

Learn to Fish Program

Rods, Reels and Lines

Make sure you get off to the right start by choosing the right Rod, Reel and Line combo.

The most important thing is to choose equipment that's right for you and the type of fishing that you plan on doing. It's a good idea to get some advice from a person working in the local tackle shop – they'll be happy to help you.



Fishing Rods

In addition to enabling you to cast a rod's major job is to take tension off your line to stop it from breaking. When you fight a fish your rod bends to take some of the tension off the line, otherwise the line would break. The right rod will bend enough to absorb the tension from the line, but will still be rigid enough for you to fight and land the fish.

A good choice for a first rod is a light one about 4 to 6 feet long. This is ideal for smaller fish, it's lightweight, and can handle smaller bobbers and tackle very well. Also, it's not too expensive.

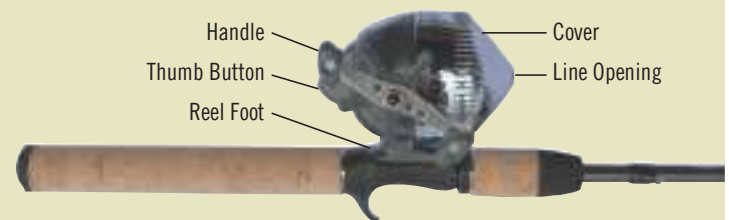
Fishing Reels

Fishing reels store line on a spool and have an adjustable friction device inside them (known as a drag). The drag creates tension on the line as it is pulled off the reel spool. When a fish pulls line off the reel, the constant tension keeps the line in order. It also means that the fish cannot put enough pull on the line to break it.

The two basic rod and reel set ups for novice and youth anglers are SPINCASTING and SPINNING. It is important to correctly match the proper rod and reel.

Spincasting

A spincasting rod has the reel mounted on top of the rod with the line guides facing upwards. Notice that the line is stored under a cover on this reel and feeds from a small hole in the front. This is sometimes called a "closed-face" reel.

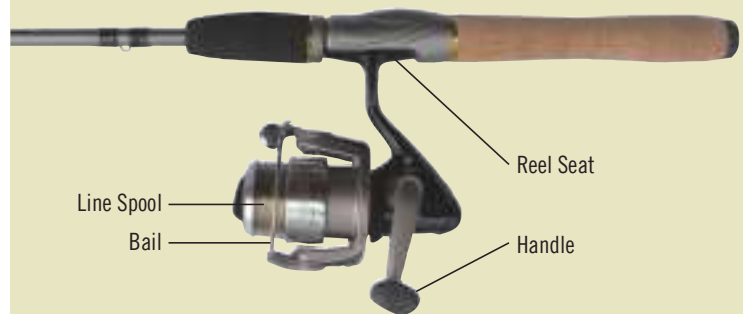


Casting is simple; Press and hold the thumb button, then as you cast, release the button to allow the line to spool out. Take a look at our 'Casting and Retrieving' guide for more information on how to cast properly.

Spinning

A spinning rod carries the reel underneath the rod and the line guides point directly to the ground. The size of the line guides start larger than on a spincasting rod and become smaller closer to the tip.

A spinning reel uses a metal bar (called a bail) to hold the line on the reel. The line is not covered and this is sometimes called an "open-face" reel. As the reel handle is turned, the bail also turns, winding line neatly onto the spool.



To cast with this reel, hold the line with your index finger of the hand holding the rod, then open the reel's bail with your other hand. As you cast, release the line from your finger to let it run. Take a look at our 'Casting and Retrieving' guide for more information on how to cast properly.

Fishing line

A good quality fishing line is essential for your angling success. You can always get good advice at your local tackle store but here is a quick guide to the three main types of line you'll find.

Monofilament

This is the most common type of line, and typically comes in either clear or green. Monofilament is a great all-purpose fishing line that can be used anywhere.

Fluorocarbon

These lines look like monofilament but are virtually invisible underwater. This means that it makes an excellent leader for your tackle.

