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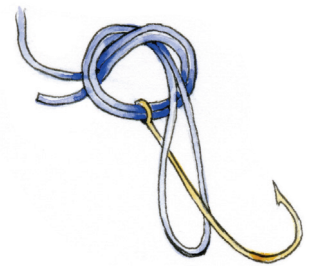
Got Skills?

Fishing is a set of skills that can be quickly learned but will improve over a lifetime of experiences. To head out fishing you need to know how to tie knots, assemble tackle, and cast your line.

Knot—As Easy As It Looks

Before you can catch a fish, your hook or lure needs to be attached to your line with a knot. Every angler has a favorite knot, and all knots have certain purposes and advantages or work best on certain types of line. Review the knot diagrams in this section and tie knots using practice materials such as rope and a shower curtain ring. Once you've mastered a knot or two using practice materials, move to fishing hooks and fishing line.

Regardless of how well you tie your knot, the knot is always the weakest point on a line—the part most likely to break when a fish fights back. A great knot still only retains about 90% of the line's test strength. For this reason, test strength on lines is almost always under-estimated. A 10-pound line may actually test at 11 to 16 pounds of pull, but it is rated down to account for your knot.

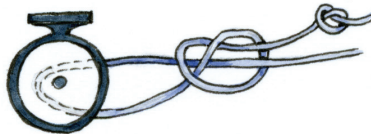
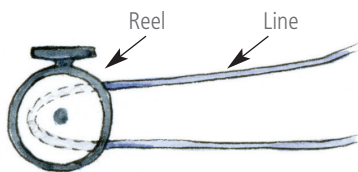


Palomar Knot

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Tying Line to Reel

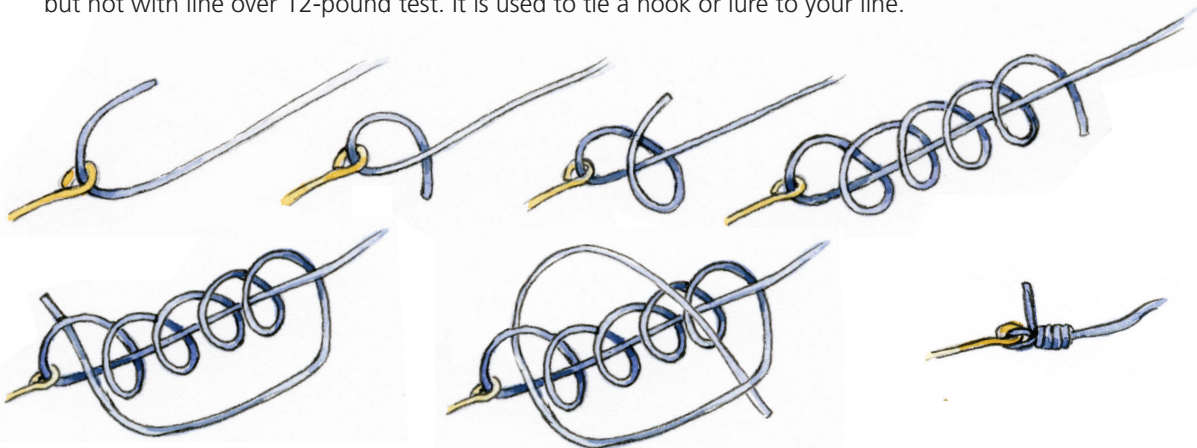
The **Arbor knot** is simple, easily learned, and effective. It is used most often to tie line onto a fishing reel, but is also used when setting up spinning reels.



Arbor Knot

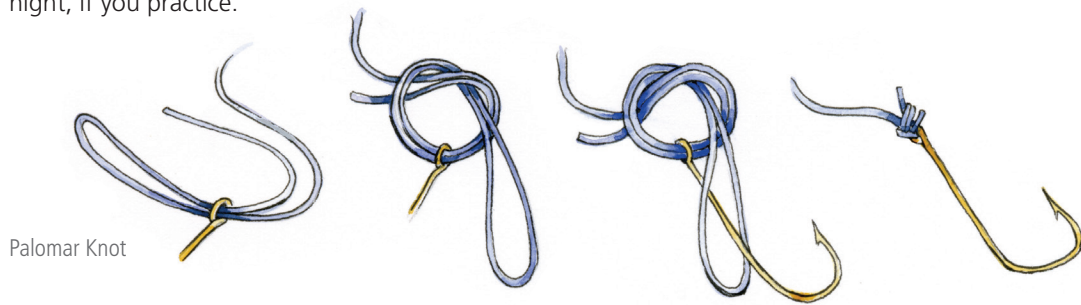
Tying Line to Hook or Lure

The **Improved Clinch Knot** is an angler's old standby. It works well on smaller line, but not with line over 12-pound test. It is used to tie a hook or lure to your line.

