

Deep cleaning

Deep cleaning is an essential element in keeping your equipment in top-notch condition. Various methods have been used: there are heat treatments, warm warm baths, ultrasonic baths, etc. One caution is that the use of homemade treating devices that attempt to deep clean can void warranties. Extreme heat treatments can inadvertently remove beneficial components like plasticizers from the ball's coverstock.

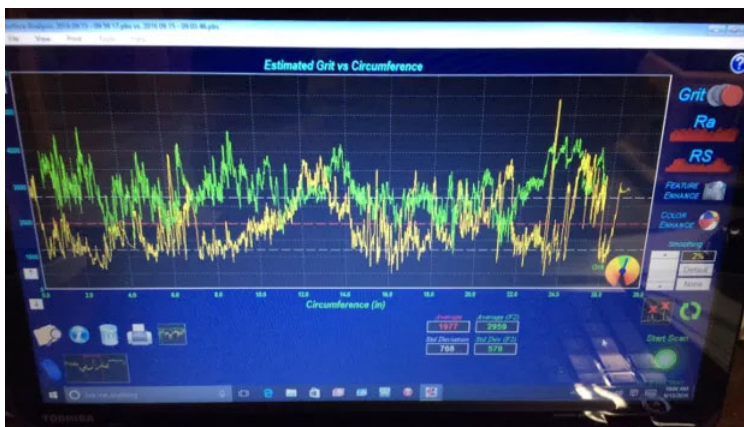
I am fond of the **Detox Ultrasonic Ball Cleaner** from Jayhawk Bowling Supply & Equipment, Inc. Ultrasound creates microscopic bubbles. The ultrasonic-enhanced bubbles in the 115 degree Fahrenheit mixture of water and Detox cleaner reach deep into pores of the cover, removing oil, grease, and dirt. I have used the Detox for almost two years. Experience has shown me that even the most devoted cleaning regimens—wiping the ball after every delivery and cleaning immediately after a bowling session—were not totally effective, and deep cleaning was still needed.



Jayhawk Detox Ultrasonic Ball Cleaner

The type of ball surface dictates the required frequency of deep cleaning. Textured surfaces (less than 4000 grit) need deep cleaning regularly. Deep clean at least once per month to maintain optimum performance. Less textured (greater than 4000 grit), smooth, or glossy surfaces require less attention, and a deep cleaning once every three to six months may suffice. These are just rough guidelines, though. The Hyper Cell I described earlier requires a weekly deep cleaning to retain performance. High performance balls may require more frequent care. The determining factor on how often to clean will ultimately be ball reaction: if the ball reaction seems sluggish or be under par, deep clean.

An additional benefit of deep cleaning is surface texture recovery. I routinely use the Jayhawk **Ball Surface Scanner** before and after cleaning to determine surface grit. Average grit readings often decrease by 500 or more after deep cleaning is complete.



This comparison on the green graph (before) versus the yellow graph (after) shows a difference of almost 1000 grit after deep cleaning with the Detox. This will produce a significant change in ball motion.

A deep cleaning example: returning a “dead” ball from the graveyard

One of my teammates recently asked for a deep clean. He claimed his ball was completely “dead.” He is devoted to keeping his equipment clean following the best recommended procedures. I wasn't confident I could help. Scuffing the surface and returning the ball to its original texture had a very mild effect on total hook, shape, and carry. I decided to give the Detox a try.

After 30 minutes of treatment in the Detox, the water was milky white. When the ball was removed from the device after this initial treatment, oil was still oozing from its surface.



The Detox viewed from above, filled with clean water and Detox cleaner (left). After 30 minutes of treatment, the water was milky white (right).

I removed the cleaning solution and replaced it with clean water and Detox cleaner. An additional 30 minutes of treatment ensued, which produced similar results (below, left). By now, the ball had endured one hour of deep cleaning. I decided to repeat the process for another 30 minutes (below, right).



Detox water after 60 minutes of treatment (left) and 90 minutes of treatment (right).

I again repeated the process for another 30 minutes. At this point—after 120 minutes of treatment—I was finally able to see the bottom of the cleaning vessel (below, left), indicating that less oil was now being removed. I decided that at least one more treatment of 30 minutes was required (below, right).



Detox water after 120 minutes of treatment (left) and 150 minutes of treatment (right).

After the final treatment, the water bath was almost completely clear. I felt that an additional treatment would not produce a significant change.

This is an extreme example. It took two and a half hours of ultrasonic cleaning in a 115 degree Fahrenheit water bath to extract the oil from a ball that was diligently cleaned both during and after use. A treatment of just 20 minutes often suffices on balls that are well maintained.

With the deep clean now complete, I am happy to report that my teammate's ball reaction has returned. He plans to regularly deep clean his equipment going forward. This "dead" ball came back to life and avoided the graveyard.

Summary

New USBC specifications may require more attention to oil removal and surface cleaning of bowling balls. It is recommended that bowlers use a microfiber towel or shammy pad to remove oil after each delivery. Once competition is complete, one should clean the ball surface with an approved cleaner. Thoroughly clean the entire surface and then dry it completely with a dry microfiber towel or shammy.

Deep clean your ball whenever ball reaction declines. Remember, more highly textured and high performance coverstocks require more frequent deep cleaning. Deep cleaning is worth every cent. It can delay “dead” ball syndrome and it may bring back to life equipment that was ready for the graveyard.