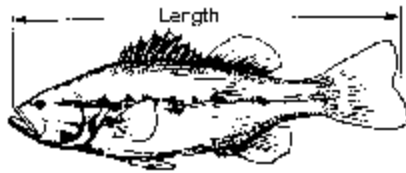


CATCHING A FISH

- Once you see the bobber move, or feel a tug on the line, be sure to set the hook in the fish's mouth (see #5 under *Five Simple Steps to Begin Fishing*). After you set the hook, keep the line tight and your rod tip up. Slowly reel in the fish.



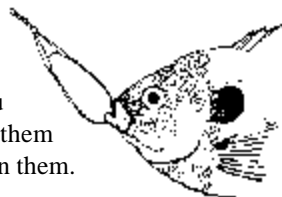
- Now you need to decide what to do with the fish. Is it large enough to keep? Will it be used for food? First, check the fishing regulations to be certain the fish is legal to keep. If it's not, carefully release the fish back into the water, being sure to handle it with wet hands, and as little as possible. A fish that you catch and release carefully can be caught again someday when it is bigger.



- To take a fish off the line, hold it firmly around the body. Watch out for sharp spines on the fish's fins. If it is a bass, put your thumb inside the lower lip, and your forefinger on the outside as illustrated below. (Note: never put your fingers inside the mouth of a toothy fish such as a pike or pickerel). To remove the hook, push it down and turn it so it comes out the way it went in.



- If you decide to keep the fish, you can keep it alive by threading a stringer under the chin and through both lips as illustrated here. Let the fish swim in the water and tie the other end of the stringer to the bank. Some people use wire fish baskets to keep their fish alive. You can also keep fish fresh by putting them on ice in a cooler until you can clean them.



CATCH AND RELEASE

To many people, a fresh fish dinner represents the ideal end to a fishing trip. However, more and more anglers are choosing to release their catch back into the water. Called *catch-and-release* fishing, this practice can minimize your impact on local fisheries.

When practicing catch-and-release, follow these simple guidelines to help the fish's chance of survival:

- ! **Quickly play and land fish**—do not fight fish to exhaustion, especially in warmer water.
- ! **Handle fish as little as possible and release them quickly**—unhook fish in water if possible. Have the necessary tools (needlenose pliers) ready, and be sure to wet your hands when handling the fish.



- ! **When a fish is deeply hooked, do not try to remove the hook**, clip the leader or hook instead.



Remember, fish that are smaller than the legal minimum size limits for that species must be released after you catch them. For more details about catch-and-release, consult the *New York State Fishing Regulations Guide*, or check DEC's website at www.dec.state.ny.us.

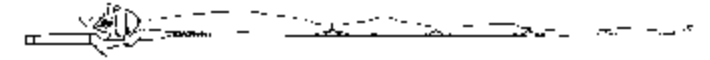


Fishing Basics Getting Started Fishing

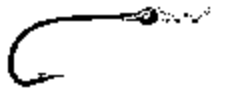


FIVE SIMPLE STEPS TO BEGIN FISHING

- Prepare your rod & reel**—Be sure your reel has line, then press the button of your spin-cast reel or open the bail (if you have a spinning reel) to release line from the reel. Pull enough line out to thread it through all of the guides of your rod.



- Attach a hook**—Hooks come in different sizes and shapes. A #6 or #8 hook with a long shank (straight edge) is a good size to try. Use a clinch knot to tie the hook onto the line (see *How to Tie a Clinch Knot*).



- Attach a bobber**—To attach a bobber, thread the line around the top and bottom hooks. To expose the bottom hook, press the top button on the bobber. For the top hook, press the button while holding the bottom hook in. Attach the bobber so the fish hook hangs just above structure (i.e. weeds, logs, etc.) or the bottom.



- Attach bait**—Place bait on your hook using one of the methods illustrated here.



