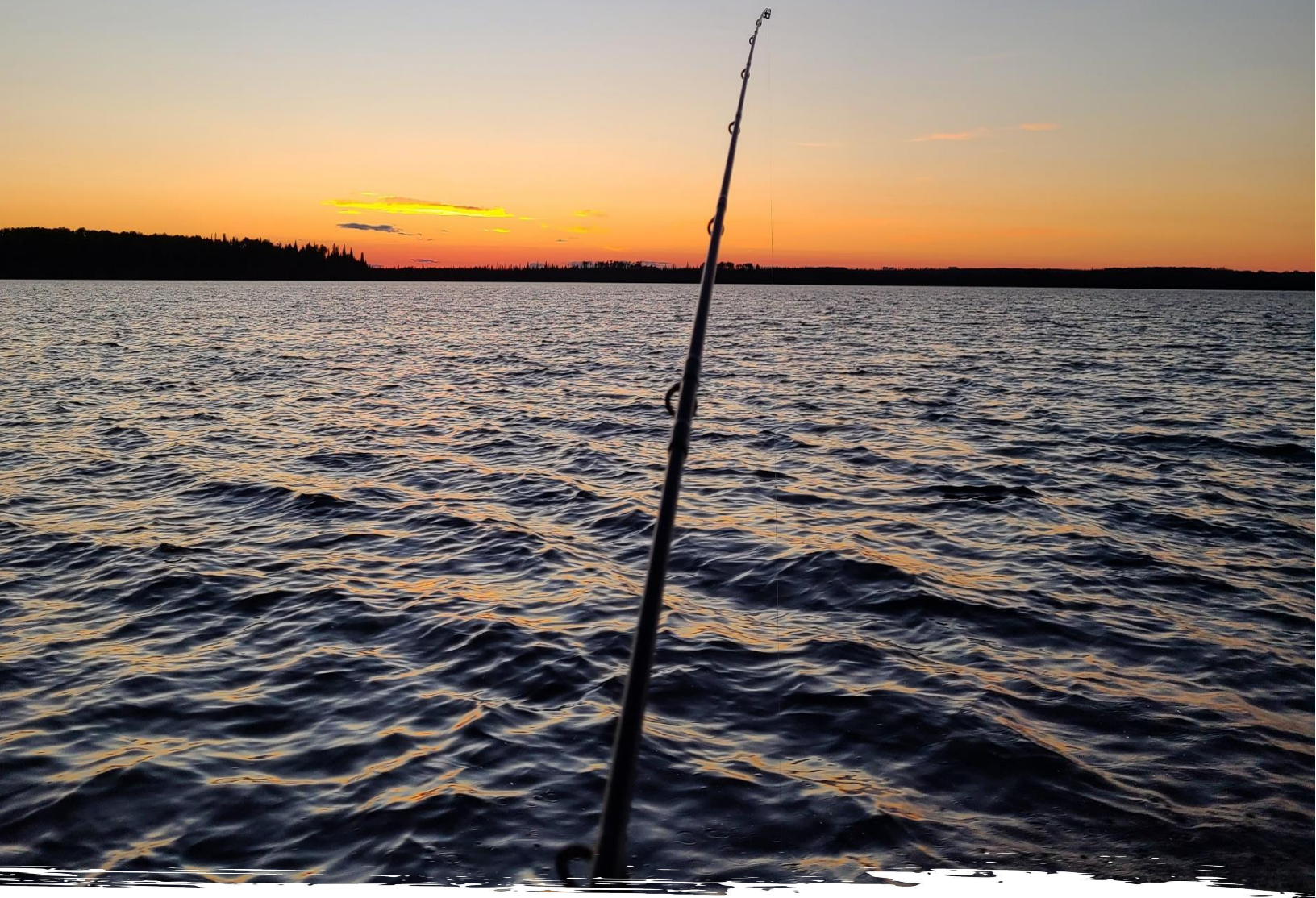




GUEST RESOURCES





PREPARING FOR YOUR TRIP

We have created a list of basic packing requirements to ensure that you are fully equipped and comfortable during your visit with us and during your fishing experience.

GENERAL PACKING LIST

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clothing and personal items (layers are best) | <input type="checkbox"/> Sunscreen |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rain suit | <input type="checkbox"/> Insect repellent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rain boots | <input type="checkbox"/> Sunglasses |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Soap, shampoo & toiletries | <input type="checkbox"/> Hat |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Camera, film & batteries | <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing License |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Small first aid kit | <input type="checkbox"/> Groceries |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Charcoal and lighter fluid for grill | (Check with accommodations on meal options) |

You may also want to bring (but is not necessary)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> GPS | <input type="checkbox"/> Tackle box (especially jigs) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cell phone and charger | <input type="checkbox"/> Fillet knife and sharpener |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waterproof bag to transport items in a boat | <input type="checkbox"/> Pliers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing rods and reels | <input type="checkbox"/> Fish scale |

CLOTHING & ESSENTIALS

Ensure you check the weather in the days leading up to your trip for forecast details. We suggest that you plan your fishing clothing for all weather conditions. Layers that can be added or subtracted are best.

FISHING CLOTHING – COOL WEATHER

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Quality rain gear | <input type="checkbox"/> Insulated gloves and hat |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waterproof footwear | <input type="checkbox"/> Layers – Windbreaker, Hoodie, Fleece |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Heavy shirt & socks | <input type="checkbox"/> Heavier jacket |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Insulated underwear | (recommended in early spring or late fall) |

FISHING CLOTHING – WARM WEATHER

- ☐ Shorts
- ☐ T-shirts
- ☐ Tennis shoes
- ☐ Water shoes

Remember to bring casual clothes and an extra pair of shoes for dining in the lodge and enjoying other activities available on-site.



GETTING A FISHING LICENCE

In order to fish in Ontario's lakes and rivers, you will need to obtain a fishing licence. We have outlined the steps, required information and costs associated with obtaining an Ontario Fishing Licence. Consult with your accommodation provider to see if they have the ability to sell you an Ontario Fishing Licence. They can also assist with determining what licence is right for you. If your accommodation provider does not have the ability to issue a license, be sure to ask where you can get a license.

- 1** You need to first purchase an Outdoors Card. You can apply online at www.huntandfishontario.com, or by phone at 1-800-288-1155, or by visiting the nearest Service Ontario location. For a list of locations, please visit <https://www.ontario.ca/travel-and-recreation/hunting-and-fishing-licence-issuers>. The Outdoors Card is required for people between the ages of 18-65 years old and is valid for 3 years.
- 2** At the time that you purchase your outdoors card, you can also apply for your Ontario Fishing Licence. To obtain your Fishing Licence you can apply online at www.huntandfishontario.com, or by phone at 1-800-288-1155, or by visiting the nearest Service Ontario location. The Ontario Fishing Licence is required for people between the ages of 18-65 years old and is valid for 1 or 3 years.

What information is required to obtain a licence?

- ☒ First and last name
- ☒ Mailing and residential address
- ☒ Date of birth
- ☒ Height and eye colour

Please see below a breakdown of the costs for an Ontario resident to purchase an Outdoors Card and Fishing Licence.

2023 PRICING GUIDE

Outdoors Card	\$8.57
3-year sport fishing licence tag	\$79.71
3-year conservation fishing licence tag	\$45.21
1-year sport fishing licence tag	\$26.57
1-year conservation fishing licence tag	\$15.07
1-day sport fishing licence (You don't need an Outdoors Card) Valid for 1 calendar day starting at 12:00 midnight	\$12.21

PLEASE NOTE: these prices are subject to change so please visit www.ontario.ca/page/fishing-licence-fees-ontario-residents to ensure the information is still accurate.

What is the difference between the conservation and sport fishing licence?

Conservation Fishing Licence
Reduced catch limits.

Sport Fishing Licence
Normal catch limits.



PARTS OF A FISHING ROD

Tip Top

The guide that sits on the tip of the rod. This guide is the easiest to break or damage, so be careful!

Tip

The very end of the rod. This is where the rod is most flexible.

Windings

How the guides get and stay attached to the rod.

Ferrule

For rods that are able to be taken apart, the ferrule is the connecting joint. There are 'male' and 'female' ferrules that connect together in order to form the whole rod.

Butt Guide

The guide closest to the handle of your rod, located on the thickest part of the rod.

Reel Seat

Where the reel attaches to the rod.

Handle / Grip

Where the rod is held.

Butt Cap

This is at the bottom of the handle and can be made of cork or rubber. This is the part that rests against your stomach to gain momentum when trying to reel in a fish.

ACTION

This refers to the flexibility of a rod. It also describes where the rod bends and how much. The bend area of the rod can also be described as where the rod is loaded. Action is defined as fast, medium and slow, with fast being the stiffest and slow being the most flexible of action types.

Guides

These are the rings that line the entirety of the rod. They are used to guide the fishing line down the length of the rod.

Butt

Part of the rod that is closest to the handle.

Hook Keeper

The part of the rod that the hook is attached to in order to avoid accidents while the rod is not in use.

Reel

This is a guide to assist you with the terms that your fishing instructor may use when referring to your fishing rod.



TYPES OF REELS



Spincast:

A closed-face reel. This reel is often used on children's designs because it is the easiest reel to use, however, not very accurate.

Baitcasting:

This reel is not usually used for beginners. It is used with heavy bait and lures and requires strict line control.

Spinning Reel:

Considered the most popular and is open-faced. This reel is easier to use than baitcasting and more accurate than a spincast reel.

DRAG

Is a setting on the reel to determine how much resistance a fish feels when it is hooked. Determining the drag is a fine science since tiring out the fish is desired, but making the drag too tight causes the risk of damaging or breaking the line.



TYPES OF TACKLE



Float / Bobber

These are designed to make sure that your bait is floating around in the water. Use the smallest one possible for the weight of your bait but make sure that it does stay afloat.



