

# How to Throw a Cornhole Bag: Winning Techniques

Cornhole is a ton of fun to play at a backyard summer barbeque. Many people are quite casual about the game. However, most of us are at least a little competitive and as such want to know the best techniques to win the game. There are plenty of ways to throw a cornhole bag, but the best way is not always instinctive to us.

**For the best chance of success when throwing a cornhole bag, keep these things in mind:**

- **Use well-designed bags and boards**
- **Placement of you and the boards must be precise**
- **Have the proper throwing motion**
- **Use the perfect arc**
- **Know the different situational throws**

Keep reading for a more detailed explanation on how to have the unbeatable cornhole throw.

## Use Well-Designed Bags and Boards

The first step to accurately throwing in cornhole is to make sure you have the correct equipment in the first place. A cornhole playing kit will include:

- **Two boards**
- **Four bags of one color**
- **Four bags of a different color**

If you are reading this, surely you have a basic understanding of how the game of cornhole works. Let's quickly review: in 1 vs 1, players stand next to **the same board** and take turns tossing their bags at the other board. Points are gathered by at least landing the bags on the board's flat surface, if not landing them in the hole. In 2 vs 2, teammates stand **at opposite boards next to their opponents**. One side of opponents takes turns tossing their bags and then the other side of opponents follows suit.

## Quality Boards

That working understanding should give you an idea of the quality of equipment you are playing with. Each board should be 4 feet long by 2 feet wide. Looking flat down at the top of the board, the hole is 6 inches in diameter starting 9 inches from the top. The front of the board (facing the player) is 3 inches tall, while the back should be 1 foot off the ground. That will give you a nice surface on roughly a 30 degree angle. Flat enough for the bags to stay put, but vertical enough to make it interesting.

You can certainly make your own. Just keep in mind wood is the best bet for a long-lasting game. You also want the surface to be at least  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an inch thick to prevent the bags from bouncing rather than just landing flat. At the end of the day, having quality boards will ensure that your throws are not wasted by bouncing off or sliding way too far. If you really want to make sure your skills will not be in vain, pick up one of these relatively inexpensive cornhole sets before you begin:

- [GoSports](#): Basic sturdy set that does the job for cheap. It also comes with a convenient carrying case to easily bring to your next tailgate.
- [GoSports Red & Blue](#): Same regulation quality but with color coded, more flashy design
- [Tailgating Pros](#): These boards cost a little more, but they have a really cool American flag design and comes with a carrying bag.

Source: [The Spruce](#)

## Proper Bags

You will never be able to figure out how to throw a cornhole bag if it is not regulation size and weight, so beware of “child versions” and smaller scale kits out there. (If you order one of the kits above, you have nothing to worry about.) Bags are 6 inches by 6 inches and are filled with 1 pound of corn, hence the name of the game. While most cornhole bags are made of just average cloth material, some professional versions have one side made of microfiber. The microfiber will grip the wood faster, giving you an advantage if you have a habit of bags constantly falling off the back.

Want to make your own bags too? No problem. Just make sure you use a strong fabric. Burlap will do very nicely, but is not required. Either way, make sure you sew them up tight. You are going to be throwing them after all.

## Placement of You and the Boards Must Be Precise

Now that you have all the proper regulation gear, you will need to make sure that you have both you and the boards themselves in the right locations. If you practice your throws at an incorrect distance from the board, you will be pretty disappointed when you start a real match. Tossing a cornhole bag is such a precise motion that moving the board just a few feet will completely throw off your game.

**Therefore, although it may seem further than what you have seen in your friend’s backyard, make sure the boards are exactly 27 feet from each other front edge to front edge.**

## Where Should You Stand?

The more nuanced question on physical location is where you should stand. The short answer is: wherever works for you. First, keep in mind the game’s rules in this regard:

- **Your feet cannot, at any point in your throwing motion, extend past the front of the board next to you.** An imaginary line is drawn parallel from the front of the board. If you cross that line, the throw does not count.
- **You cannot at any point be in the way or otherwise block the shot of your opponent.** Stand at least a couple feet apart to avoid this.
- **Stand away from the board so you do not impede the throws of your opponent or teammate on the other side.**

Aside from the rules, it is generally a good idea to give yourself plenty of space. The last thing you want is for your perfect toss to be ruined because you bumped your opponent in the elbow.

Source: [Joe2Jock- Cornhole Setup and Scoring](#)

## Have the Proper Throwing Motion

Of course the most important part of throwing a cornhole bag is nailing the correct motion. Let's walk through that step by step now in plenty of detail. Just keep in mind that in practice this throw should occur in one gentle but fluid motion that takes no more than a couple seconds.

1. **Start with all 4 bags in one hand**
2. **Take a step forward, if you want**
3. **Gentle is key**
4. **Hold the bag like a Frisbee**
5. **Frisbee throw, but palm to the sky**

### 1. Start with All 4 Bags in One Hand

You want your throws to be able to occur consecutively. If you have to keep bending down to grab a bag, you will have to line yourself up and reset your aim all over again. Like bowling, you should aim to be as repetitive with your good throw as possible.

### 2. Take a Step Forward, If You Want

If it does not feel natural, do not bother. However, many players find that taking a step forward as they make the throw really helps drive the forward motion. This can be either with your left foot or right foot, generally opposite from your throwing hand. This will also help you maintain balance as you lean into the throw. Experiment and see what you prefer.

### 3. Gentle is Key

You are not aggressively shooting a basketball here; you are probably trying to juggle your bags with a beer bottle in one hand, let's be honest. That being said, your release should be a gradual toss, like it is a surprise when it leaves your hand. The longer you have that bag under your control through your throwing motion, the better your aim will be.

