

Fishing – Level 2

Fishing – More of the Basics

Fishing

The first level brought you up to speed on some of the fishing equipment that can be used in the sport. We will continue building on this information so by the end of this level you should be able to go fishing for pan fish with live bait.

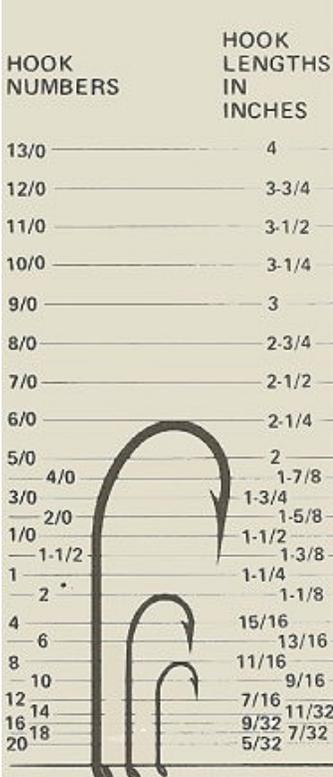
Fishing Hooks

As a rule, use the smallest hook possible. Small hooks allow the live-bait presentation to look natural. Small hooks also penetrate quicker than larger hooks upon the fish striking the bait. Always test your hook for sharpness. Sharp hook points will catch more fish than dull hooks. To test your hook simply draw the hook point across your fingernail, a sharp hook will leave a light scratch and digs in to your nail. A dull hook will skate across your nail without digging in. When necessary touch up the hook point by using a hook file or sharpening stone.

I have found that some new hooks, right out of the box, were dull. All hooks will dull over time and use by hitting rocks and debris in the water.

I have included a hook size gauge to the right to give you the feel for the hook number and the relative size in inches.

HOOK NUMBERS	HOOK LENGTHS IN INCHES
13/0	4
12/0	3-3/4
11/0	3-1/2
10/0	3-1/4
9/0	3
8/0	2-3/4
7/0	2-1/2
6/0	2-1/4
5/0	2
4/0	1-7/8
3/0	1-3/4
2/0	1-5/8
1/0	1-1/2
1-1/2	1-3/8
1	1-1/4
2	1-1/8
4	15/16
6	13/16
8	11/16
10	9/16
12	7/16
14	11/32
16	9/32
18	7/32
20	5/32



HOOK SIZES ARE DETERMINED BY LENGTH OF SHANK EXCLUDING EYE

The Parts of a Fish Hook

The parts of a fish hook:

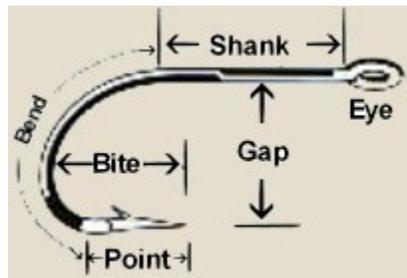
Point- the sharp end that penetrates the fish's mouth or flesh;

Barb – the projection extending backwards from the point, that secures the fish from unhooking;

Eye – the end of the hook that is connected to the fishing line or lure;

Bend and shank – that portion of the hook that connects the point and the eye;

Gap – the distance between the shank and the point.



Fishing Hook Types:

Aberdeen



Light wire long shank hook, perfect for Panfish, Crappie and light biting Walleyes under a slip bobber or attached bobber rig. The light wire makes it easy to attach minnows, the long shank allows the angler to more easily remove the hook from panfish, as they tend to swallow the bait.

Bait Holder



The bait holder hook is one of the most popular live bait hook styles today, the additional barbs on the shank holds the bait more effectively, such as night crawlers leeches and red worms.

Bait Holder



Circle hooks are an excellent choice for live bait catch and release anglers. Upon a fish swallowing your bait, the inward bend of the hook point allows the hook to slide along the inside of the fish's throat until it reaches the mouth. A sharp pulling hook set is not required, just maintain tension and the fish will hook itself in the corner of the mouth as the fish moves away. The lip hook rate using a circle hook is very high and this type of hook reduces the mortality rate of fish to be released to fight another day. This hook is very popular for Catfish, Sturgeon and Muskies anglers.