Fusion and Braided type lines.

With this type of line the materials are either braided or fused together to make a single strand of line. This makes the line super-strong line with a much smaller diameter than its monofilament competitor. While these lines are stronger per diameter than monofilament unfortunately they are not as transparent. Therefore, they are generally used only as mainline.



Understanding what the terms mean.

These are some of the things you might see written on the packaging of line in the store. Your local fishing tackle store can advise you on which line is best suited for your needs.

Strength:

Line strength is expressed in terms of "test". The higher the number, or test strength, the stronger the fishing line is. This number will be clearly labeled on any fishing line that you buy. It is very important to use the right "test" strength line for your particular targeted species and fishing conditions. Most rods and reels are labelled with a suitable line weight or test.

Following these suggested line sizes will help make the equipment function properly.

Visibility:

This simply states how visible the fishing line is to the angler (not the fish). On the fishing line box, it will generally be listed as high visibility, low visibility or invisible.

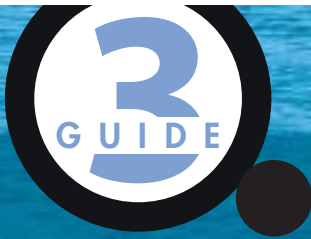
Size:

This is the diameter of the line. It will be labeled clearly on the box, and is measured in either hundredths of an inch or hundredths of a millimeter.

Stretch:

Fishing lines, particularly Monofilament and Fluorocarbon, often have considerable stretch in them. How much a fishing line will stretch is labeled on the box. They are generally coded as no stretch, low stretch, moderate stretch and high stretch.





Learn to Fish Program

Tackle and Accessories

Here's a simple guide to the basic tackle you'll need to start fishing. Let's work backwards starting from the hook. Remember that your local tackle store is a great place to ask for advice on what works best for fishing in your area.

Bait

Bait is foodstuff or natural substances you will use to attract the fish and tempt them to bite. Basically, bait falls into two categories:

Natural bait: includes worms, roe and doughballs.



Artificial Bait: includes artificial substances that are scented or flavoured to attract fish to bite.



Some waters in B.C. prohibit the use of bait. For complete definitions on bait and the "Rules on Bait Usage" consult the BC Freshwater Fishing Regulations Synopsis before you go fishing. As your angling experience grows you'll learn which baits are the best for catching different species of fish.

Lures

Artificial Lures: includes plugs, spoons and spinners.

Plugs: Usually made of balsa or plastic and designed to resemble a baitfish. Some plugs are designed to float on the surface and some will have a small lip at the front that will make them dive as you reel in your line. The faster you reel, the deeper they dive.



Spoons: Spoons will wobble and move in the water as you reel in. This movement makes them vibrate and reflect light which attracts fish. There are hundreds of different designs and sizes of spoons to choose from.



Spinners: Like spoons, spinners produce vibration and reflect light. They do this by using a spinning blade at the front of the lure. Again, there are many to choose from.

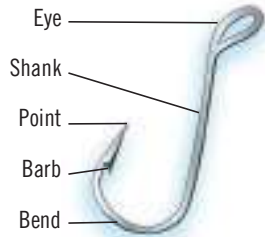


QUICK TIP:

Fish can be picky feeders. If you are not having much luck, try changing lures occasionally. You will increase your chance of being successful.

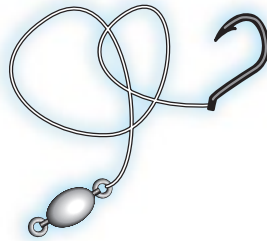
Hooks

Hooks come in many shapes and sizes, each designed with a different purpose in mind. All rivers and streams and some lakes in B.C. require the use of single barbless hooks. If you buy a lure or spoon that has a treble hook or hook with a barb, you can easily replace the treble with a single hook and pinch the barb flat with a pair of pliers.



Leaders

A leader is a piece of line that goes between your main fishing line and your hook. The type of leader you use depends on the type of fishing – when fishing for a strong fish with teeth you should choose a short strong leader, but in clear water a lighter, thinner leader would be better. Many hooks and lures come with leaders already attached.