Sinker:

These are weights made of metal that attach to the line in order to create a balance between the float and tackle.



Leader:

A separate piece of line that the hook is tied to that is used to stop fish with teeth from biting your line.



Swivel:

This is a rotating tool attached to the line. It helps to prevent the line from twisting.



Bait:

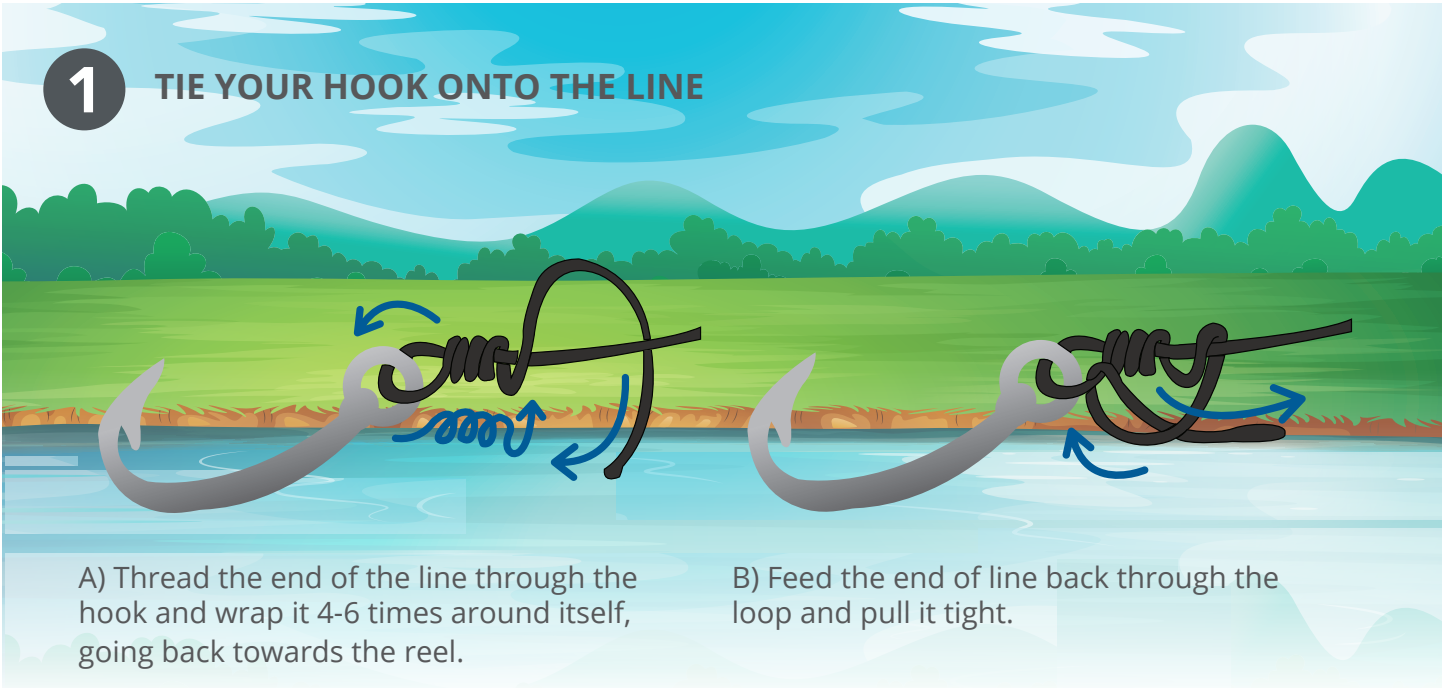
Bait can be live or synthetic and is designed to resemble food in order to encourage fish to bite and get hooked on your rod. Examples of bait include: worms, minnows, grasshoppers and a wide variety of synthetic items.

TERMINAL TACKLE

These include hooks, weights, swivels, floats and any other tools that go on the end of your line to attract fish.

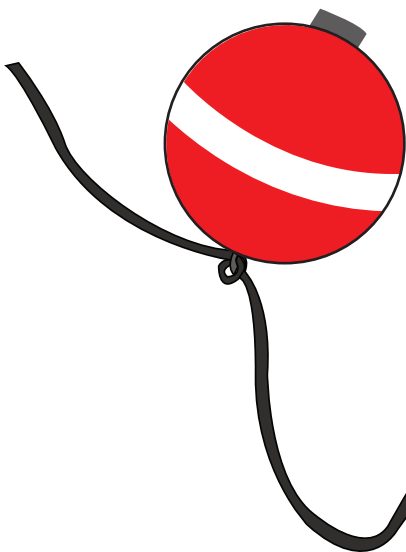
1

TIE YOUR HOOK ONTO THE LINE



2

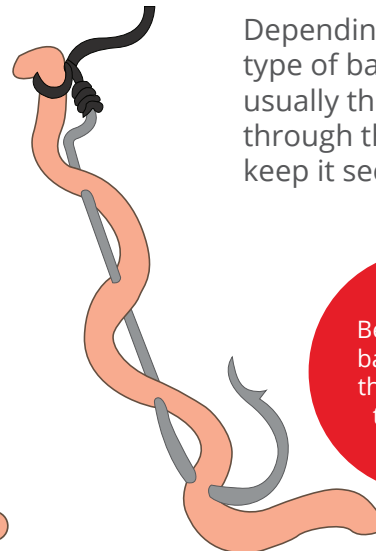
ATTACH YOUR BOBBER AND WEIGHTS TO THE LINE



Beginners should use a large bobber so it is easier to see when a fish has been caught. Attach your weights about 12" above the hook.

3

BAIT YOUR HOOK



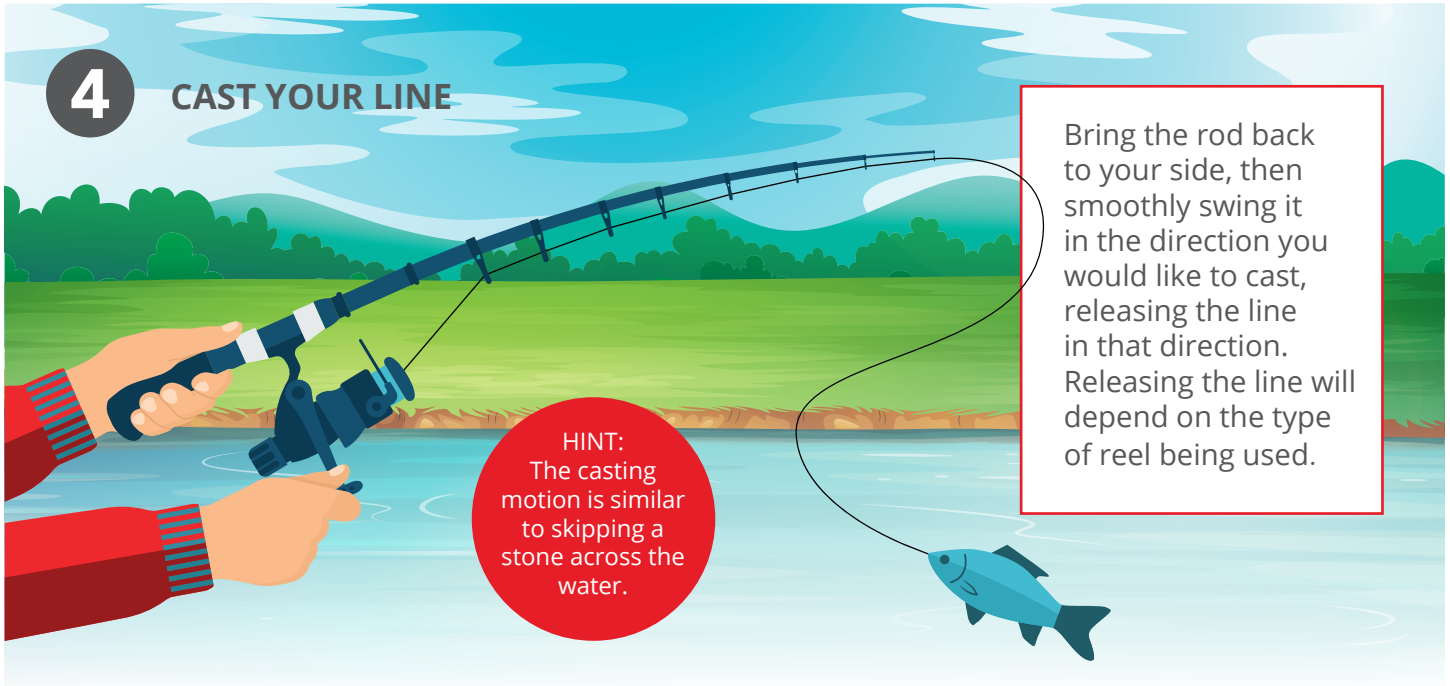
Depending on the type of bait used, you usually thread the bait through the hook to keep it secure.

HINT:
Bend the bait back towards the hook and then again halfway.

HOW TO CATCH A FISH

4

CAST YOUR LINE



HINT:
The casting motion is similar to skipping a stone across the water.

Bring the rod back to your side, then smoothly swing it in the direction you would like to cast, releasing the line in that direction. Releasing the line will depend on the type of reel being used.

