

Fishing is Fun for Everyone

Getting Started

Fishing is fun – just ask any of the 40 million children and adults in America who now enjoy the sport! Better yet, try it yourself – you can quickly learn to fish at any age. Fishing is not just about fish – during a fishing trip, families and friends relax together as they enjoy being outdoors and learning new skills.

Here's what you'll need to fish in fresh water:

- An inexpensive fishing rod and reel
- 4- to 12-pound-test monofilament fishing line
- A package of fishing weights
- Fish hooks (Number 6-10 size)
- A plastic or cork bobber
- A selection of live bait or fishing lures
- A state fishing license (depending on your age). You'll find everything you need at a fishing tackle or sporting goods store.

Largemouth bass

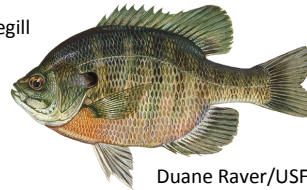


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What Tackle Can I use?

With spin casting or spinning tackle, you can put the bait or lure where the fish are. You can cast greater distances with more accuracy, work lures effectively, fish in deeper water, and handle larger fish more easily with this tackle.

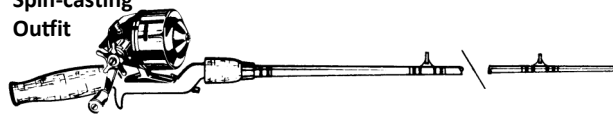
Bluegill



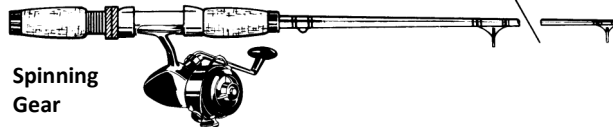
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Spin-casting outfits use a rod with a pistol-like grip and a reel that's mounted on the top of the rod's handle. Line is released using a push button on the reel. This is the easier rod and reel for beginners.

Spin-casting Outfit



Spinning Gear

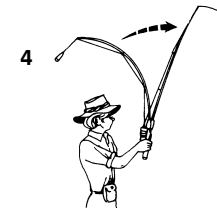
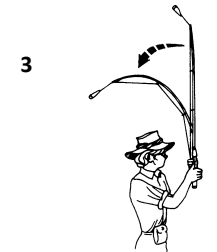


Spinning gear uses a rod with a straight handle and a reel that's mounted under the handle. Line is released using your index finger.

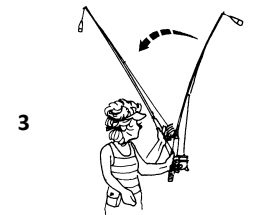
How Can I Learn to Cast?

Once you've selected a spin-casting or spinning outfit, use the Improved Clinch Knot demonstrated on the next page to tie on an inexpensive rubber covered weight called a casting plug. Next, find an open area away from other people where you can practice casting.

Spin Casting

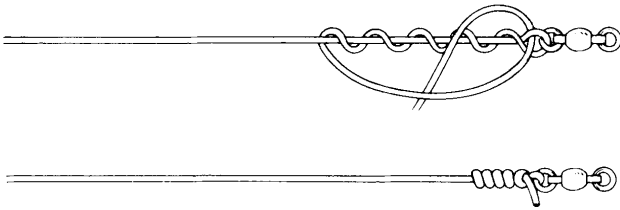


Spinning



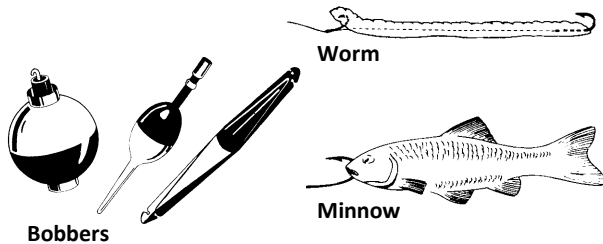
The Improved Clinch Knot

Pass line through the hook eye and, with the tag end, make 5 turns around the standing line. Insert the loose end of the line between the eye and the first loop formed. Bring the tag end through the large second loop formed. Wet the line and tighten the knot slowly.



Hook, Line, and Sinker

Now you are ready to set up your rod with hook, line, and sinker. Tie on a fish hook. Attach 1 or 2 sinkers, 6 to 12 inches above the hook. This weight will keep your bait or lure down in the water and will help swing it away from shore. A bobber lets you know when fish are biting, because it moves up and down in the water as fish nibble at the bait. Most bobbers attach to fishing line with a spring clip and move up and down the line easily, depending on how deep you want to fish the bait.



Channel catfish

Duane Raver/USFWS

What about Accessories?

A tackle box will store a variety of lures, hooks, snap swivels, weights, and tools like long-nose pliers and other gear you can use. You might also need a live bait container (such as a minnow bucket or a worm box), a stringer or an ice chest to keep your catch fresh, a landing net, and a first-aid kit for minor emergencies.

Safety First!

- Fish with a companion who can offer help in an emergency
- Be careful when handling sharp hooks
- Don't cast near other people, and always look around before making a cast.
- Wear a Coast Guard-approved personal flotation device or life vest when wading or in a boat.

Practice Conservation

A good angler respects our natural resources and wants to conserve them for others to enjoy. Always carry out what you brought in and never leave behind plastic containers or packaging. Fishing line is very dangerous to birds and other wildlife, so pick up and recycle.

Catch and Release

Fish should never be wasted. If you catch a fish that is under the legal or minimum size or that you do not want to keep, release it quickly. If possible, keep the fish in the water and handle it carefully. When it begins to wiggle and can swim normally, let it go.



Rainbow trout

Duane Raver/USFWS

Go Fish!

Look for a weedy or rocky area where the water is several feet deep. Look for areas where the bottom changes in some way – from sand to gravel or from sand to mud. Stay quiet and avoid disturbing the water or you may scare fish away. Next, bait your hook. Swing the bait as far from shore as you can and watch the bobber. When a fish bites, raise the tip of the rod quickly to set the hook and reel your catch in.