Worm Rig



Worm Rig for Bait Stealers



Doughball

- Cast and retrieve**—Cast your bait out using the technique in *How to Cast*. Next, turn the reel crank forward until it clicks to prevent more line from coming out. To take up any slack in your line, reel the line in until the float begins to move. When a fish bites, the float will either move along the water's surface or go underwater. When this happens, give the line a quick jerk that's hard enough to move the float and set the hook in the fish's mouth, but not so hard that you send the hook, bait and/or fish flying over your shoulder. Now, reel in the line until you can pick up the fish with your hand.

HOW TO CAST

Learning how to cast takes some practice, but is really pretty simple. Beginners will find it easiest to learn with a spin-cast outfit. (Note: you can first practice casting in your yard by tying a rubber plug, or some other non-sharp weighted object to the line.)

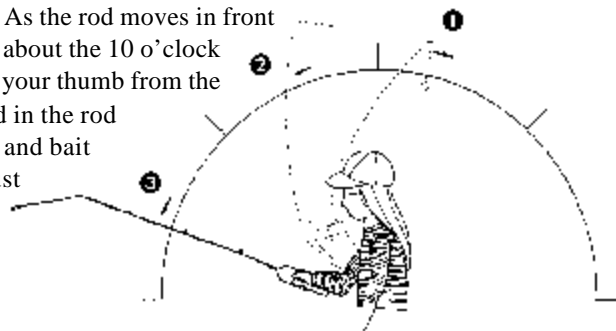
Get a feel for the equipment—Hold the rod out in front of you to get a feel for how the spin-cast reel works. Reel up the line until the bobber is about four inches from the tip of the rod. Now, press down firmly on the release button and hold it there. Notice how the bobber stays in the same place. Now let the release button go. The bobber should fall to the ground. You have just learned how to release the line from the reel, a very important step in casting.



To prevent loops that can become tangles from forming in the line, carefully add tension to the line with your thumb and forefinger while reeling in the line. You should hear a click when you start to reel—that is the pick-up pin of the reel being activated. Now you are all set to wind line back onto the spool of the reel. Remember whenever you are fishing to always reel in enough line after you cast to hear that click. This will prevent excess line from coming out of the reel, and loose line can mean missed fish.

Final Check—Your line is ready and your hook and bobber are tied on. Place your bobber 6-12" from your rod tip and make sure your line is not wrapped around your rod. Before you cast, look behind you to be sure no one else is there. Also, check for trees and bushes that can get in your way.

Casting—Press and hold down the reel's release button. Using wrist action (not the whole arm), slowly bring the rod straight up over your shoulder. Next, gently sweep the rod forward, causing the rod to bend with the motion. As the rod moves in front of you, reaching about the 10 o'clock position, release your thumb from the button. The bend in the rod casts the bobber and bait out. You have just made a cast!



HOW TO TIE A CLINCH KNOT

1. Put the end of the line through the eye of the hook and bring it back toward the line.



2. Make five "S" twists around the line.



3. Take the end back toward the hook and push it through the first loop nearest the eye.



4. Bring the end back through the big loop you just made.



5. Holding the hook and line, pull the knot tight until it looks like the knot shown. Clip the excess line from the knot.



COMMON BAIT RIGS



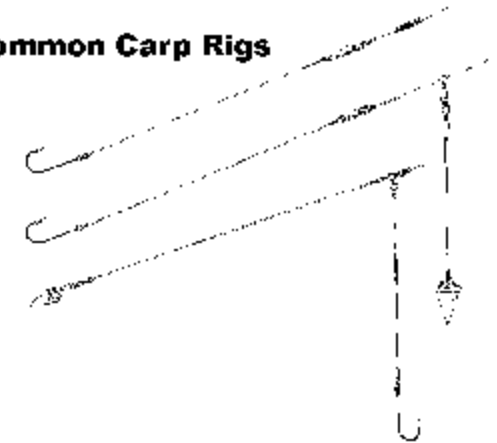
sinker
keeps
minnow
from the
surface

**Bobber and
Minnow Rig**

**Bobber and
Worm Rig**



Common Carp Rigs



Worm Bottom Rig