Egg



This hook is commonly called the salmon egg hook. The design of this hook includes a turned up eye and offset bend. This allows the hook to ride upward along with the placement of a barb on the shank which holds the bait in place securely. This hook is used primarily for drift fishing along current when using natural or imitation salmon eggs, spawn sacs, worms and grubs typically when one is fishing for Salmon and Trout.

Octopus



The larger gap and overall rounded shape of Octopus hooks makes this hook very popular and can be used for most species of fish. The Octopus is ideal for rigging cut bait for Catfish or Salmon, minnows for Bass, Pike and Walleyes and this hook is a good choice for building crawler harnesses. These hooks are available in an assortment of painted or metallic colors, if you like that. The color I think works the best is shiny brass. Why I do not know, but it catches more fish for me.

Rotating



This hook is made with a special compound curve on the offset as part of the shank. This causes the hook to rotate automatically and turns when a fish bites on the bait. This long compound curve in the shank places the point in position for penetration of the fish from any angle. This hook comes highly recommended as I have read on some blogs that it holds bait better than most and also hooks fish better.

Treble



Treble hooks have a single eye with three hooks fused together by the shanks all evenly spaced around the hook. The treble is mainly used on artificial lures and spoons with it being attached by using a split ring. Treble hooks today comes in an assortment of colors as well as feathers tied on as a trailer/teaser hooks on lures. Treble hooks are not for beginners. They have three very sharp hooks and if you are not paying attention when attaching them, using them or taking them out of a fish, you will get stabbed by them. Even people experienced in fishing get stabbed with treble hooks, they need to be respected!

Weedless



The weedless hook is a hook that has a light wire wrapped on the shank formed in a loop that covers the point of the hook. This allows the hook to be fished in weeds, logs, trees, stumps, rocks and lily pads, the places other hooks get hung up. When a fish strikes this hook the wire compresses exposing the hook's point and the rest should be history.

Offset/Worm Hook



Worm hooks are used for fishing soft plastic lures. The front bend on a worm hook is used to lock lures such as worms and lizards from moving down the shank by simply inserting the hook point into the head of the lure down about a 1/4 inch. Bring the hook point out of the lure, and pull the shaft of the hook through until the eye is at the head, turn the hook straight and insert the hook point into the body, adjust the eye so it is just inside the lure.

Tying on the Hook

Level 3 in Knots you learned the Trilene knot that is the basic knot for attaching hooks to fishing line for fishing. Use this knot to attach the hook to the line.

Getting Organized

I started out fishing with small rig boxes like the one shown below. They keep things organized and that have everything you need in one small case. This way you will not have to spend a lot on a tackle box and you will have something you can use for a very long time. I still use these rig boxes today after 30 plus years of fishing. If you get the clear boxes you will be able to see what you have and be able to find what you need fast. Using these boxes you will be able to find the appropriate hook, weight, bobber for most fishing situations.



Baiting a hook

Live bait should always appear to the fish to be alive. Once you put the bait on your hook it will eventually die, so you need to make the bait look like it is alive.

