

The Art of Training, Not Rolling Up

Whenever you go out to train, have you a goal to achieve. Is it your delivery that you wish to improve? Is it long ends? Is it short ends? Is it drawing to the ditch, etc? Be sure of what you're going out there for, and practise on your own unless you're with someone practising the same thing you are, and with the same purposeful approach and dedication. Below are exercises to improve specific areas of your game.

Grooving a Delivery and Grouping Skills

If you want to groove a delivery, you don't need a jack – in fact a jack can be distracting. You don't want to think about weight, you only want to ensure the bowl goes away smoothly. So play four bowls on the forehand using a weight you are comfortable with, then four on the backhand. Keep practising, taking the same grass line, until your bowls are grouped inside a .6 m (2 foot) circle. When you can do this, you've grooved a consistent delivery. The more you practise it, the more instinctive it will become, until it reaches the stage when, like driving a car you no longer have to think about it.

Bowling a Consistent Line

Concentrate on a line until you have found a mark, curve, or reference point (again, you don't need a jack) and deliver bowls along this line, being aware of feet, body placement, stillness of the head and above all, making sure you're following through. You'll know you've got it right when all bowls finish consistently in the same vertical line. Groove the action until you no longer have to think about it.

Bowling a Consistent Line While Changing Feet Position on the Mat

Most bowlers in Australia find it more comfortable to correct line by maintaining the same feet position on the mat and changing the grass line. Experience gained in the UK suggests that, due to the untrue green surfaces, the good UK players correct slight line corrections by changing feet position on the mat, rather than changing grass line.

Practise this by playing 2 bowls from inside the mat, then the other 2 bowls from the outside of the mat, using the same grass point.

Weight Control

Your goal in practising weight control is to end up totally trusting your training, feel and sub-consciousness. Pay attention – without being judgemental – to what you're "feeling" during the delivery. You want your subconscious to gain more experience and knowledge and you can hasten this process by "feeling" your delivery. The best way to "feel" your delivery as it relates to weight is to practise drawing with your eyes closed or using blacked out glasses. Using a pair of old glasses painted with black paint allows you to keep your eyes open at delivery which helps with balance.

Participant's Notes