Sinkers

Sinkers are usually made of lead or tungsten and come in various shapes and sizes. A sinker adds some weight to your line, making it easier to cast further, it also makes your bait sink and balances your bobber or float in the water.



Swivels

Swivels are used where your main line is joined to your leader and help to stop your line from twisting. The two most common types are the barrel swivel (a loop at each end of a barrel) and a snap swivel (a quick snap on one end and a loop on the other).



Bobbers

Bobbers allow you to adjust your fishing depth. They can be moved up or down your line allowing you to place your bait, lure or fly in the exact area the fish are located.



Keep your tackle clean and organized

A great way to keep everything you need close at hand is to invest in a tackle box. Although they come in many shapes and sizes they will all have sections where you can keep your sinkers, hooks, lures, bobbers, and floats separated and untangled for easy access and use.



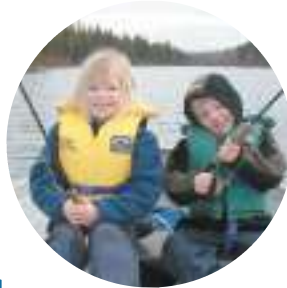
Some additional things you should include in your tackle box are:

- Needlenose pliers (to help remove hooks)
- A fish rag or cloth
- Mechanical scales (for weighing those big specimens)
- A measuring tape
- Nail clippers (great for snipping line)
- Bait container
- A small screwdriver (repairing or keeping your reel tightened)
- A plastic holder for your licence
- A sharp filleting knife (for cleaning fish you harvest)
- A few band aids in case of cuts
- Extra fishing line
- Freshwater Fishing Regulations Synopsis

QUICK TIP:

Depending on the season, it's also a great idea to take a backpack for extra gear like sun screen, insect repellent, sun glasses, a baseball cap and extra clothes for changing weather conditions. If it's a family day out, don't forget the camera for those family album shots!

Learn the best way to set up your tackle for the species of fish you want to catch and the different conditions you'll find when you Go fish BC.



Here are some simple and effective ways to set up your equipment for angling.

Still fishing (Mid water)

With this technique bait is suspended at a chosen depth in the water using a bobber or float. Split shot sinkers are used to sink the bait and balance the bobber. When a fish strikes the bait the angler is alerted by the movement (or disappearance!) of the bobber. Altering the suspended depth of the bait enables the angler to locate the exact depth of the fish and be more successful.



How to set up:

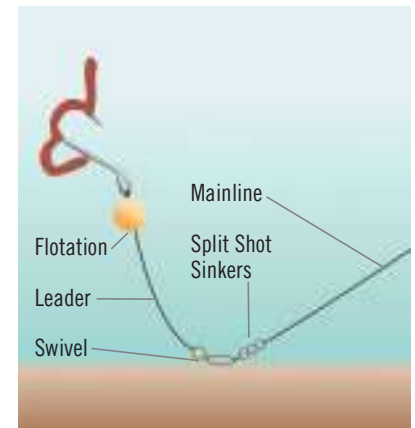
1. Pass your line through each of the guides on your rod.
2. Now clip a bobber on to your line, the amount of line below the bobber will depend on the depth you want to fish.
3. Attach your hook directly with an improved clinch knot or attach your hook and leader to a swivel attached to the mainline.

4. Attach split shot sinkers to the line, at least 40 cm above the hook. Before fishing, test the bobber in the water. If necessary, add more sinkers until the bobber sits upright in the water.

Still fishing (Bottom)

Use this method to target bottom-feeding fish such as carp.

With this method your bait and sinkers will sit on or near the bottom. You can use floating bait or try adding a little flotation to your hook so that the bait floats just above the



bottom and is more visible to fish. Cast the weight and bait. After the weight sinks to the bottom wind in any slack line until there is a taut connection between the weight and rod. Be sure to use enough weight to anchor the bait in one location on the bottom. In flowing rivers the amount of weight will have to be increased to hold the bait stationary in the current.

