



12. Bowling (FRED 1972, Bally 1973, RCA Studio II 1977, Fairchild 1978)

10-pin bowling computer games were amongst the earliest to be played in true “one-switch” style. As with POSM a switch is put within reach of any part of your body best suited to activate it. This could be via a large push-button switch on its own, a sound sensor, a head-wand.... Almost anything you can imagine.

Most cartridge games consoles of the 1970s had a bowling game. With most the ball would sweep constantly from side to side behind the foul line. Hitting a single button threw the ball in a straight line into the pins. Most excluded the misery inducing no-score gutters running down both sides of a lane.

In 1978 a hugely empowering adaptation for real world bowling arrived: Bumper Bowling. Special-education teacher Zena Sheinberg and her fiancé, Alex Wortman in Ann Arbor, Michigan saw the need. Sensing the frustration of a group of special needs students constantly bowling gutter-balls, the pair experimented with blocking the drains. Starting with long cardboard carpet tubing, people could at last reliably get a ball to the end of the lane and into the pins. The method developed to inflatable tubes and Phil Kinzer’s rival bumper rails system. Business boomed and many tears were saved from children and adults alike. For those unable to throw a physical bowling ball, ramps and rare EM one-switch bowling machines would follow.



No rush to take shot. Aiming assistance (often) not needed.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and PICTURE CREDITS

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Photo by Meri Houtchens-Kitchens via Adapting Audio/Video Games for Handicapped Learners: Part 2 by Karen Hughes, Teaching Exceptional Children (p124 Nov 1981): <https://switchgaming.blogspot.com/2008/03/accessible-gaming-in-1981.html> (with thanks to Michelle Hinn a the IGDA GASIG).

Bumper Bowling information via: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_bowling#Bumper_bowling and People: <https://people.com/archive/the-bowling-bumper-cushion-spares-frustrated-alley-cats-the-indignity-of-gutter-balls-vol-32-no-24/> (11th December 1989). Physical bowling ramps and machines information via: <https://switchgaming.blogspot.com/2008/10/switch-accessible-bowling.html?q=bowling>

SEE: [OneSwitch.org.uk/page/100](https://www.oneswitch.org.uk/page/100) for the full story

Special Effect

