

## Managing Your Spare Game

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With all the emphasis being placed on power and striking in today's modern game, spare shooting sometimes takes a back seat. In some cases, disappears altogether. There is no doubt in my mind that good spare shooting abilities are a must for anyone who wishes to have any success in this sport. It's important to practice even the easiest spares on a regular basis to ensure that when the time comes, you'll be ready to fill those frames. Here are some tips on how to do just that.

First of all, the best way to approach any single pin spare is to go directly for it. Learning how to throw a straight ball to certain areas of the lane will increase your spare percentages immediately. Some bowlers like to use a "spare ball", which is generally plastic, which goes much straighter than regular [urethane](#) or resin. Also, learning to straighten your wrist, and not "hitting" the ball at the bottom of your swing will take away a good amount of spin and revolutions on your ball, allowing it to go even straighter. Next time you go practice, try using this technique, and targeting different areas of the lane, imagine you have a 4 pin, or an 8 pin, or 9 pin, etc. and see how many times you can get the ball to go straight to that pin. It might take a little time to determine where to position yourself for each pin, but that's what practice is for to begin with. It isn't about scoring as much as you can in practice.

Also, do not take spares for granted. Take your time and think about what you're doing before you step onto the lanes for your spare. Those pins aren't going anywhere, and taking a couple extra seconds to organize your thoughts will help prevent making careless mistakes.

Finally, while practicing before league, or even a tournament, take a couple balls and shoot at the 7 pin (10 pin for lefties), to see what kind of reaction you get going across the lane. This will avoid any surprises during the game if you have to go cross alley at any spares. It's all part of preparation, having as much information as possible before starting competition will give you a leg up when the arrows come up.

Ideally, we'd all like to strike every time we step on the lanes. Realistically, we know that isn't going to happen. Knowing what to do on that second ball will help avoid needless opens, and in turn raise your average. Remember the motto, "Strike for show, spare for dough." :)