### 4. Hold the Bag Like a Frisbee

Keep it flat with your thumb on top and fingers on the bottom. Do not pinch the edge with your thumb and pointer finger, as this will make precise aim impossible. Similarly, bunching up the bag up in your palm will cause it to expand upon release, catching air and always falling short of the board. Frisbee style instead allows the bag to slice through the air for minimal wind resistance.

### 5. Frisbee Throw, But Palm to the Sky

Now, even though you are holding the bag like a Frisbee, the whole throw should not go that way. Instead:

- **Swing your arm back to gain momentum, then forward** (not bent sideways)

- **As you reach the end of your arm radius, perform the Frisbee style twist in the wrist**
- **End the twist with your palm up towards the sky**
- **Carefully release**

Done in a clean and fluid motion, and the bag will head up on its arc with a good speed. Also, by performing the twist in the wrist, you put a nice spin on the bag which keeps it on target.

Sources: [Bag Toss](#)

Joe2Jock: [Cornhole for Beginners](#)

## Use the Perfect Arc

In addition, it is important that the bag has a good trajectory once it leaves your hand. You are not throwing it overhand, since that only makes aim more difficult. Why? It is really hard to land something on a smooth, angled surface when it is slamming against it at a high rate of speed. The bag needs to head towards the board and then land flat on top of it (or into the hole if possible), not slide off the back end.

**Therefore, the throwing arc of cornhole is all about compromise: too fast and you will go too far, but not enough energy and you will not make it or slide down the front.**

Unfortunately, the only way to learn this is by lots and lots of practice. This again is why distance is so critical: the last thing you want to do is have the arc nailed down, just to realize you have only been practicing at a distance of 22 feet. That would mean that after all that practice, all your throws in a regulation game will be short.

If all of the previous steps are fulfilled and your arc is still short, try experimenting in your throw with:

- **Power**
- **Arm speed**
- **More or less twist of the wrist**
- **Release timing**
- **Switching hands-** not everybody is a lefty or righty for everything

Source: [Cornhole Addicts](#)

## Know the Different Situational Throws

It is important to realize as well that not every throw is going to be aimed towards an empty board. In fact, based on the number of bags both of you are throwing, most of them will not be. Therefore, once you have your cornhole bag **general** throwing aim perfected, you will then need to fine tune for different situational throws. Let's go through a few different possibilities, keeping in mind that the situations you encounter can be as random as the players' skill variety.

### Straight in the Hole

We definitely do not recommend always aiming directly for the hole, as that is by far the most difficult shot you can make. The hole only makes up 5 percent of the board, so you are

eliminating 95 percent of options that allow you at least 1 point. Therefore, unless you are an absolute pro, your best bet is to aim for a somewhat flat landing on the middle of the board that slides up into the hole. That way, if you are off from the hole, you still stay on the board and net a point.

### Flatter Landings

But what happens if the middle part of the board is blocked? Well in that case one of your options is to just focus on achieving the most points you can out of your own game. **To do this, focus on a throw with a higher arc (with accompanying slightly higher speed) that lands flatter on the board.** With enough skill, you can at least pick out a quadrant of the board and try to land in that vicinity. With any luck, the bag might slide down or over into the hole anyway.

### The Push

Not everyone wants to just play it safe. Some of us like to be more competitive or aggressive. To that end, another throw you can try is to push other bags. **For this throw you will need a lower arc while maintaining most of your speed.** With more forward momentum, you can land on the board and push off your opponent's bag so they lose points. Or better yet, push your last bag that is in the way anyway into the hole. With any luck, your current bag will fall in too, earning you a nice 6 points.

Sources: [ACL Director](#)

## Additional Advice to Perfect Cornhole

Perfecting your throw is not the only thing you should do in order to master the game of cornhole. Here is some other advice to consider:

- **Pick a good partner if possible**
- **Lay off the alcohol**
- **Buy your own set**

### Pick a Good Partner

Odds are if you made it this far, you take this game seriously. That is great, but you have to remember that not everybody does. Therefore, if you are playing 2 vs. 2, your partner could really slow you down. Consider this: if you have been practicing every week and you are teamed up with someone who has never even played before, you might essentially be all on your own. Not great if you are playing against two seasoned pros.

To mitigate this, try separating teams in a way so that their skills are more evenly matched. This may mean that you are playing with an acquaintance rather than your best friend. If that still will not help, you may need to settle for alternating games of 1 vs. 1 rather than 2 vs. 2. Ultimately it depends how competitive the match is.

### Lay off the Alcohol

As mentioned earlier, for many of us, cornhole is just a casual game at weekend backyard parties. If that is the case for you, well, have fun. But if competitive play is more your style, you

may want to switch out that Budweiser for a Gatorade. **Alcohol impairs motor skills, which will be detrimental to your throwing skills and probably cost you the game.**

### Buy Your Own Set

If you are only playing cornhole twice a year at parties, your skills are just never going to become that good. The solution here is to fork over the money for your own set. Check out one of the quality ones listed above. Owning your own set allows you to practice any time you like. Consider buying a set even if you do not plan on practicing a lot: simply having one at home means you will be playing it at all of your own parties or will want to bring it to your friends' houses for their gatherings. You may even be prompted to play pick up games with your kids.

Source: [Esquire](#)

### The Most Important Thing You Can Do? Relax

Lastly, the best way to perfect the art of cornhole is to remain calm. It is largely an easy game to start out in but be patient: it often takes people a while to master. This is not a high adrenaline sport unless you are in the throes of high-level competition. Even then, it is important to keep the nerves at a minimum. Nervousness causes shakiness, which can also affect throwing motion and aim. Just relax, have a good time, and the points will come with enough practice and concentration.