5

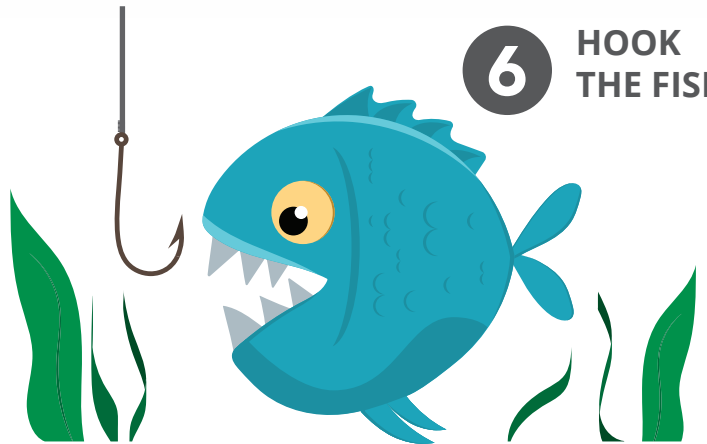
WAIT AND RELAX

You can reel in the line slowly while lightly jerking the line to simulate the movement of live bait. However, do not immediately start reeling back as soon as you've cast.

HINT:
Sit quietly as fish can get startled by loud noises.

6

HOOK THE FISH



After you feel a tug on the line, you will want to do a quick jerk backwards and up. This will secure the fish on the hook.

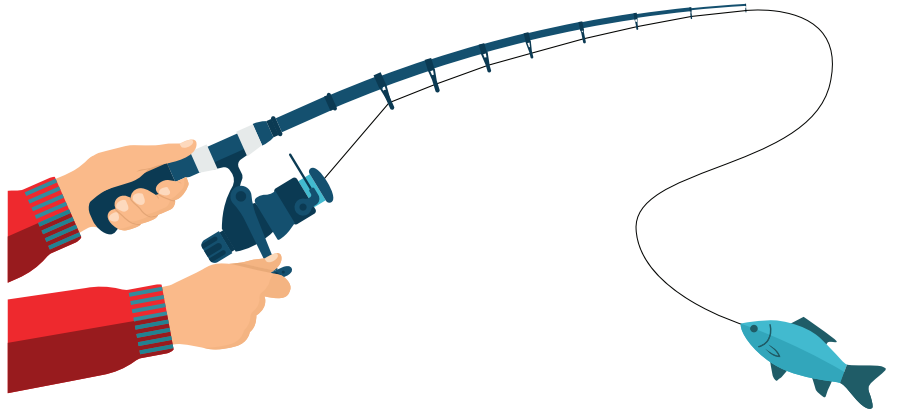
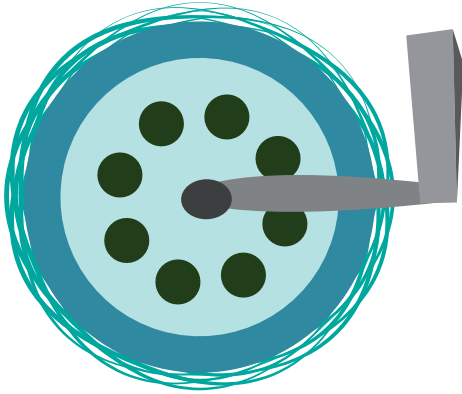


HOW TO CATCH A FISH

7

REEL IN THE FISH

Pull the fish in by pumping and lifting the rod vertically while reeling in the line. Make sure to keep the line tight so you don't lose the fish.



8

USE A NET TO CAPTURE THE FISH

When placing the fish in the net, be careful of the fish's sharp spines and the hook, which might be sticking out of the mouth.

9

DECIDE IF YOU ARE RELEASING OR KEEPING THE FISH

Regardless of your decision, you will need to gently back the hook out of the fish's mouth. If you are releasing the fish, put it gently back in the water.

HINT:
Using pliers
will make this
process
easier.



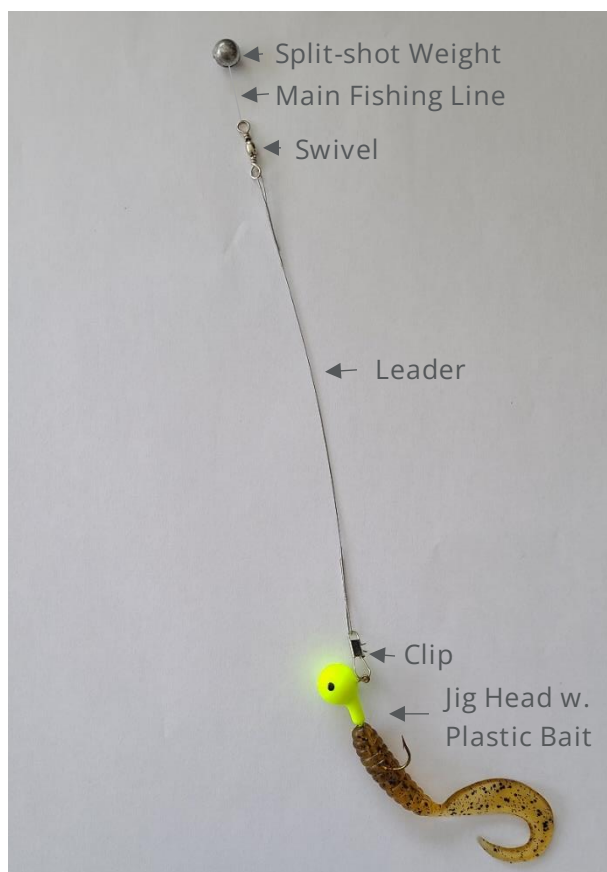
Now that you are comfortable with tying knots and baiting hooks, it's time to get familiar with the different types of rig set-ups you can do when fishing.

WHAT IS A RIG?

The items used for fishing when assembled together is called a rig. A rig is typically composed of fishing line, a leader, weight or sinker, hooks and bait. There are numerous different rig set-ups, but we will introduce you to the three most popular ones below.

The Carolina Rig:

Often used when using the jigging fishing technique (cast, let the rig sink to the bottom, move your fishing rod in a slow-and-steady up and down motion).



FUN FACTS:

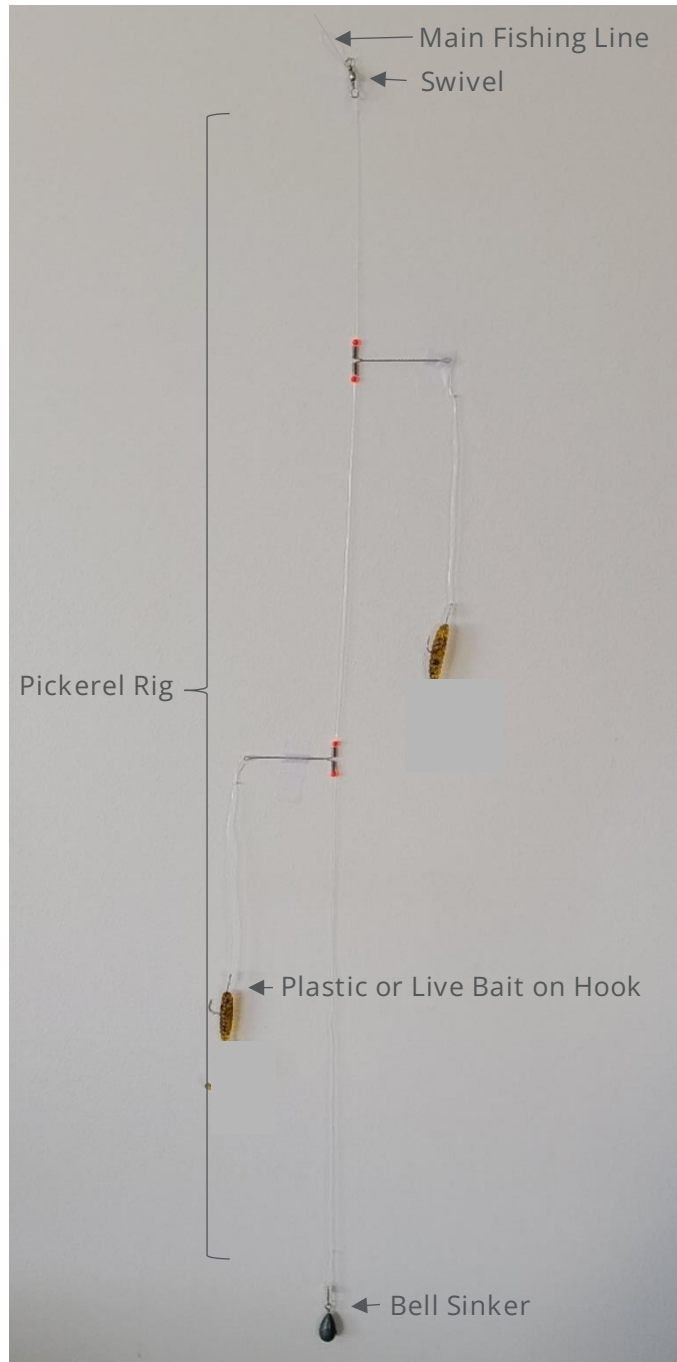
Anglers will often put a colourful or glass bead on their main fishing line between the split shot weight and swivel when building a Carolina Rig. This is not mandatory (as shown in image), but it is an option.

Leaders often come with a swivel at the top, and clip at the bottom to help you secure your tackle of choice!

You can opt to use a regular hook with bait instead of a jig head. To add visibility to your rig with just a hook, consider adding a bead to your rig as described above.

Pickerel Rig

Often used by those who want to cast, let their rig sink near the bottom of the lake, and wait for bites. Easiest rig for beginner anglers looking to simply catch a fish.



FUN FACTS:

You don't need to use a leader when using a pickerel rig, but if you already have one tied to your line, feel free to keep it there!

Leaders often come with a swivel at the top, and clip at the bottom to help you secure your tackle of choice. This also makes it easier to switch your tackle and rig set-ups.

Pickerel rigs are fairly cheap to purchase and typically come with a swivel already installed and the two hooks for you to tie to the rig.

