

How Do You Get The Weight?

Almost every book written about bowls gives lots of information about how you get the green, but information on getting the weight is very scarce. The internet is not helpful. In the 'YouTube Coaching Index', I wrote for my newsletter, I found only one video on the subject.

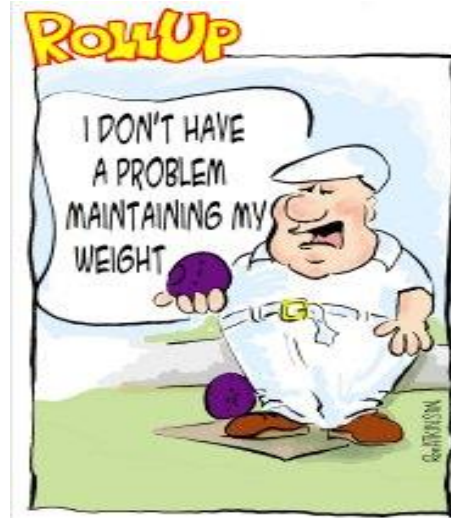
Here are quotes from one current and two older sources.

Bowls Australia Club Coach Manual

It can take hours of practice (or even years) to master finding the correct weight. To adjust the weight of a delivery lock in the feeling of how it felt when the bowl left your finger. Some of the ways to achieve this are.

- *Have a conscious memory of the level of effort and momentum placed on the bowl, then bowl harder or softer or the same depending on the result.*
- *Increase or decrease the length of backswing.*
- *Use bodyweight by quickening or slowing your tempo when you step forward into the shot"*

You can purchase this manual from the Bowls Australia online store.



'Bowls -the Textbook of the Game' (R T Harrison)

Throughout his book, Harrison places great emphasis on grooving the delivery and there is no doubt he is right about this. If your delivery is not grooved there is no chance of achieving small variations in weight.

"Length, strength, touch, control of the bowl comes with practice. To secure these essentials a foundation or grounding has to be carefully prepared."

'Bowling Along' (Glynn Bosisto)

Bosisto emphasizes the necessity for lots of solo practice. He admits that he was probably considered unfriendly by some members of his clubs because of this preference.

On the matter of weight control, he rejects mechanical methods.

"I believe the principle of close bowling is not governed by the length of step but by the timing, propulsion, and spin given by arm wrist and fingers at the precise moment of delivery. Success, too, stems from the action of grooming all movements to enable the same delivery every time."

'Winning Bowls (John Snell)

Snell is a strong advocate of visualization. His web site is a must for those using this method.

Almost all of us, believe it or not, already use visualization. To get our correct line we imagine the path the bowl will take and from that path we decide on the amount of "green" required for our bowl to finish on the jack.

Whether you're able to practice regularly or not (and practice is of the utmost importance) spend plenty of time in mental practice by vividly imagining yourself, not only delivering the perfect bowl but also seeing yourself, in every possible detail, as being successful, playing the greatest game of your life and winning the match or tournament upon which you have set your goal. It's up to you.

The books give no clear methods to enable you to vary your weight at will, but they all agree about this.

“To achieve weight control, you must have a well-grooved delivery”.

Learning Weight Control

When you believe that your delivery is well-grooved, here are some methods you might try to improve your weight control

- **Alter the Length of your step.** This will happen automatically when you have mastered weight control, but if you do it consciously you will almost certainly not be able to make small changes.
- **Bowl from further forward or back on the mat.** The idea behind this is that you can alter your weight by the amount you move. A good idea but it is likely to upset your groove.
- **Increase the amplitude of your pendulum swing** by changing the height of your bowling hand at the start of your delivery.

Terminology Must be Used Carefully



Altering the amplitude of your swing - The 'look at the corner of the mat' method

I used to use this. In my stance position, in the middle of the mat, with my toes 20-30cm from the front, I would look down to the front corner of the mat and raise or lower my bowling arm, lining up points on the bowl, wrist, or arm. The closer the line of sight is to the front of the bowl the lower the arm position, the shorter the backswing, and the shorter the bowl.

There is no doubt this works - try bowling three consecutive bowls looking at the corner of the mat through your wrist, the back of the bowl, and the front of the bowl. The problem is that the variations achieved by this method are not small enough to allow high-level competition on fast greens.

For a beginner I still believe this is a good way to get reasonable weight. To get your control of weight up to the standard required for high level you need to follow the instructions on the next page and undertake many hours of solo practice.

'Training Your Brain' is the way to go!

Whatever method you use, you must train your brain to allow you to minutely vary the speed at which you release the bowl. This can only come about through meticulous practice.

Here are some suggestions on how to improve weight control by training your brain.