

How to Cast the Bait Casting Reel

Bait-casting describes a fishing technique and its associated tackle that originated in the early 1800s. It took its name from its initial purpose, which was to cast live bait. Modern bait-casting reels utilize a revolving-spool reel to cast artificial lures and live bait. Basically, the weight of the lure or bait pulls line from the spool until it reaches the intended casting target. The objective is to offer a tempting lure or bait to fish from a distance.

Bait-casting is one of four basic categories of fishing tackle. The other three are spin-casting, spinning, and fly-casting. They differ from one another in popularity, ease of use, fishing styles, spool type, and strength.

There are no great differences between the four casting techniques, with the exception of fly-casting, in which the weight of the line (not the lure) delivers a near-weightless fly. Spin-casting is probably the most popular because it is easily used by children and novices who do not want or need to spend much time learning to cast. Spin-casters are willing to sacrifice accuracy for ease of use. Spinning is also popular among beginners, though widely used by anglers at all levels of experience.

While bait-casting is similar to other casting techniques in its purpose and methods, it is a distinct and unique style of fishing. It is generally used for freshwater fishing, mostly large species like largemouth bass, catfish and northern pike. But bait-casting tackle is well suited to saltwater species such as tarpon and snook.

Why Bait-casting?

Beginners, or anglers with only spinning or spin-casting experience, may wonder why they should bother learning the bait-casting technique. The main strength of this technique is that, when mastered, it allows for a high degree of accuracy in the placement of a bait or lure. Conversely, it is more difficult to learn than other types of casting and requires a higher level of skill to achieve desired results. But learning and mastering the technique will make the angler a more complete fisherman.

For the freshwater fisherman pursuing any species larger than small trout or panfish, bait-casting gear is considered standard equipment. This is due to the tremendous versatility of bait-casting tackle. Lures such as crankbaits (plugs), large spinners and spinnerbaits, heavy jigs, large soft plastics, topwater and other lures are fished most effectively with bait-casting gear.

Expert and serious anglers prefer bait-casting because it offers the combination of high line capacity, cranking power and greater casting accuracy from both short and long distances. The mechanics of a bait-cast reel are strong, durable and less prone to failure than spinning or spin-cast reels.

While spinning tackle definitely serves a valuable purpose, especially when using small lures, light line (10-pound test or lighter) and/or live bait, bait-casting gear gives the angler unmatched versatility for a variety of

lures and fishing methods. Most experienced anglers have at least one, if not more, of both spinning and bait-casting outfits.

Casting a Bait Casting Reel

There sure is a fair amount of miss-information flowing around on baitcasters or overheads. Many fishing enthusiasts believe they are difficult to use, yet this is not really the case, because in fact they are easy to master. If you use the correct technique, and are prepared to spent a bit of time practicing so that it becomes a natural process, a baitcaster will become a dream machine to use.

A golf swing requires hours of repetitive practice to perfect. In contrast, an overhead baitcaster requires nothing like the time the golf swing needs. However, it does require a little repetitive training. For those prepared to put in the hour or two, the rewards will be fantastic and you'll find accuracy and distance with every cast. And you won't get those embarrassing line twists, or bird-nests.

To begin, hold the rod and reel tilted so that the handles are higher than the spool of the reel. (Left handers should have the handles facing down). The reel should be cocked to one side of top dead centre.

Secondly, the grip should be similar to holding a tennis racket. The "V" developed between the thumb and the index finger should be virtually at top dead centre. The grip should be relaxed.

You will find that in holding the rod as described in rules 1 & 2, the index finger is all that is required to stop the rod falling to the floor. The weight, or balance of the rod will cause the butt to push up into the palm of the hand. Actually it will be pushing up into the palm area beneath the thumb known as "the mount".

And last but not least, the area between the side of your thumb and the flat of your thumb should rest across the line on the spool. In other words, if you consider the rod to be pointing North, your thumb should be pointing more North West than North.

These three rules of thumb are the basis for making overhead baitcasting a dream.

Too many angler's attempt to hold the reel in the upright position. This forces the thumb to lie straight north south, and this in turn cause a whole host of problems which are sure to result in over-runs (birdnests).

Upright Problems

The first of these problems is that you have to grip the rod too firmly, and use all your fingers. If you don't, the tip of the rod will fall away to the ground.

Secondly, you will find that as you bring the rod back to cast your wrist will lock. This, in turn, will force you to use more arm action, destroying the natural action of the rod, and resulting in less distance, less accuracy and the expenditure of more energy.

Thirdly, on the forward thrust, your thumb will want to lift off the line on the spool. This will occur as a direct result of the mount of your palm and your fingers fighting to grip the rod, to stop it leaving your hand. Once

your thumb cocks up in the air as a result of this wrong grip, you can guarantee a back-lash. Your thumb will never get back down on the spool quickly enough to stop it.

By rotating the reel to the side, you no longer have to hold the rod with that vice like grip. You can now relax your grip, bring your fingers into the cast, and it becomes all wrist action, with a completely relaxed forearm. The forearm in fact becomes an extension of the rod's length, pivoting at the elbow, whilst your upper arm remains relatively motionless.