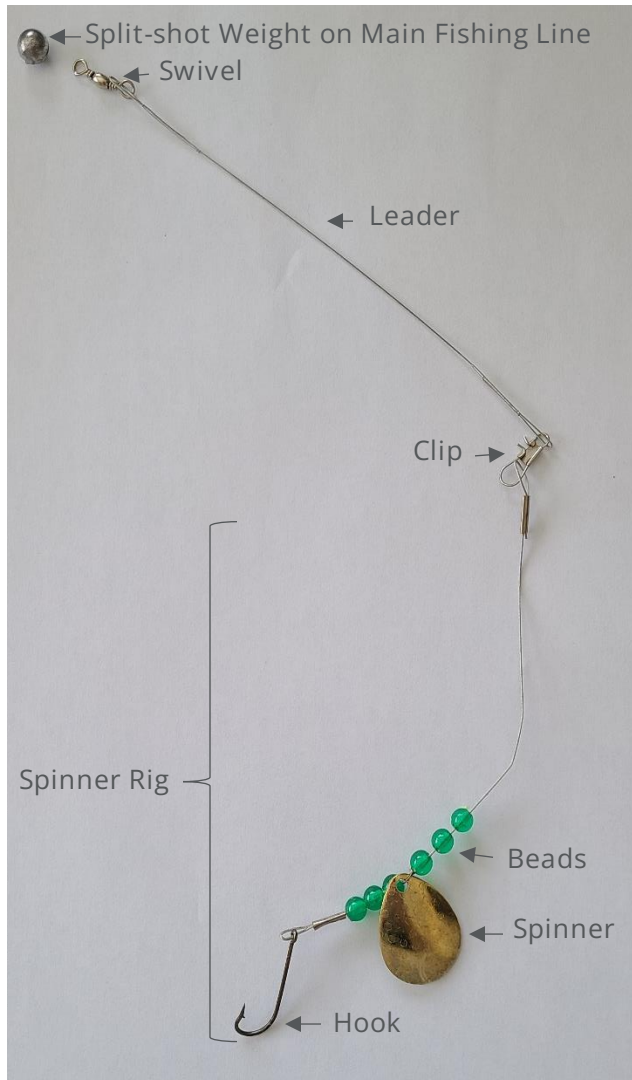
Bell sinkers are also fairly cheap!

Pickerel rig jigs are often what beginner anglers use when they are simply looking to catch a fish.

It is possible to catch many different types of species with a pickerel rig set up. If you are looking to catch larger fish, you may want to opt for a stronger rig set-up like a Carolina or Spinner Rig.

Spinner Rig

Often used when using the trolling technique (pulling bait behind a slow-moving boat), or casting technique (casting, waiting a few seconds to let it sink, and slowly reeling your line back in).



FUN FACTS:

Split-shots are very user friendly! Simply place your fishing line deep within the slit, and firmly pinch the split-shot shut. To remove the split-shot, you may be able to do it with your fingers but depending on how well you pressed, you may need pliers to pull it apart.

Spinner rigs are sold in stores for fairly cheap! They typically come with the line, beads, spinner, and hook already assembled and ready to go. Stores also sell make-your-own spinner kits!

There are many different colours, sizes and types to choose from! Some spinner rigs have 1 hook while others have 2. One hook is recommended for beginners as they are less likely to get tangled as you practice the art of casting.

Don't forget to bait your hook(s)!

Regardless of what type of rig set-up you choose, don't hesitate to try different tackle and bait colour combinations! You'll often find anglers with large collections of different coloured spinners, jig heads, spoons and plastic baits, and they will often change them as they fish to see what combination gets the most bites. Be creative and most importantly, have fun!

Congratulations! You caught a fish! Understanding how to handle your fish is one of the first few steps you can take to be a good angler and to promote fishing conservation. Looking to keep your fish? Make sure you know your limits and seasons for the area you are in. Here are some tips:

Ontario Fishing Regulations: <https://www.ontario.ca/document/ontario-fishing-regulations-summary>

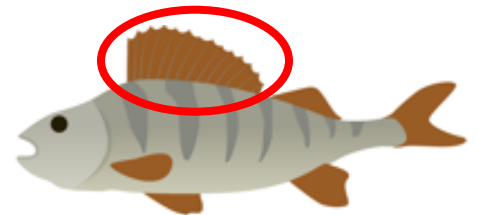
1 Use a rubberized net to bring the fish into your boat or out of the water onto shore. If you're bringing a fish onto shore, have someone hold the net off the ground while you prepare to unhook the fish. Placing the fish on the land (rocks, beach, shoreline) is likely to remove the slime coat on the fish and may also physically hurt the fish.



2 Use wet hands when handling the fish, or rubberized gloves if you must wear gloves. This helps maintain the slime coat on the fish which protects it from bacteria, fungus and parasites, and aids in swimming. Never use cotton gloves or a towel to handle fish as this will remove its slime coat.

3 Hold the fish horizontally whenever possible. This is the way fish naturally swim through the water.

4 Keep fingers away from the gills and eyes. Also be mindful that some fish species also have spiny dorsal fins which may poke or cut your hand. Do not drop the fish onto hard surfaces.



5 Use tools to help you release the fish and minimize handling (dehooker, pliers).

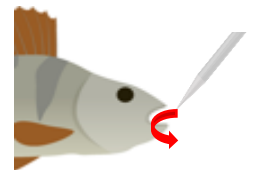
RELEASING THE FISH:

6 Release the fish as soon as possible and do not keep them out of the water for longer than necessary. Release your fish gently by first placing their head into the water, which helps push water through the mouth and over the gills, and helps the fish recover. Revive exhausted fish by placing the fish in the water, facing the current if possible, with one hand under its belly and the other hand holding the bottom lip or tail.



KEEPING THE FISH:

Do not keep them out of the water for longer than necessary. Gently put the sharp end of the chain hook or fish stringer into the fish's mouth, and push it through the thin membrane and out the underside of the mouth. This technique doesn't risk damage to the fish's delicate gills, allowing it to breathe easily and making it live longer so your catch remains fresh until you are ready to clean it.



7

RELEASING THE FISH:

Be sure to stay up-to-date on current regulations surrounding fish handling, measuring, and when you are permitted to take pictures with the fish:
<https://www.ontario.ca/document/ontario-fishing-regulations-summary>

KEEPING THE FISH:

Fasten the chain or stringer to your boat, or fasten to a dock, nearby tree or other secure, heavy item while keeping the fish in the water. You may need additional rope to allow you to fasten the chain or stringer to a nearby object if fishing on-shore.

Tips to Avoid Injuring the Fish & Steps You Can Take to be a Good Angler

To minimize injury to the fish, consider using barbless hooks! These are easy to remove and will cause the least amount of damage to the fish.

Be quick to set the hook! The longer the fish plays with your bait, the deeper inside its body the hook is likely to go. You want the hook set somewhere in the fish's mouth. As soon as you feel a bite, give the line a good tug to set the hook.

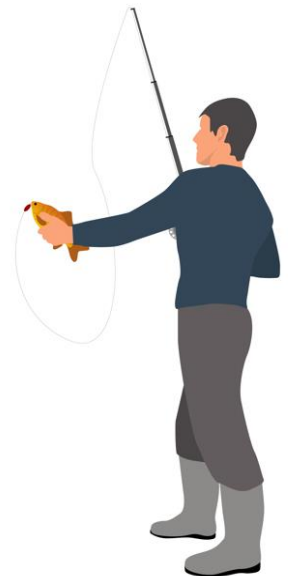
Be smooth but quick when reeling in a fish. Fish exhaust themselves relatively quickly when fighting an angler. The quicker and smoother you can get from catch to release, the better it is for the fish.

As you gain confidence as an angler, if you can, remove the hook without pulling the fish out of water - that is the ideal situation.

If the fish swallowed your hook and it is lodged deep within it, it's sometimes better to leave the hook in than risk damaging the internal organs of the fish. Cut the line just outside the fish's mouth and let it go. If the fish survives, it will eventually shed the hook and new tissue will grow, or the hook will corrode. This is when using non-stainless steel hooks is advised, as they'll corrode quicker than stainless steel ones.

Practice good conservation! Larger fish are the breeders of the population. Putting larger fish back into the lake will allow the fish to continue to breed, and ensure that fishing opportunities remain available for generations to come.

You'll often hear an angler say that larger fish don't taste as good, and that's because they are higher in fats, oils, contaminants and chemicals like PCBs and mercury. Ingesting high levels of mercury and PCBs may have harmful effects on a human's brain and nervous system. This **doesn't** mean you need to be afraid to eat your fish! The Ministry of Health has a very comprehensive guide to how many fish meals you can safely eat in a month: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/guide-eating-ontario-fish>



Photography Tips

Before taking a picture of your catch, ensure you are in compliance with the Ontario regulations. Current regulations require anglers to immediately release fish where retention or possession is prohibited. This includes fish that are caught out of season, over the daily catch or possession limit, of a restricted size, or improperly caught.

NOTE: The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry are proposing changes to these regulations which would allow anglers time to photograph, measure and weight the fish caught during the open season for that species, while prohibiting these activities and requiring the immediate release of fish that are out of season, are species at risk, or are otherwise prohibited under the existing recreational fishing regulations. *If approved*, these new changes would come into effect late 2023 or in 2024.

- 1 Do not squish the belly/guts of your fish when holding it. This will constrict their internal organs which adds stress to the fish you are trying to release.



- 2 Hold the fish horizontally. With one hand, gently grip just before the tail meets the body of the fish and place the other hand under the pectoral fins allowing the fish to rest on your hand without gripping.



Cleaning and Cooking Fish


Keep your fish in the water and alive as long as possible to maintain the freshness of your catch. If you have a live well with an aerator on your boat, you can place a few frozen water bottles in there to keep fish cool and alive until you decide to cull.

