

Lawn Bowling Drills

Weight Control Exercises

1. The 4-Jack Drill.

Place one jack each at the far 2-meter mark and at each hog line, centering them and placing a chalk mark under them.

Place the mat at the near 2-meter mark. (If you are unfamiliar with the rink, you may wish to bowl 4 trial ends, 16 bowls total, to decide which side of this rink you wish to play.)

Decide which side of the rink you will play, and draw 2 bowls to the short jack, and 2 to the long jack.

Pick up the mat, place the 4th jack at the 2-meter mark you are leaving, and go the other end, gathering all 4 bowls there.

Scoring is simple: 1 point for every bowl within 1 foot (you may wish to increase this to 2 feet if the green is 14 second pace or faster); no points for anything else.

At the other end, for the play back, play the same side of the rink, again 2 short and 2 long, and again keep score. Now, in one round trip, you have played 2 short and 2 long on both BH and FH. Play at least 10 ends (5 RT's or 40 bowls). 10 RTs (20 ends or 80 bowls) is better but time-consuming.

Total up your points and calculate your percentage of success.

This exercise accomplishes many good things. It gives you an organized and purposeful exercise. It will identify any temporary weakness in your drawing. It will give you a baseline for improvement. It will give you confidence on the mat. Do this for at least a year if you aren't already doing so. Whether or not you persevere with this training, with time you will see what you could do in the past. When you get onto the mat in a crucial situation, you will have input on what your success ratio will be.

If wished, the weather and green conditions may be recorded. Environmental factors will affect the scores. The truly dedicated will also try to attempt to practice under adverse conditions, like when ill, and in rain weather. Major events are often held during adverse weather conditions. If your scores are significantly worse in wet weather, you need to learn how to bowl well in the wet.

2. Adding/Subtracting Weight.

Place/cast the jack somewhere beyond the hog line. Roll your first bowl past the jack. (No penalty for a short first bowl, except that you must go down and retrieve it immediately. This will give you time to reflect on what went wrong in your computer for the first bowl.)

With each successive bowl, try to add one yard. You will see how successful you are when you go the other end for the return trip.

Coming back, place/cast a long jack. Try to leave the first bowl short of the jack. Try to take one yard off each successive bowl.

Advanced drill: Cast/place the jack. First bowl and third bowls slightly past the jack, second and fourth bowls slightly short of the jack. Personal variations are also useful. (Don't make this drill any easier.)

RATIONALE: In Drill 1, you are practicing the minimum and maximum original lengths. Any length in between will take care of itself. Drill 2 teaches weight adjustment on a relative basis rather than on an absolute basis.

3. Drawing - Reproducibility.

Roll first bowl approximately 80'.

Attempt to make as tight a head as possible with the remaining 3 bowls, using the same hand. (The marker should pick up any {and replace} bowls which may stop the delivered bowl.)

Scoring:

Every bowl within 1' = +5 pts.

Every bowl within 3' of the original bowl = -5 pts.

No score for bowls between 1' and 3' from the jack.

Total possible points for this drill: +15 to -15 pts

Repeat drill using opposite hand.

4. Drawing - GCL.

Set jack at approximately 80'.

Roll all 4 bowls, same hand. (The marker should pick up {and replace} any bowls which may stop the delivered bowl.)

Scoring:

Every bowl within 1' = +5 pts.

Every bowl within 3' of the original bowl = -5 pts.

No score for bowls between 1' and 3' from the jack.

Total possible points for this drill: +20 to -20 pts.

Repeat drill using opposite hand.

5. Yard On.

No jack, roll the first bowl approximately 80', it becomes the target.

Try to roll the remaining 3 bowls exactly 4' past.

Scoring:

Jack high (delivered bowl and target are even) to 3' past = +3 pts.

3' to 6' past = +5 pts.

More than 6' past, or short of target = -5 pts.

Total possible points for this drill: +15 to -15 pts.

Repeat drill using opposite hand.

6. Resting Takeout.

Place jack at approximately 80', with friendly bowls:

a) On the right, jack high, 14" away

b) 14" short and 14" to the right

Place opposing shot bowl 12" away o left.

Roll all 4 bowls on the forehand (for RH bowlers), attempting to rest the shot bowl with a yard of weight.

Reconstruct head after each bowl, if necessary.

Scoring:

Take out bowl and stay within 12" of the jack = +5 pts.

Take out bowl not within 12" of the jack = +3 pts.

