



FOUNDATION FRAME

BY MICHELLE MULLEN { yourbowlingcoach.com }

Drifting: How to Correct It

HOW YOU LINE UP and make adjustments largely determines whether you will develop a drift. Drifting is defined as ending on a board other than the one on which you started in the stance.

It's important to establish a realistic relationship between your stance and your target to enable you to walk straight. Then you need to make sound adjustments to maintain a healthy distance between you and your target. If you had been lining up improperly to be able to walk straight and you've improved your relationship to your target, you still may drift — out of habit.

A FIX FOR DRIFT

Finishing a board, or even two or three boards, off your start position is not drastic, especially if you do so consistently. However, excessive drifting can be corrected with a little overcompensation.

The boards on the approach can serve as a guide to help you determine if (and how much) you have drifted, especially when you feel that you have not drifted. If you are right-handed, make sure you line up on the approach with your left foot because that is the foot you slide on at the finish. If you are left-handed, line up with your right foot. Lining up with your slide foot is the only way you will know whether you drifted.

When you have been walking crooked on the approach and start working on walking straight, you likely will find that attempting to just walk straight does not fix the problem. Chances are that the drift felt straight to you. You will have to over-exaggerate walking in the opposite direction to fix the drift and actually walk straight.

To fix your drift, exaggerate walking in the opposite direction from that in which you were drifting. This will help you fix it quicker. If the drift is to the left, trick your mind by trying to walk to the right. Although it will feel as though you actually walked to the right, you probably did not end up to the right —

just less left. Compare where you started to where you ended to calculate the actual drift.

If you walk to the right, you will have to think “walk left” to start walking straighter again. In fact, it is likely that you will only walk less right in your attempt to walk left. Keep in mind that the direction in which you have drifted feels normal (or straight) for you. The more you drift, the more you have to over-exaggerate walking in the other direction.

You will swear that you walked left,



Avoiding Drift: Many bowlers develop drift because they move their feet without also moving their target as they adjust to lane conditions. Making up the extra distance from your target by opening up the shoulders will enable you to walk straight and still hit your target.

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but when you check, you will likely see that you just drifted less right than usual. Checking where you end up on every shot will give you the incentive you need to continue to over-exaggerate your walk in the opposite direction, no matter what it feels like. With this committed and focused effort, you will learn to walk straight again.

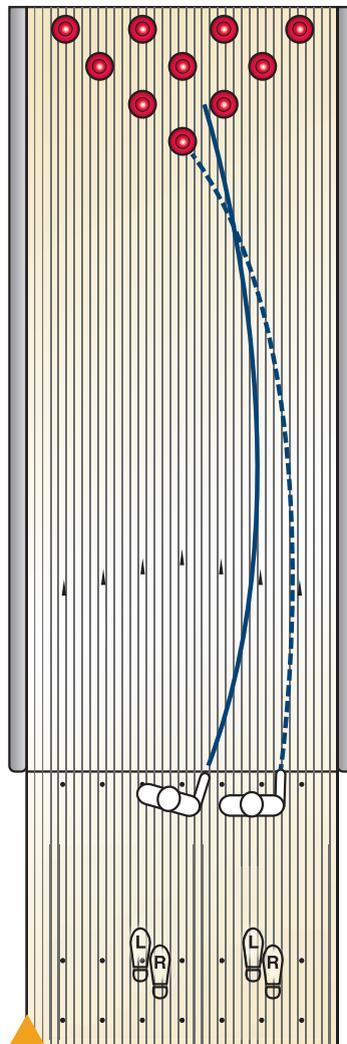
Get into the habit of checking for drift. If you find that you have a hard time remembering to look at the end of the approach, have a piece of paper on hand to write down where you slide after each shot. You will soon learn that you will not have anything to write down if you don't look.

Remember that there may be fewer dots in the beginning of the approach than at the foul line, so that you correctly identify your board numbers, both at the start and finish. (This idea also can help during target practice. Having to write down what you hit after each shot will soon train you to look at your target.)

If you really have a hard time with drifting, place a towel at the end of the approach to limit the amount you can drift without hitting the towel — it's either drift less or fall. This works great because your body cares more about not falling than it does about bowling. You will avoid the towel. However, eventually you will have to learn to walk straight without it.

When placing the towel, put the edge of the towel on the board beside the board you drift toward. Depending on which way you drift, you may need to allow a couple extra boards for the width of your foot.

Once you correct the drift, overcompensating thoughts are no longer necessary. So, at some point, you can stop over-exaggerating your walk. When you actually begin drifting in the opposite direction to the one in which you were initially drifting, you've fixed your drift. You can then begin to think "straight" to walk straight. Caution: I would not advise doing this until you have over-corrected several times. If you go back to drifting, you are not ready to stop exaggerating. Continually monitor where you are finishing to determine what your



Backswing Direction: Making sure your swing comes back straight will help you walk straighter again. Push the ball straight in line with the shoulder at the start, maintaining a relaxed arm so that it swings straight back.

thoughts need to be for the best results. Continue to exaggerate until you fix it; then, just try to walk straight.

BACKSWING DIRECTION

If your armswing comes behind your back, rather than staying in line with your shoulder, it can cause a drift in that direction because your body will naturally walk out of the way of the downswing. This would be a drift to the

left for a right-handed bowler, or a drift to the right for a left-handed bowler.

Your body naturally wants to avoid getting hit by the ball. If your swing comes back away from your body, you might drift in that direction. In either case, the feet tend to walk in the direction in which the ball veers out of the swing plane in the backswing.

Making sure your swing comes back straight will help you walk straighter again. For starters, make sure you push the ball straight in line with the shoulder at the start, maintaining a relaxed arm so that it swings straight back.

Again, it's important to note that you need to line up properly to hit your target. If you stand too far away from or too close to the target, you will start to drift in order to hit it. Make sure you adjust your shoulders toward the target so the swing is in alignment with the target line. A good lineup enables you to walk straight as your arm swings on the desired target line.

It is important to note again that you have to learn to line up properly in relation to your target and make sound lane adjustments so you do not have to drift. However, you also have to drift less to be able to line up properly to your target. These factors work together.

Lining up better will not necessarily or instantly stop you from drifting. You may need to line up better and work on your drift to create that ideal relationship between your stance and your target.

Many bowlers develop a drift because, as they make adjustments to changing lane conditions, they move their feet too much without also moving their target. To avoid this, learn to move your feet no more than a few boards unless you also move your target in the same direction.

As you move deeper, you can get farther from your target to swing the ball out, but you will make up the extra distance you are from your target by opening up the shoulders. This will enable you to walk straight and still hit the target, though you are farther from it.

Michelle Mullen is a Gold coach and author of two books, Bowling Fundamentals and How to Pick Up Spares.