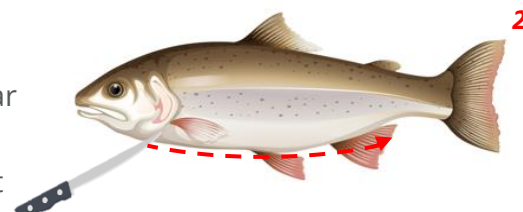
Fish can easily spoil within 1 to 2 hours if they die. In the event your fish does die while you are on the water, it is recommended that you bleed and gut the fish to prevent spoiling. The enzymes and bacteria in the fish guts continue to work long after the fish is dead and can lead to the breakdown of tissues and make you sick if consumed. Follow the next steps to clean the fish.


IMPORTANT NOTE: If you are gutting the fish while on the water, you must keep the head, scales and tail of the fish intact for identification purposes in the event a Conservation Officer comes to examine your catch. Place the guts in a plastic bag and dispose of them in a garbage when you return to shore. Put the gutted fish in your cooler to prevent spoiling (either in a bag or directly on ice).

Cleaning and Cooking Fish

- 1 Use a pair of side cutters or a fillet knife to bleed your fish. On the belly side of the fish, cut the section between the left and right gill. Cut a gill as well to cull the fish swiftly and prevent suffering if the fish is alive.


- 2 Using a sharp fillet knife, insert the knife at the base of the gills and shallowly cut a line from the gills, down the belly of the fish, all the way to the anus. Don't push your knife too far in as you may cut open the intestines leading to messy spillage. If you do clip the intestines, make sure to scoop out all of the spillage.


- 3 Use your fingers or a spoon to scoop out the guts of the fish. Pull out everything from the fish and check inside to make sure that all you see is the white or pink-ish flesh. Put the guts in a bucket or plastic bag to dispose of them in the garbage.


- 4 Once bleed and gutted, use a water bottle or place the fish in your net and back in the water to rinse it until fairly clean, then immediately place it on ice cubes or an ice block. This will ensure your catch will remain in prime condition for consumption. Coolers with wheels are best for this as they are heavy but the wheels make it easier to move around.
- 5 Once you are ready to cook your fish, use cold running water to rinse the inside of the fish thoroughly to remove any remaining blood, scales, oils, etc. Cook or deep fry the fish until it reaches the safe minimum internal temperature. The Health Canada Standard for fish is 158°F (70°C).

NOTE: Every fish has slightly different anatomy and you will see that cleaning a Northern Pike is harder and involves slightly different techniques than cleaning fish like Walleye or Perch. There are several fish cleaning videos on YouTube which you can follow-along as you clean your fish. You may have a few bones in your fillets the first few times you clean fish but don't get discouraged! Practice makes perfect!

As you gain confidence as an angler, you may be looking to fish for specific species. Below are tips to target the most popular species anglers enjoy. Always ensure you review the fishing regulations for the area you are looking to fish. The season for specific species may be open or closed during various times of the year, and certain lakes may be closed year-round as they have been designated as a sanctuary by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. View fishing regulations online: <https://www.ontario.ca/document/ontario-fishing-regulations-summary>

NORTHERN PIKE



EQUIPMENT:

Northern Pike are very large fish that will put up a fight. Make sure your rod and line are up to the task. Medium to heavy power rods, and a strong braided line (minimum 15lbs test) are ideal when pike fishing. A spinning reel will work just fine.

On your line, you want to make sure you use a steel leader at all times.

Pike are very visual feeders and tend to be attracted to bright colours. They are also known for having eyes bigger than their stomachs. Don't be afraid to go bigger with your tackle. Spinners, spoons, hard plastic baits or loud topwater baits are good choices.

Bring a net to avoid breaking the tip of your rod when bringing the fish in. You'll also want long nose pliers and a jaw spreader, as unhooking them can be a delicate process.



Braided Line & Steel Leader



Jaw Spreader



Long Nose Pliers



Topwater Bait



Spoons



Spinner



TARGETING SPECIES

LOCATION:

Northern Pike are typically found in or around any type of aquatic vegetation. If you see any shallow water (2 to 15ft) and weedy areas on a lake or river, this is typically where you would find them. Like most fish, pike are active during the early morning and evening.

TECHNIQUE:

Pike like to wait and ambush their prey. Most pike are caught by trolling (pulling bait behind a slow-moving boat) or casting, waiting a few seconds, and slowly reeling your line back in. The goal is to swim the lure quickly just above the top of underwater weed beds.



WALLEYE



EQUIPMENT:

A medium power rod with a spinning reel is the best when fishing for walleye. This rod combination is the best when fishing for many different types of freshwater fish species. A 6 to 8lbs monofilament line is ideal. It is also recommended to have a steel, or fluorocarbon leader.

Depending on where you are fishing, live bait like minnows or worms are great when targeting walleye. If the area does not permit live bait, or if you want to experiment, you will also need some soft plastic baits.

Jigging is the most popular technique for targeting walleye therefore you will definitely need jig heads. Many individuals will go for chartreuse jig heads (yellow/green), although you may want to play around with different colour combinations of jig heads and plastic baits to see what works best for you. Your plastic bait should be fully secured, covering the barb of the hook (if any), and the



Monofilament Line & Leader



Plastic Baits



TARGETING SPECIES

hook should exit the plastic with a gap long enough to get a good hook set in a fish (see example below). You may also choose to use a live bait rig, spinner rig or crankbaits.

You will also need sinkers. A ¼ oz weight is ideal in most situations. If it is very windy, or you need to access deeper waters, you may want to go up to a ½ oz weight. There are many different types of sinkers, but egg or teardrop shaped sinkers will let your rigs drag across the bottom while reducing the chances of snags.



Sinkers

Bring a net, pliers and a jaw spreader, as unhooking them can be a delicate process.



Jig Head



Jig Head with Plastic Bait



Spinner Rig



Live Bait Rig



Crankbaits

LOCATION:

Walleye love structure in lakes. Structure is defined as a-typical areas of the waterbody's floor that varies in depth or consistency from the general make up of the lake. Points on shorelines (where shallow water protrudes out into the lake) turns, bends, mouth of bays or creeks, rocky ledges, or areas near banks of islands in the lake are ideal walleye areas. Walleye's love points because they support multiple water depth irregularities around a small area.



Walleye are typically found in 15 to 30ft in depth. They seek deeper water during the day and feed in shallow areas at night. Like most fish, walleye are active during the early morning and evening.

TECHNIQUE:

Jigging (gently moving your rod in an up and down motion), is the most popular technique for targeting walleye. Trolling slowly with crankbaits or spinners when fishing offshore can also prove successful.



Visit Experience Fishing's
YouTube Channel for videos
of fishing techniques!

BASS



EQUIPMENT

Similarly to walleye, you will want a medium power rod with a spinning reel. A 10lb monofilament line will do. Bass are aggressive therefore it is recommended that anglers consider a leader when bass fishing.

For tackle, crankbaits, spinners, weedless or heavy cover jigs, swimbaits or topwater lures are commonly used. Lipless crankbaits will allow you to access deeper waters with more structure. Plastic baits are also important to have. Ideal plastic baits when bass fishing include worms, curl tail grubs, shad jerk baits, or tube baits. When fishing in shallow waters with vegetation, you may want to consider natural colours (green, brown, black). For deeper waters with rocky structure, you may want brighter colours like chartreuse, pink, or blue.

You'll also need some sinkers. 1/4 oz to 1/8 oz will do fine.



Monofilament Line & Leader



Heavy Cover Jig



Topwater Lure



Lipless Crankbait



Plastic Worms



Spinners

LOCATION

Bass are a hard species to target as they often travel alone or in small pods of 2 or 3 fish. Finding the right combination of depth, structure, cover, water temperature and conditions for the lake you are fishing is what will make you successful.

Bass love areas where transitions in structure occur, such as shoreline points, humps, holes, drop offs, and areas where creeks or rivers enter a lake as these promote changes in



TARGETING SPECIES

depth or bottom consistency. Bass also love cover to ambush prey. Docks, weed beds, rocks, logs, sunken trees and lily pads provide great cover. Your goal is to position yourself near both structure and cover.

Like most fish, bass are active in the early mornings and late evening. This is a great time for shore or dock anglers to take advantage of their position in the shallower areas.

TECHNIQUE

There are quite a few techniques for bass fishing, but as a beginner you will want to "Work the Bottom" which involves bouncing your soft bait rig along the bottom of the lake, while alternating between dragging it steadily at the bottom, and lifting your rod to let the bait drop back with a pause (alternating from slow side to side, to up and down motions with your rod).

You will want to cast along the edge of a structure instead of across from it. If you see a part of the shoreline protruding outwards, or the edge of a weed bed, you may want to cast along side it, rather than in front of it.

You may also choose the "rolling" technique which involves targeting underwater cover like sunken trees, rocks, or logs with a snag-less set up like a spinnerbait and dragging it onto the sides of the cover. You will want to let your rig thump against the rocks, logs or trees and let your lure roll over to the shady side of the cover. You may get snagged a few times when you first try this technique, but don't give up! Practice makes perfect!



PERCH



EQUIPMENT

Any rod and spinning reel combo with a 6 to 8lb monofilament line is what you'll need when targeting perch. The perk of fishing for perch is that you don't need any advanced gear or tackle.



Monofilament Line



TARGETING SPECIES

They will bite just about anything that will fit in their mouths. Live bait, such as worms or minnows are the most effective option, but always make sure that the area where you are fishing permits live bait. It is common to catch perch with nothing but a hook and a worm. Jigs or spinners are also commonly used when fishing for perch. You will want bright coloured lures like white or chartreuse, or metallic lures if fishing in darker waters.



Worm with Hook

You'll also want some light split-shot weights and bell sinkers which will help you get your hook and bait near the bottom of the lake.