Miss narrow of the head or through the gap = +1 pt.

More than 6' heavy, or don't reach jack high, or take out own jack high bowl, or miss everything wide = -5 pts.

Promote own short bowl for the shot = +1 pt.

Total possible points for this drill: +20 to -20 pts.

7. Min/Max Length.

Place one jack each at the far 2-meter mark and at the hog line, centering them and placing a chalk mark under them.

Place the mat at the near 2-meter mark.

Draw 2 bowls to the short jack, and 2 to the long jack, on the right side of the rink (FH for right-handers).

Scoring:

Each bowl within 1' of jack = +5 pts.

Each bowl within 2' of jack = +3 pts.

Total possible points for 8 bowls = +40 pts.

Bring the bowls back to the same mat position, and repeat, using the left side of the rink, scoring similarly.

(Skip the other hand if the rink doesn't play well – go to the opposite end and play back, using the good side which will be the opposite hand.)

8. Drawing a Position Bowl.

Place jack approximately 80'

Make a small chalk mark 6' past the jack and 1' to the side.

Make another small chalk mark 1' on the other side of the jack.

(These spots should not be visible from the mat.)

Roll 2 bowls FH and 2 more BH to the spots, attempting to be wide of the jack when passing it.

Scoring:

1' or closer to the target = +5 pts.

Narrow, through the head, or shorter than 3' from the spot = -5 pts.

All other bowls – no score.

Total possible points = +20 to -20 pts.

9. Drawing to the Ditch.

Place the opposing bowl at the 2-meter mark, and the jack in the ditch on the center mark.

Bowl to get the shot, either hand.

Scoring:

Get the shot = +5 pts.

Delivered bowl in the ditch = no score.

Delivered bowl past the opposing bowl, but not shot = +2 pts.

Delivered bowl short of the opposing bowl = -5 pts.

Total possible points = +20 to -20 pts.

10. Occluded Draw.

Place jack approximately 80', and place a bowl in the draw on each hand, on the running surface and headed toward the jack, 4' short and 2' to the side.

Draw to the jack, stating your intentions as to whether the attempt is outside (wide) of the bowl, or inside (narrow) of the bowl. 2 bowls each FH and BH.

Scoring:

Every bowl within 1' = +5 pts. (no penalty for touching the short bowl)

More than 3' short or long, or "wooded out" = -5 pts.

Bowls more than 1' away but less than 3' away from the jack = no score.

Trailing the jack more than 1' = -5 pts.

Total possible points = +20 to -20 pts.

11. Promotions.

Place jack approximately 80', and place a bowl in the draw on each hand, on the running surface and headed toward the jack, 2' short.

Playing 2 FH and 2 BH, attempt to promote the short bowl within 1' of the jack.

Scoring:

Promote target bowl to 1' of the jack = +5 pts.

Promote target bowl, but more than 1' from jack and not heavy = +2 pts.

Miss bowl and hit jack, or promote bowl farther than 3' past the jack, or more than 3' heavy, or short of target bowl = -5 pts.

Miss everything with enough weight to reach target bowl and not more than 3' heavy = no score.

Total possible points = +20 to -20 pts.

12. DRIVING.

Set up target frame at approximately 80'.

Drive 2 bowls FH, 2 bowls BH.

Scoring:

Hit target = +5 pts.

Pass between jack and either side bowl = +2 pts.

Don't reach backboard in bounds - -5 pts.

Hit frame of target = -5 pts.

Total possible points = +20 to -20 pts.

NOTES:

Some of these drills are difficult on a fast green. Conversely, they can be very easy on a slow green. For practice purposes, the distances can be adjusted to provide a truer measure of success. On a very fast green (15+ seconds), some tactics, like the yard on or the resting takeout, simply do not exist and are only accidents when occurring in a game. Practice on a very fast green should be only drawing and driving, as no other good short selections are available. There are very few greens in N. American which exceed 15 seconds, but the southern hemisphere has many.

Practice in the U.S. should, for the most part, be conducted on the fastest and truest greens available, except for the firm shots (overweight takeouts and promotions), which optimally should be practiced on medium pace greens, 12 to 14 seconds.

OTHER USEFUL DRILLS.

DRAW TO A HIDDEN JACK is extremely useful mentally. It gives confidence when the situation arises. Remember, bowls that are short of the jack and on the center line are helpers, not blocks. Just like wide bowls which are considered "elbows" or wicking bowls, these short bowls help lead you to the jack.

