



wildlife

R E V I E W

UTAH DIVISION OF WILDLIFE RESOURCES

Fishing gear basics

How to get started

Fishing gear

BASICS



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A beginner's fishing outfit can be purchased at any department or sporting goods store. The outfit will consist of a fishing rod and reel. Some reels will come with a spool of monofilament line. With others, you will have to purchase the line separately. Besides the rod and reel, all that's needed to start fishing are a few hooks and worms.

So how do you attach a hook to the line? Hooks have an “eye” at one end through which the fishing line passes. Lots of beginners tie a couple of overhand knots, but monofilament line can cut into itself and break if the line is not tied properly. Overhand knots are fine when you’re catching small fish, but if you hook a big one, your line will probably break at the knot.

Knots

Once an angler advances a bit in knowledge, he or she may want to try one or more of the common “fishermen” knots. These knots have been tried and proven and have the added benefit of maintaining the tensile strength of the line. A couple of good knots to know include the “Fisher-man’s” knots, illustrated in the link at the top of this page.

A simple knot that does a great job of attaching your hook to your line is the clinch knot shown on the next page. You want to tie a good knot. There’s nothing more frustrating than having a fish on your line and then having it get away with your hook!

Line

Fishing lines are sold in a variety of strengths, called “pound test.” Most beginner fishing outfits should be equipped with about 8-pound test line, which implies that the line would break with 8 pounds of pressure; in reality, most lines have a breaking strength above that stated on the label.

If you are fishing where there is heavy cover such as weeds or brush, you may want to increase the strength of your line. The downside is that the heavier the test, the thicker the line. Thick lines are more visible to fish and, when cast, the lines roll out in a series of loops across the water. Thick lines don’t cast as far and may scare fish.

It’s a good idea (but not necessary) to remove the heavy line on a reel and replace it with a much thinner line, such as a 2- to 6-pound test. This will facilitate longer casts. Any trail of loops over the water will be virtually invisible. This is important because if fish see your line, they often will refuse your bait.

Another thing to consider is the storage and transportation of a rod and reel. If you wish to transport



the outfit with a hook on the line, secure the hook to the rod so you won't be snagging everything on your way to your fishing hole. Avoid attaching the hook through the eye of a guide because the hook can nick the eye, and cut the line when you're casting or trying to land a fish. Place the hook on the guide's foot, if the rod doesn't have a hook keeper.

Sometimes you'll transport more than one rod at a

time. In this case, it's important to keep the lines and hooks of each rod from tangling. You can keep the rods separate in your car, or keep them in tubes or rod holders. It's best not to transport the rods in the passenger compartment of your vehicle, where kids can bump the rods and hook the car seats, upholstery—or themselves. Also, while fishing, it is not a good idea to lay the reel on the beach because dirt can make the reel inoperable.

Once your fishing trip is over, store the rod where the reel and line can dry out. It's a good idea to clean and oil the reel's moving parts periodically, to keep everything in working order. Many experienced anglers change the line every year—or more often. Over time, monofilament lines become brittle and develop a “memory” or coil for the spool. 🐟