Jig Head



Metallic Spinner



Split-shot Weights



Bell Sinker



Plastic Worms

LOCATION

Yellow perch typically stay near the bottom of lakes, although it is common to catch them in a wide range of depth, with smaller fish staying close to the shore and larger perch being found in deep water. You can find them in waters between 8 to 12 ft, and as deep as 25 to 35ft.

Perch are often found in schools of 50 to 200 fish so if you catch one, you will likely catch many more in the same area. They like areas with a mixture of rocks and aquatic vegetation. Drop-offs and shallow reefs surrounded by deeper water are great places to find perch. Like all fish, they are most active in the morning and evening.



TECHNIQUE

After you cast, let your hook and bait drop to the bottom of the lake. You may want to use the jigging technique (gently moving your rod in an up and down motion), or trolling technique if in a boat (pulling bait behind a slow-moving boat). You may also choose to set up a bobber and wait for bites. It is entirely up to you.

TROUT



IMPORTANT NOTE: Trout are heavily regulated in Ontario and many areas have strict regulations, short fishing seasons, or are closed year-round for trout fishing. Make sure to check the Ontario Fishing Regulations before setting out: <https://www.ontario.ca/document/ontario-fishing-regulations-summary>

EQUIPMENT

There are many different species of trout from rainbow trout, lake trout, brown trout and more. Most are the same shape and size, it's the colour of their scales that vary the most. Any type of rod with a spinning reel, and a 6lb monofilament line is best.

You'll also need sinkers (split-shots or bell are ideal), hooks and bobbers. You may also want to use spinners or spoons when targeting trout. Trout aren't picky and will go for almost any type of bait. You may want to use worms, insects like crickets, or you may want to experiment with different plastic baits like PowerBaits.



Trout PowerBait



Bobber



Split-Shot Weight



Bell Sinker



Spinner



Spoons



TARGETING SPECIES

LOCATION

Trout are commonly found in cleaner, cold, freshwater lakes, rivers, streams, creeks, and ponds. They typically move around looking for food while not straying too far away from cover that offers protection. Due to this, you will find them near or above aquatic vegetation, around logs, stumps or rocks. They usually are found in deeper waters in the summer where the cooler waters are.



TECHNIQUE

When fishing for trout, you have a few techniques to choose from. You may want to suspend the baited hook under a bobber and wait for bites. This technique is great for when you want to keep your bait suspended above a weed bed.

You may also want to "fish the bottom" to target deeper water. For this technique, you would not use a bobber, however you would install a weight about one foot above the baited hook and cast it out and wait for bites.

The third technique would be to use a spinner or spoon, cast it over trout-habitat-looking water, let it sink for a minute, then begin reeling your line in smoothly.



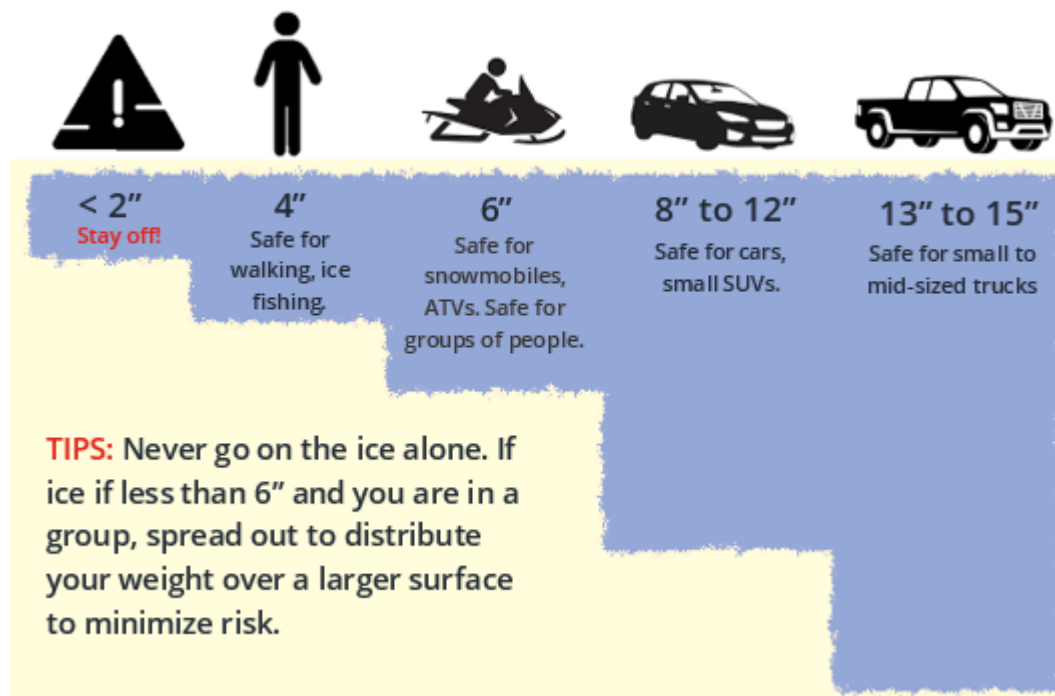
ICE FISHING RESOURCES





ICE SAFETY

Before venturing out onto a frozen lake, there are some very important safety steps you must take. Always remember, **no ice is safe ice**. Ice safety is highly dependent on ice thickness. Always check in with local authorities and personally check the ice thickness regularly. Obey posted signs indicating when and where ice surface is acceptable for winter activities. Avoid going out on ice at night.



As part of your ice-checking process, you should also evaluate the color of the ice since that can give you information about its strength. An easy way to remember which color is safe is "Thick and blue, tried and true - white and crispy way too risky."

Transparent blue/black ice – SAFE & STRONG
White opaque ice – WEAK, USE EXTREME CAUTION
Gray ice – STAY OFF
White and grey mottled – STAY OFF

The final step is taking ice measurements **regularly**. Do not test alone; always ensure you're using the buddy system. You can chip the ice with an axe or hatchet to create a small hole in the ice or use an ice auger or ice chisel. Measure the thickness of the ice in the hole. Continue to check the ice thickness as you move around the lake. REMEMBER: ice thickness is **NOT** uniform across most lakes and rivers. Avoid where rivers and streams flow as the water may not completely freeze over.



ICE SAFETY

It is always better to err on the side of caution when it comes to ice safety. If you see any of these signs during your inspections, do not go out onto the ice:

- cracks, breaks or holes in the ice
- water on top of the ice
- water flowing onto the ice
- ice that's soft or mushy
- flowing springs in spring-fed ponds and lakes
- ice that appears to have thawed and refrozen
- thick snow on the ice; snow can warm up the ice as it acts like an insulator

WHAT TO DO IF YOU GET INTO TROUBLE:

It is always best to go out on the ice using the buddy system but if you are ever by yourself, follow these steps:

- Call for help. Use your whistle if you have one. Get help from trained professionals (police, fire fighters or ambulance) or bystanders.
- Resist the immediate urge to climb back out where you fell in. The ice is weak in this area.
- Try to relax and catch your breath.
- Turn yourself towards the shore.
- Reach your arms forward onto the broken ice without pushing down. Kick your legs (swimming kicks) to try to get your body into a horizontal position.
- Continue kicking your legs, and crawl onto the ice.
- When you are back on the ice, crawl on your stomach or roll away from the open area with your arms and legs spread out as far as possible to evenly distribute your body weight.
- Do not stand up! Look for shore and make sure you are crawling in the right direction.
- Move to a safe position on shore and wait for trained professionals to arrive (police, firefighters, ambulance).

When you are with another person, follow these steps:

- Call for help. Get help from trained professionals (police, fire fighters or ambulance) or bystanders.
- Check if you can reach the person using a long pole or branch, lie down and extend the pole to the person.
- If you save someone on the ice, wear a PFD and carry a long pole or branch to test the ice in front of you. Bring something to reach or throw to the person (e.g. pole, weighted rope, or tree branch).
- When near the break, lie down to distribute your weight and slowly crawl toward the hole.
- Remaining low, extend or throw your emergency rescue device (pole, rope, line or branch) to the person.
- Have the person kick their legs while you pull them out.
- Move the person to a safe position on shore or where you are sure the ice is thick.

OTHER SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS:

- Keep a close eye on the weather. Changing weather and snowfall can cover waters and landmarks and leave you disoriented. Reduced visibility also increases the risk of passing over weak or open ice.
- Carry a fully-charged GPS, a compass and map as a backup.
- Loosen buckles, bindings, and undo belts on any equipment so they can be removed in an emergency.
- Do not travel over ice in early and late winter when conditions are more likely to be dangerous.
- Avoid slushy, thawed, recently refrozen ice, or ice near moving water.
- Avoid going on the ice at night.
- Don't travel on ice alone. Leave a trip plan with someone that includes where you're going, for how long, and when you will be back. If you are unable to leave a trip plan with someone, leave a note on your car windshield.
- Don't consume alcohol. Alcohol impairs judgment and reduces your ability to stay warm in cold conditions.

Carry a personal safety kit that includes:

- a lighter
- waterproof matches
- pocket knife
- cellphone in a waterproof pouch.

Bring ice safety essentials with you:

- ice chisel
- ice claws/picks
- throw rope
- whistle
- first aid kit
- boot cleats
- extra food and water
- fire starter
- change of clothes





IDENTIFYING HEALTH HAZARDS

It's also important to know the signs of what could be potential medical emergency. When ice fishing, the greatest risks are frostbite and hypothermia. Know the signs and be prepared.

FROSTBITE

Frostbite is a type of injury caused by freezing. Signs of frostbite include a loss of feeling and colour in the area(s) affected, and usually affects extremities such as the nose, ears, cheeks, fingers and toes. Frostbite can cause permanent damage, and severe cases may require amputation.

