

The Best Bowling Tip I've Ever Received

By Cristina K. Chapman



Choosing the best bowling tip I've ever received is a little difficult. I have been extremely fortunate to have some wonderful coaches and receive some great advice throughout the years, but I would have to say that one of the best tips is probably the simplest and one of the very first. It came from my parents.

When I began bowling for the Puerto Rican National Team, I would often get really uptight as I began to mull over every shot. I was just a kid, and I was trying so hard to bowl well against the adults that every decision I faced seemed extremely complicated and all of the muscles in my body would tense up. Instead of focusing on executing what I already knew how to do, what had gotten me there in the first place, I would begin to second-guess myself and succumb to the pressure. As a result, I would make bad decisions and throw really bad shots.

My parents pointed out that sometimes I would actually stop breathing which, of course, made things worse. *Soooooo*, my mother would say to me that what I was doing was “just bowling” and “not brain surgery,” and my father would pull me off the lanes, put his arm around me, rock me back and forth, and remind me that bowling is about the basics and that there was no need to panic. This made me realize that I knew what I had to do, and that I just needed to compose myself and take a deep breath. As soon as I accepted that I was making things more complicated than they really were, my body relaxed, and I was able to throw some better shots and make adjustments off of those better shots.

When faced with tough competition and/or difficult lane conditions, especially in team and international play, I always remember that bowling is only as complicated as I make it, and that there really is no need to analyze every single shot. When I focus on that, bowling becomes simple again—I enjoy the game more, and I have a better chance of succeeding.

Oh, yeah, and if my father is in the bowling center, I let him pull me off of the lanes, put his arm around me, and rock me back and forth. I may not be a kid anymore, but it still works!

Cristina K. Chapman was the eighth-ranked bowler in the Washington, D.C. Area Women's Bowling Association in 2005-2006—the third consecutive season she has appeared in the Top 10 of the annual ranking.