them. Intermediate and advanced bowlers need to seek out their own equipment.





Semi-fingertip and fingertip grips can also be used for more advanced bowlers. Both grips allow the thumb to be inserted completely and the fingers to either the first joints, fingertip or between the first and second joints (semi-fingertip). Adaptations, such as allowing holes to be drilled for all four fingers and the thumb for a better grip, can be made for physically challenged (i.e., those with weak hands, wrists or fingers). Inserts, normally made of rubber, can also be used to provide additional gripping.

The weight of the ball will be determined by the bowler's physical makeup. A very generalized gauge is that adult males often choose 14- to 16-pound balls; adult females, 10- to 14-pound balls; and youth, a wide range of 6- to 14-pound balls. A well-balanced swing is a good indication that ball weight is correct. For example, during the back swing, if the ball is too heavy, it will cause the shoulder to dip and pull the body off balance. If the bowler consistently drops the ball at the foul line or lofts the ball onto the lane, the ball is not properly fitted.

Ball speed can be an indication of proper weight. Decrease of speed toward the end of a session may mean the ball is too heavy. Often, when scores begin to decrease toward the end of a session, this is a sign that the ball is too heavy. The material and degree of hardness of the ball determine proper use on different lane conditions, the type of roll a bowler throws, and the way the ball impacts the pins. The ball cannot weigh more than 16 pounds. There are no minimum weight restrictions; however, some ball return machines have difficulty returning lighter balls. Balls generally range from 6- to 16-pounds. Some bowling centers have a "pro shop" staff, which can offer further advice and assistance.

It is recommended that athletes have their own ball if possible. This will provide the athlete with a ball that is the proper weight and fit for their hand. For many Special Olympics athletes, the most important consideration for bowling properly is having enough strength to hold the ball. Selecting a properly weighted house ball often results in the finger holes and span being too small for the athlete. Having their own equipment—bag, ball and shoes— is also a great source of pride for the athletes. Work with your local bowling center or pro shop to accomplish the goal of all athletes having their own balls. For little or no charge, they will often take donated balls and plug and re-drill them to fit your athletes.

Bowling Bag

Bowling bag is used for storage of own ball.

Rosin Bag

Rosin bag is used to provide athlete with dry hands.

Bowling Towel

Bowling towel is used to wipe dirt, oil off of ball to keep it clean.

General Bowling Equipment List At-A-Glance

Bowling Bag
Rosin Bag
Bowling Towel
Bowling Shoes

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