HOW TO PREVENT FROSTBITE:

- Dress appropriately when going out in cold temperatures.
- If you are experiencing any redness and pain on exposed or ill-protected skin, get out of the cold.

SYMPTOMS:

- White or grayish-yellow area on skin
- Skin that feels unusually firm or waxy
- Numbness



IF YOU HAVE FROSTBITE:

If you notice signs of frostbite on yourself or someone else, do the following and seek medical care:

- Go into a warm space as soon as possible.
- Unless absolutely necessary, do not walk on feet or toes that show signs of frostbite—this increases the damage.
- Do not rub the frostbitten area. This can cause more damage.
- Put the areas affected by frostbite in warm—not hot—water (the temperature should be comfortable to the touch for unaffected parts of the body).
- If warm water is not available, warm the affected area using body heat.
- **Do not use** a heating pad, heat lamp, or the heat of a stove, fireplace, or radiator for warming. Affected areas are numb and can easily burn.

Frostbites should always be examined by a health care professional.



IDENTIFYING HEALTH HAZARDS

HYPOTHERMIA

Hypothermia is caused when you are exposed to cold temperatures for a long period of time and your body begins to lose heat faster than it is being produced. Low body temperature affects the brain, making the victim unable to think clearly or move well. While the risk of hypothermia is most likely in very cold temperatures, it can occur even in cool temperatures if an individual becomes chilled from rain, sweat or is submersed in cold water.

HOW TO PREVENT HYPOTHERMIA:

- Dress appropriately
- Bring lots of food
- Go to a warm place or indoors when you begin to feel cold
- Do not consume alcohol

SYMPTOMS:

- Shivering
- Exhaustion or feeling weak and very tired
- Confusion
- Fumbling hands
- Memory loss
- Slurred speech
- Drowsiness



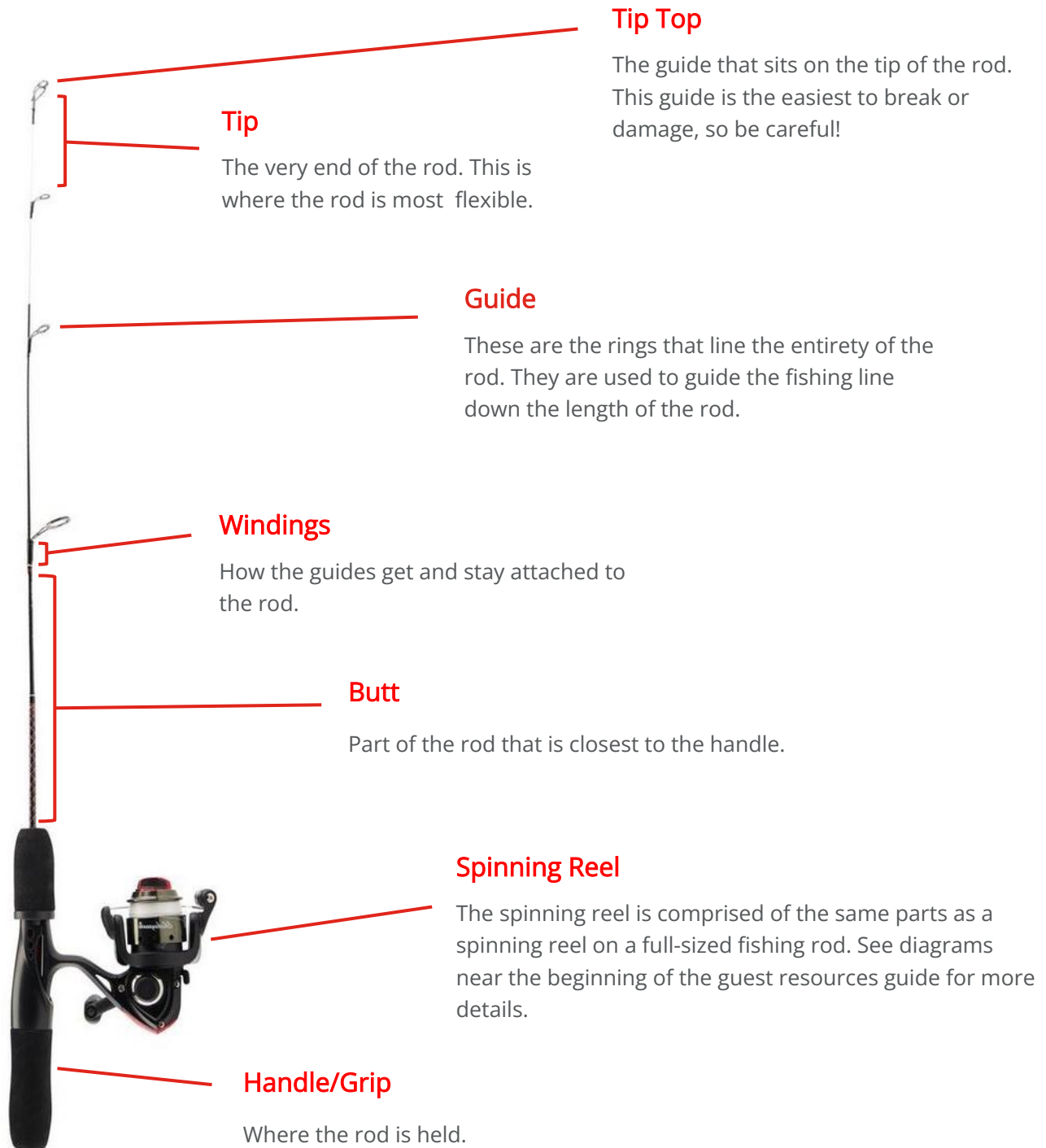
IF YOU OR SOMEONE IS EXPERIENCING SYMPTOMS OF HYPOTHERMIA:

It is an urgent medical emergency - take action immediately!

- Call 9-1-1
- Get the person into a warm room or shelter.
- Remove any wet clothing the person is wearing.
- Warm the center of the person's body—chest, neck, head, and groin using blankets, if available. You can also use skin-to-skin contact under loose, dry layers of blankets, clothing, towels, or sheets.
- Provide warm drinks to help increase body temperature. Do not try to give beverages to an unconscious person.
- A person with severe hypothermia may be unconscious and may not seem to have a pulse or to be breathing. In this case, handle the person gently, and perform CPR. CPR should continue until the person responds or emergency crew arrives. Keep warming the person while performing CPR.

PARTS OF AN ICE FISHING ROD

The main difference between an ice fishing rod and a summer rod is an ice fishing rod is significantly shorter. You can choose to fish with an ice fishing rod, or set up a tip-up.



Tip-ups are fishing devices made to fit over an ice fishing hole. Tip-ups consist of a small plank that sits over the ice hole and they are typically outfitted with a spool, trip mechanism and a flag which acts as a signaling device for bites. When using a tip-up, you may want to use a simple rig like a live minnow on a hook (if live bait is permitted in the area you are looking to fish) or set up a dead-bait.

When a fish bites and swims off with the bait, the line pulls and releases the flag to show that a fish has been caught. Fish are then pulled up by hand through the hole in the ice.

Spring

Keeps pressure on the flag and releases when a fish bites and rotates the shaft.

Flag

When the flag springs up, you got a fish!

Plank

Can be made of wood, metal or heavy plastic. Sits over the hole in the ice.

Shaft

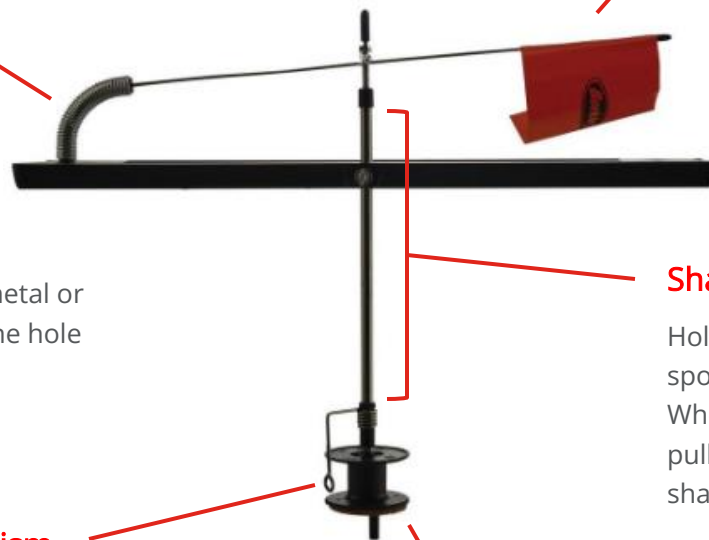
Holds the tripping mechanism and spool in place under the water. When a fish bites the bait and pulls the line, it will rotate the shaft, which releases the flag.

Tripping Mechanism

Usually comprised of an eye in which the fishing line will go through that rotates the shaft to release the flag when a fish bites and pulls the line.

Spool

Contains fishing line that will suspend your bait and rig. With many tip-ups, you must manually drop the line, and pull the line back up when a fish is caught.



FUN TIP: Even if you don't have an ice fishing rod or a tip-up, you can also create a home made ice rod with nothing more than a spool of line and a stick!



PREPARING FOR AN ICE FISHING TRIP

To prepare for an ice fishing trip, here is a list of items that you will require to ensure that you are fully equipped and comfortable during your visit and during your fishing experience.

CLOTHING AND ESSENTIALS

Ensure you check the weather in the days leading up to your trip for forecast details. It is highly recommended you dress in layers. It is always better to be over-dressed than under-dressed when ice fishing. Being prepared and dressed in layers are your best defense against frostbite and hypothermia.

