

Warm-Up - Part II

This month concludes our look into the warming up before bowling. If this is your first issues, or the first time you have read this column, review last issue for the initial introduction to bowling-specific warm-up, then proceed to this article.

The following Bowling-Specific Warm-Up Routine is comprised of two stages lasting a few shorts minutes each. To apply warm-up as an effective part of your preparation for bowling, take the time to arrive at the bowling center 20-30 minutes before your league or practice session. Without giving it or yourself ample amount of time to warm-up, you will only hurry yourself through it often neglecting it or the importance of doing it correctly.

I know the idea of warm-up may have never crossed your mind, or if it has, only for a brief moment, or a passing liberal notion. I also understand warm-up may be intimidating and uncomfortable as compared to what you are currently customary. People will look at you differently until they are accustomed to your undying desire to become a bowler-athlete. We know for a fact, society generally resists change, and views it as often unordinary and unusual. Look how long it took the Internet to be recognized for what it is today. Warm-up has been shunned by our sport for decades, and I for one want to do something about it. If you watch me bowl, or any of my students, you will generally see a similar pattern between all of us as we take warm-up a little more seriously. I hope you will do the same.

I think back to my first year or two writing about the "bowler-athlete" concept and sport specific training. When I first started using the term "bowler-athlete" it was viewed as different and unconventional. Then, as sport and sport science began, over the past decade or two, to really impact society, we, as a bowling community, began to embrace the bowler-athlete concept beyond a fad or some form of unique terminology.

So folks, here it is. Bowling-specific warm-up. Take this routine and practice it at home. Practice it when you practice, before you train in the gym, as you prepare for league, and ingrain it as part of your everyday preparation method.

The Bowling-Specific Warm-Up Routine

Stage I - Limbering

The first stage, **Limbering**, is a three to five minute loosening period designed to increase body temperature and joint lubrication. A slight increase in your body temperature enables blood to flow more rapidly and your joints to become lubed, limbered, and ready for the next phase.

To limber yourself, spend 3-5 continuous minutes engaging in very light vigorous activity. Try arms circles for starters. Start with small circles and then widen them as you go along. Switch directions about 30 seconds to one minute into it (Diagram II). Try lightly jogging in place, brisk walking, simulated rope jumping, ½ squats (Diagram I), stair climbing, soft jumping jacks, high knees (Diagram III), or even simulated rowing. Begin your chosen movement slowly, then as you start to limber, build and increase the intensity gradually. After 3-5 of mixing up your limbering activities, progress to stage two.

Stage II - Bowling-Specific Stretching

The second stage is a stretching phase. Bowling related stretches are performed for about 3-5 minutes in an effort to further refine the warm-up routine. These stretches address the major muscle groups activated while bowling. Perform each stretch using the static stretching principle. Slowly take the stretch to your farthest pain-free range of motion, hold for 15-30 seconds, then slowly relax to your original position.

1) Hip/Hamstring - lay on your back. Using both legs simultaneously, flex the hip joint and begin to bring the legs into the chest and stomach area. Place each hand behind the same side knee joint slightly pulling to bring the legs further up and into the upper body. Maintain constant contact between the lower back and the floor.

2) Lower Back/Abdominals - lay on your back. Using both legs simultaneously, bring them straight up to a 90-degree position perpendicular to the floor. Slowly shift both legs to one side (L or R) allowing the trunk to rotate. Continue rotating and relax both legs to the floor.

3) Calves - stagger your feet 1-2 feet apart. Supporting yourself on your front leg, slowly lean forward stretching the calf muscle of the rear leg. As you lean forward, keep both feet flat on the ground. (Diagram IV)

4) Shoulder/Rotator Cuff - move one arm at a time across the front of the chest cavity. Use the opposite hand and press on the triceps muscle behind the elbow joint stretching the rear head of the shoulder. (Diagram V)

5) Wrists/Forearm - stretching the flexor first, extend the arm fully in front of the body. Using the opposite hand apply pressure to the palm stretching the wrist into the relaxed extended position. Once the stretch is completed, immediately turn the palms down and stretch the forearm extensors by placing pressure onto the top of the hand. (Diagram VI & VII)

There you have it, a more complete Bowling-Specific Warm-Up Routine. The only one of its kind. I know it may sound corny, but let's consider it worthy of our attention. If you have questions or want to learn more about bowling and sport science, pick up a copy of The Bowling-Specific Training Program Manual from www.briggsconsulting.com and begin to educate yourself on how sport science can aid your bowling. ***One last thing, always consult your doctor or physician before beginning this or any other activity program.***