



The Grip

There are two basic types of grips used in bowling: conventional grip and fingertip grip.

Conventional Grip

Most Special Olympics bowlers use the conventional grip because it provides a firmer hold with the fingers. It also gives the bowler a more secure feeling about having full control of the ball. The conventional grip also allows the athlete to hold more of the ball, thus providing the feeling of a secure release. The finger hole depths are deep enough to allow the fingers to enter the ball up to the second knuckle. The thumbhole is drilled to allow the whole thumb to be inserted into the ball. The thumbhole is drilled the same for both the conventional and fingertip grip.

Fingertip Grip

The fingertip grip is recommended for the advanced bowler. The finger holes are drilled to allow only the tips of the fingers to be inserted into the bowling ball. This grip will spread the hand across more of the surface area of the ball, known as the span (distance between the thumb and finger holes). The thumbhole is drilled the same as the conventional grip. The fingertip grip allows for more lift on the ball during the release.

Athlete Readiness

- Places his/her fingers and thumb in the ball properly
- Supports the ball by placing the non-bowling hand under the ball with elbows in, close to the body

Teaching the Grip



1. Athlete places his/her fingers in the ball, the ring and middle fingers in first, then the thumb.
2. Fingers always go in to the same depth.
3. The grip needs to feel natural and comfortable. Do not place any strain on the thumb, fingers or wrist.
4. Fingers not in the hole may be spread out from or held close to the fingers in the ball.

Key Words

- Fingers first - then thumb
- Non-bowling hand under the ball



Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction
Thumb in first	Demonstrate to athlete, placing fingers in first
Thumb falling out of ball before release	Insert bowlers' tape in thumbhole to secure grip
Finger holes are sticky	Make sure hands are clean and dry

Coaches' Tips for the Grip – At-A-Glance

Tips for Practice

1. If the athlete is having difficulty with proper finger placement, try marking those fingers (stars, fingernail polish, magic marker, etc.) to further remind him/her.
2. Have the athlete pick the ball up from the ball return with both hands. While holding the ball with both hands, rotate the ball so that the holes of the ball are on top.
3. The non-bowling hand is under the ball, providing support, while the bowler places his/her fingers and thumb in the holes.