How to set up:

1. Pass your line through each of the guides on your rod.
2. Attach your hook directly to the mainline with an improved clinch knot or attach a hook and leader setup to a swivel which can then be attached to the mainline. Your leader should be 50-60 cm in length.
3. Attach a sinker to the line at least 40 cm from your hook or just above the swivel.
4. Cast and test to see if the weight of the sinker will hold your bait in place on the bottom, if not add more weight.

Lure or Spinner fishing

Using artificial lures or spinners with bait allows the angler to tempt the fish to bite a moving target. The depth of the lure will depend on the weight of the lure and speed with which the angler retrieves it. Fish may be found in all parts of the water column. By varying the retrieval speed and fishing depth you will cover all sections of the water and improve your chances of finding fish.

How to set up:

1. Pass your line through each of the guides on your rod.
2. Use an improved clinch knot to attach a swivel to the end of your mainline.
3. Attach a 50–60 cm leader to the swivel and your choice of lure or spinner.
4. Adding weight just above the swivel will allow you to fish deeper in the water column.

Knots

Here are some basic knots that you'll need to learn to make sure that your hooks and tackle will stand up to the strain of a fight with a good sized fish. Quick tip: Always moisten the line before completing your knot or you will burn the line and weaken it.

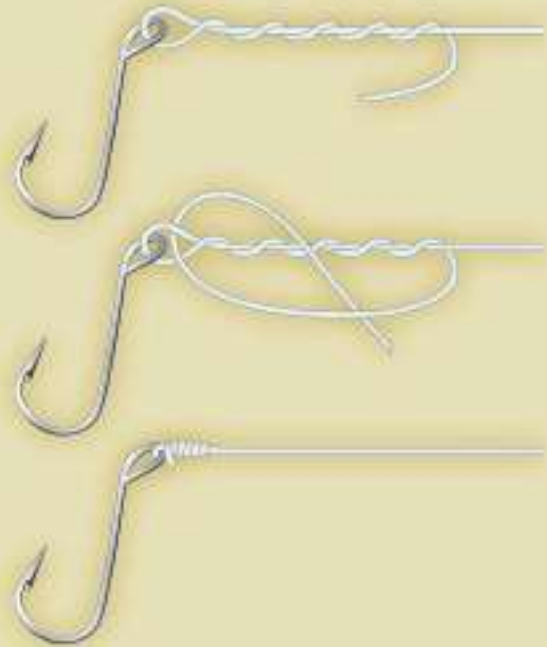
The Improved Clinch Knot

A good knot for tying lines to swivels, lures and hooks.

Step 1 – Pass the tag end of the line through the eye of the tackle (hook or swivel etc) allowing 10 cm of line beyond the eye to complete the knot. Double the line back and make 5 to 7 coils around the line going back to the rod.

Step 2 – Hold the coils in place by pinching with your thumb and forefinger. Avoid pinching the eye of the tackle or the first loop created by the coils. With the opposite hand, thread the end of the line through the first loop over the eye and then back through the large loop created by this action.

Step 3 – Before tightening, moisten the knot. Hold the tag end and the line going back to the rod and pull simultaneously. The coils will form tight spirals. Use your fingers to slide the spirals back against the eye of the terminal tackle, making sure that the spirals are not overlapping each other. Give a final pull to securely set the knot and then clip the excess tag end.



The Barrel or Blood Knot

This knot is used to join one line to another, where they are approximately of the same thickness. Where their diameters are very dissimilar, either the Surgeon's Knot should be used, or the thinner line should be doubled where the knot is formed.

Lay the ends of the two lines against each other, overlapping about 15cm.

Take 5 turns around one line with the end of the other, and bring the end back where it's held between the two lines.

Repeat by taking 5 turns around the other line, bringing the end back between the two lines. These two ends should then project in opposite directions.

Work the knot up into loops, taking care that the two ends do not slip out of position.

Moisten and draw the knot up tightly.