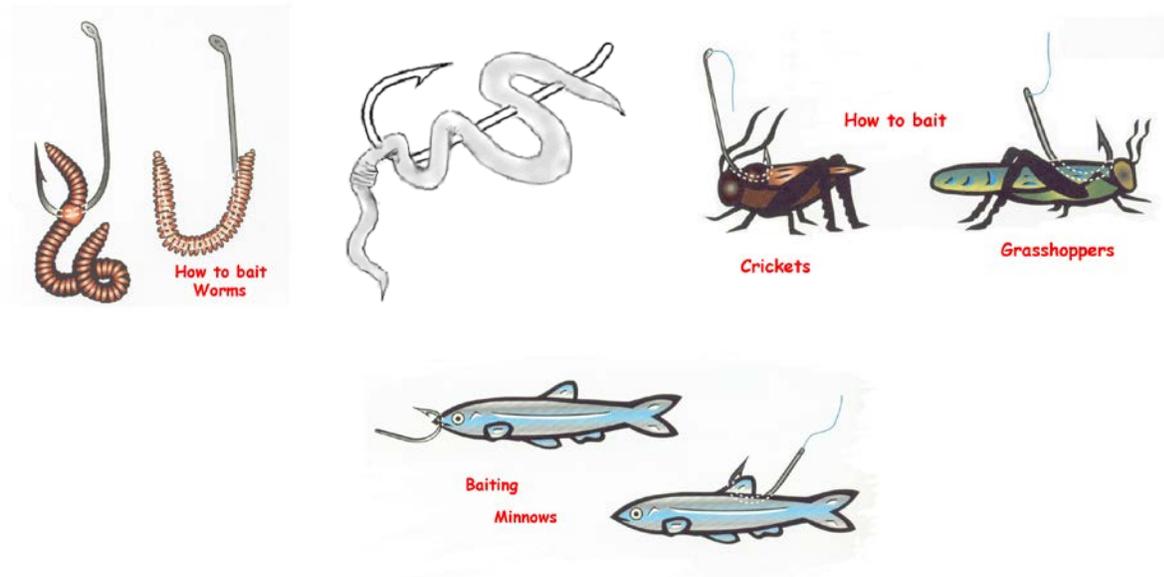
When attaching the worm to the hook, you'll want to hook the worm more than once so it stays on the hook.

The less you handle the bait with your fingers, the more effective your bait will be. Human hands have a scent on them that fish do not like, so the less the less you handle the bait the less scent you put on the bait and the more effective your bait becomes.

If you do not like handling bait you can buy disposable gloves (they're cheap).

Hand soap or sanitizers do not eliminate the scent from your hands and may add scents to your bait making it more ineffective.

See the diagrams below to learn how to hook different types of live bait:



Removing the Hook from a Fish

So you caught a fish! Congratulations! Now what do you do? For pan fish and other smaller fish, you can pick up the fish from the water in a net or with your hands making sure to fold back the dorsal fin as you grasp the fish. Folding back the dorsal fin requires you to move your hand from the head of the fish towards the tail but stop when you are half way between head and tail. This will fold the dorsal fin back and have it lay against the spine of the fish. Whenever you handle a fish make sure your hands are wet as dry hands remove the protective mucus layer that is on the scales of a fish and this could cause bacterial infections for the fish when returned to the water. Avoid touching the gills or squeezing the fish.

Use needle-nose pliers to remove the hook. Grasp the hook by the shank and, while holding the fish, preferably in the water, twist and pull gently, backing the hook out the way it came in. Don't wiggle the hook or pull with too much force if it's snagged. If the fish is gut-hooked or the hook is too deep into the throat, it's best to cut the hook as close to the body as possible and leave it in the fish. Many times the hook will simply dissolve and get spit out. The fish has a better chance of living doing this than if you struggle to free the hook.

Once the hook is out, you need to revive the fish. "Tossing a fish" back into the water should remain an expression. Never throw a fish into the water. If you're bass fishing, you can hold the fish by the lower jaw and ease it back into the water. If it's a trout or another non-bass, lower the fish headfirst with both hands the same way you handled it out of the water, supporting the belly. If it's a river catch, point the fish with its head upstream in a slow current. You may need to help

it out some by moving it gently back and forth to allow water to flow into the gills. The same holds true for lake fish. Once it begins to come around and tries to swim away, simply release your grasp. Larger fish may take a little longer to revive.

If you plan on catch-and-release fishing, be prepared ahead of time. Get the proper tackle, have your pliers within easy reach and the camera ready. Fish can only live for a few minutes out of the water, but you should never even come close to using this amount of time. Try and keep the time out of the water to less than 30 seconds. Experienced catch-and-release fishermen never allow the fish to leave the water at all.

You now know how to cast, tie on a hook, bait a hook and remove a hook from a fish. The next thing for you to do is to make plans to go fishing and try and catch some fish.

The vast majority of states and municipalities require fishing licenses and the state Department of Natural Resources also has limits of what you can keep. Some states have size limits on fish as they need to be at least a minimum size before you can keep the fish. You will need to check the regulations in your state and municipality before you go fishing.

Fishing Level 2 Requirements:

- 1 – Tie on a fishing hook using
- 2 – Bait a fishing hook with a worm and a minnow
- 3 – Catch a pan fish