- ☐ Clothing and personal items (layers are best)
- ☐ Insulated socks and underwear
- ☐ Waterproof snow suit (suitable for temperatures between -25°C and -40°C)
- ☐ Winter boots (suitable for temperatures between -25°C and -40°C)
- ☐ Winter toque and insulated waterproof mittens/gloves.
- ☐ Neck gaiter, scarf or balaclava
- ☐ Sunscreen and sunglasses - sunburns are still very much a threat in the winter!
- ☐ Fishing License

NOTE: It is recommended you consider packing extra socks and mitts. They don't take up much space and come in handy if you get wet or sweaty.

GENERAL PACKING LIST

Check in with your accommodations to determine what you may need from this list. Every business is different and the services and amenities provided will vary.

- ☐ Soap, shampoo & toiletries
- ☐ Camera, film & batteries
- ☐ Cell phone & charger
- ☐ Small first aid kit
- ☐ Groceries
- ☐ GPS
- ☐ Bedding (Sleeping bag, pillow)
- ☐ Water proof or water-resistant bag
- ☐ Fishing rods & reels
- ☐ Tacklebox (especially jigs)
- ☐ Filet knife and sharpener
- ☐ Pliers
- ☐ Fish scale
- ☐ Thermos

Participating Experience Fishing lodges will have some fishing equipment available for you to borrow, although you may wish to bring your own. Many lodges may have other activities on-site or nearby. Don't forget to pack accordingly and enjoy the experience!



DRESSING FOR ICE FISHING - ESSENTIAL LAYERS

When doing any kind of outdoor activity in the winter, most people will wear 3 to 4 layers comprised of the following: base layer, mid-layer, insulating layer, and an outer shell.

BASE LAYER: Your base layer should be thermal, moisture-wicking, breathable and comfortable under all weather conditions. This layer acts as your second skin. Think of a light, warm yet breathable long sleeve shirt that one would wear when doing physical activity. Thermal underwear is a great base layer for your legs.



MID LAYER: Your mid layer should be warm yet breathable and easy to remove/vent. Half-zip sweaters are often used as mid-layers as to help you keep warm and are easy to help you vent some of the heat when you begin to feel too warm, without needing to completely remove the layer. Consider fleece pants as a great mid layer for your legs.



Don't forget to layer your socks and mitts for added protection and warmth!

INSULATING LAYER: The insulating layer is a second breathable mid layer that provides extra warmth when the weather is colder. This is highly recommended when ice fishing.

OUTER SHELL: The outer shell is the top layer of defense against the elements of nature. It should be wind and water resistant, yet breathable. Many outer shells have vents for added breathability. When looking for "vents" on jackets, look for zippers under the armpits.

TIPS: Merino wool base layers provide excellent moisture-wicking and are fast drying meaning they will keep you warmer for longer!

Don't forget to pack a few foot and hand warmer packets! These will help provide extra warmth on cold days. Simply slide them into your boots and mitts for extra comfort.





ICE FISHING TACKLE

The tackle used while ice fishing is very similar to the tackle used when fishing in the summer. Here are some key tackle items you should have in your tacklebox.

- ✓ Ice Fishing Line (has water-repellent protection to lessen ice build-up)
- ✓ Hooks
- ✓ Sinkers (bell &/or split-shots)
- ✓ Swivels and snaps
- ✓ Jig Heads
- ✓ Assorted Spoons
- ✓ Gliding Jigs
- ✓ Lipless Crankbaits
- ✓ Plastic Baits
- ✓ Pliers





OTHER EQUIPMENT

As you look to go ice fishing on your own, here is some other equipment you will want to consider purchasing.

- ✓ Ice Auger
- ✓ Portable Ice Shack
- ✓ Ice Sled (to carry your gear)
- ✓ Bait Bucket
- ✓ Cooler
- ✓ Filet Knife
- ✓ Ice Scoop
- ✓ Portable Ice Fishing Heater (be sure to vent your shack appropriately when using gas heaters!)
- ✓ GPS
- ✓ Headlamp, flashlight and/or lantern
- ✓ Hand Towel (wet hands = cold hands)
- ✓ Compact Shovel
- ✓ Portable Chair
- ✓ Ice Fish Finder
- ✓ Underwater Camera



ICE SAFETY EQUIPMENT

- ✓ Ice Chisel
- ✓ Ice Claws/Picks
- ✓ Throw Rope
- ✓ Whistle
- ✓ First Aid Kit
- ✓ Boot Cleats
- ✓ Extra Food and Water
- ✓ Fire Starter
- ✓ Spare Change of Clothes





ICE FISHING SET-UPS

Once you've selected the area where you would like to fish and you've checked that the ice is safe, here are some tips to help guide your set-up.

GETTING STARTED:

Regardless if you are fishing with an ice rod or tip-up, the first few steps will always be the same.

- 1. Find the Best Fishing Spot on the Ice:** Early in the season, try setting up on the same spots you fished during the summer season. As the season progresses, depleting oxygen levels will push fish to deeper waters. Use contour maps of the lake or online mapping tools to find points, drop-offs and reefs where fish are likely to migrate to as the season progresses.
- 2. Drill a Hole in the Ice:** Using an ice auger, make a hole in the ice. An 8-inch auger is most common as it will create a hole that will allow everything from perch to pike to fit through.
- 3. Check the Water Depth:** The fastest way to measure water depth is with a fish finder however, it is possible to measure the depth using fishing line and a weight. Tie a bell sinker to the end of the fishing line and lower it down until it hits the bottom. Find something to mark the line (tape, bobber, split shot sinker, permanent marker). Pull up the line with the weight, and measure the distance from the weight to your marker. This will give you the water depth.
- 4. Selecting Your Bait:** The bait you will want to use will vary based on what species you are hoping to catch. Always remember to check the Fishing Regulations to see if live bait is permitted in the area you are looking to fish. Minnows are great for targeting multiple species of fish, including walleye. You will want to hook the minnow just under the dorsal fin. You may also want to try jigging with some plastic baits.





ICE FISHING SET-UPS

FISHING WITH AN ICE FISHING ROD:

1. **Set Up Your Chair & Rod:** If you are satisfied with the water depth and location you've selected, set up your chair and set up your fishing rod with the tackle and bait you'd like to use.
2. **Drop Your Line in the Water:** Drop the line into the water until the bait hits the bottom. Jigging is a very common technique when ice fishing. Wait for bites.
3. **Set the Hook:** Once you feel a bite, set the hook by quickly pulling your rod up with a quick and hard snap of your wrist. Reel in the fish and carefully pull it through the hole. Gently release it back through the hole, or measure it to ensure you can keep it as per the Fishing Regulations for the area you are fishing in. Make sure to dry off your hands after handling fish and get your gloves back on to stay warm!



SETTING UP A TIP-UP:

1. **Set Up Your Tip-Up:** Place the plank over the hole to make sure it will be stable. You can always level the plank with snow when you're ready to fish. Wait until after you've set your bait before setting up the flag.
2. **Adjust the Trigger Sensitivity:** Most tip-ups come with adjustable triggers that way you can adjust it to match the sensitivity to the species you are targeting. Always set it to the minimum standard listed on the packaging and learn what sensitivity level works best as you gain experience as an angler. If the line is too tight, the fish will feel the resistance and the flag may not go up when you have a bite. Not tight enough and the flag will get tripped too easily. As you learn your equipment through practice, you will want to get into the habit of testing the tension of your trigger before placing the tip-up over the hole.
3. **Deciding Your Fishing Depth:** Knowing how deep the water is, you will want to decide how far off the bottom you will want your bait suspended. Pull the line up approximately 2 feet from the bottom (or whatever your desired depth is) and use a bobber to mark that spot on the line. When you're ready to set your bait, drop the line into the water, reel in any excess line right to where the marker is, put the plank down over the hole and set the flag down.



4. **Keep an Eye on the Flag:** When the flag goes up, it means you likely have a bite! Remember to exercise caution as you go to check the line. Remember, you're on ice. Use boot spikes for more traction on the ice and be sure to keep your path to the tip-up clear and free of tripping hazards.
5. **Make Sure the Fish is Still On:** Wait a second before grabbing the line. Look for movement in the line, or the rotation of the spool. These signs mean the fish still has the bait.
6. **Set the Hook:** If the fish still has the bait and you can see movement in the line and spool, gently take up the line and pull slowly until you feel the pressure and weight from the fish. As soon as you feel that pressure or weight, a quick, smooth lift of the line will set the hook into the fish's mouth. Pull the line in using a hand over hand method until the fish come to the surface. Use gloves when pulling the line in to avoid line cuts.

BEFORE LEAVING:

Be sure to mark where you've drilled a hole in the ice with a stick or branch before you leave. Also leave the area near the hole open and snow-free in order to ensure the area is as visible as possible. This will help indicate to other anglers, snowmobilers, etc. to be cautious around the hole(s). Marking the holes ensures the health and safety of fellow outdoor enthusiasts.



REGULATIONS TO KEEP IN MIND:

When ice fishing in Ontario, an angler can have two lines in the water except in a limited number of waters. Anglers must be within 60 meters of any line(s) or tip-up(s) they have set-up and have a clear and unobstructed view of the lines being used at all times. Be sure to check the [Ontario Fishing Regulations](#) for the area and lake you are looking to fish.

If you have an ice hut, be sure to check the Ontario Regulations to see if they need to be registered with the Ministry in the [Fisheries Management Zone](#) you are fishing in. You do not need to register an ice hut that is a tent made of cloth or synthetic fabric that has a base area of seven square metres or less. Be sure to remove your ice hut while the ice is safe and before the Ministry's established removal date.



youtube.com/@experiencefishing8542



facebook.com/ExperienceFishingON



instagram.com/experience.fishing

**FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA FOR
ADDITIONAL TIPS, PICTURES & HIGHLIGHTS!**

experiencefishingon.ca



Acknowledgments

We would like to thank our program funders, partners and sponsors for their contributions toward the success of the Experience Fishing program.