SPLIT SHOT. (Sometimes, the split is easier than the resting shot. If avoidable, refrain from leaving your opponents this opportunity. This part of the strategy to play with a lot of bowls in the head, and to have these bowls apart from each other, so that one bowl can't turn them out).

DRAW TO A JACK MOVED OFF-CENTER is self explanatory. However, it may be useful, when able to use at least 3 rinks, to roll the jack almost diagonally. Then, play to the jack wherever it is, using 2 bowls on each hand. This will teach you new ways to find your line and your length.

DRAW A POSITION BOWL TO EACH BACK CORNER OF THE RINK.

PLACE THE JACK ON THE PLINTH, AND DRAW IT INTO THE DITCH.

STANDARDIZED DRILLS

General Instructions: These drills are designed for two but can be adapted for one person. Warm up and find the rink's aiming points with a few trial ends. For the first three tests, if the first bowl doesn't finish within the target area, redeliver it. After changing ends come back using the other hand to your only bowling on one side of the rink. It is OK for the marker to signal a "target distance" with their foot. Always lift the jack or target bowl to avoid displacing a bowl in course.

Reproducibility Drill: Roll first bowl a medium length, close to the centerline. Do not "center" it. Using the same hand, draw the remaining 3 bowls to the first. Score it then remove the most recently delivered bowl.

Scoring:

Each bowl within 1' of original bowl = 9 pts.

Each bowl 1' to 2' from the original bowl = 6 pts.

Each bowl 2' to 3' from the original bowl = 3 pts.

Bowls further than 3' away = 0 pts.

Yard-on Drill: Mat line at 2 meters. Deliver a short bowl. Marker centers it and all subsequent bowls. Using the same hand, roll each of the remaining bowls 3' past the previous bowl. (Lift target bowl if it might interfere.) After scoring marker leaves the most recently delivered but removes the most recently delivered bowl.

Scoring:

Bowls that finish jack low = 0 pts.

Jack level to 2' past jack = 4 pts.

2' to 4' past jack = 6 pts.

4' to 6' past jack = 4 pts.

6' to 10' past = 1 pt.

Bowls further than 10' past = 0 pts.

Yard-off Drill: Mat line at 2 meters. Deliver a long bowl. Marker centers it and all subsequent bowls. Using the same hand, roll each of the remaining bowls 3' short of the previous bowl. (Lift target bowl if it might interfere.) After scoring, marker leaves the most recently delivered but removes the earlier delivered bowl.

Scoring:

Bowls that finish jack high = 0 pts.

Jack level to 2' short of jack = 4 pts.

2' to 4' short of jack = 6 pts.

4' to 6' past jack = 4 pts.

6' to 10' past jack = 1 pt.

Bowls more than 10' short = 0 pts.

Long-Short Test: Set one jack on centerline at the hog line and another jack two meters from the ditch. Place the mat at 2 meters. Roll 2 bowls to the long jack and then 2 to the short jack. Marker records score for each bowl then removes it so it doesn't interfere with the second. Coming back: reset the 2 jacks as before and use the other hand (i.e., use the same side of the rink both ways).

Scoring:

Bowl comes to rest within 1' of the jack = 10 pts.

Bowl comes to rest within 2' of the jack = 8 pts.

Bowl comes to rest within 3' of the jack = 6 pts.

If weight was within 3' of the target, even though you were too wide or too narrow to get 6 pts. = 4 pts.

More than 3' light or heavy = 0 pts.

Near Ditch: Place mat at hog line. Put a jack 2 meters from the front ditch. Roll 4 bowls.

Scoring:

Bowls that come to rest jack high to the plinth = 4 pts.

Bowls that come to rest jack low or in the ditch = 0 pts.

Clustering:

2 Players - 4 Bowls each.

Match each other's bowls to within 1 foot radius.

Use a jack as a starting reference point anywhere on the rink.

Peas in a Pod:

- Objective is to get 3rd, 2nd, or 1st shot.

Draw:

- Draw around the bowls in front of the jack and get the shot.

Take-out Shot: The objective is to take out bowls, but to keep your bowls in play.

Weight Control:

Put a jack at each end of the rink, place the mat, take your stance.

Have a good look at the jack, letting your eyes take in the distance it is away from you.

Position your body and head to take the correct green line.

Close your eyes and deliver the bowl.