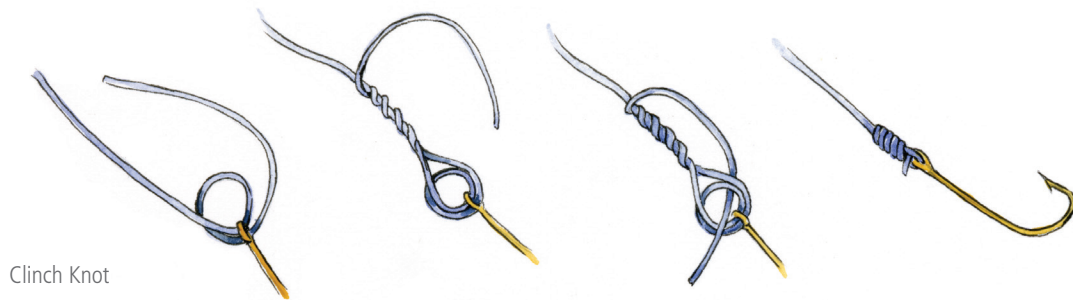


Improved Clinch Knot

The **Palomar Knot** is a strong and reliable way of tying a hook to a line. It can be tied in the dark of night, if you practice.

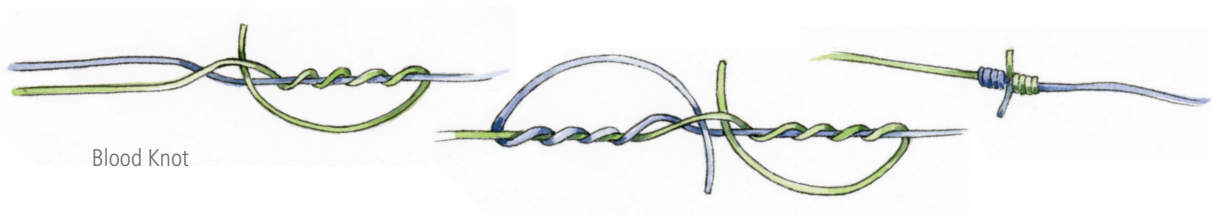


The **Clinch Knot** is for use with monofilament lines. It can attach hooks, swivels, and lures to monofilament in a way that resists slippage and failure.

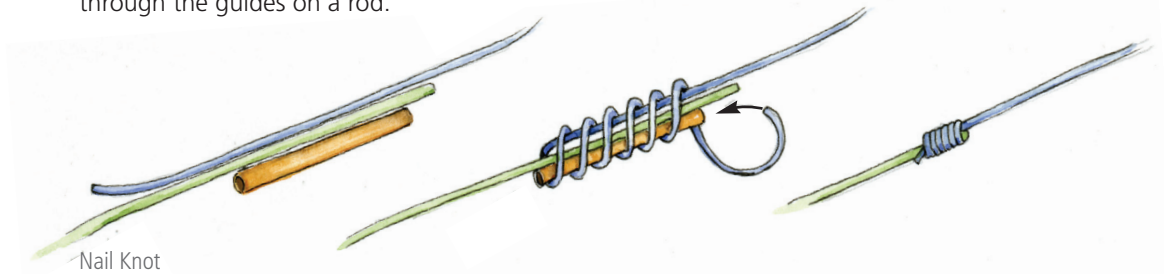


Tying Line to Line

The **Blood Knot** can tie lines of similar size together in a simple and effective manner.

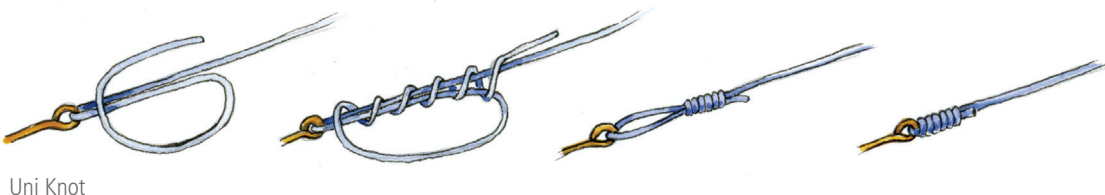


The **Nail Knot** ties lines of different diameter together. The Nail is smooth and will easily pass through the guides on a rod.



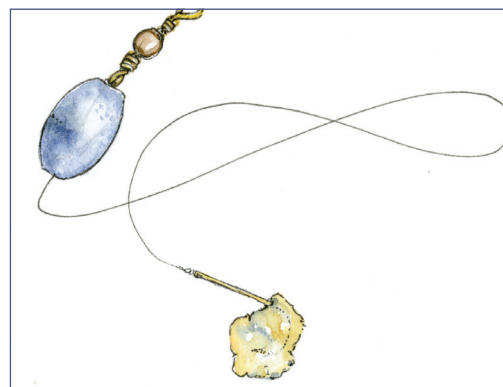
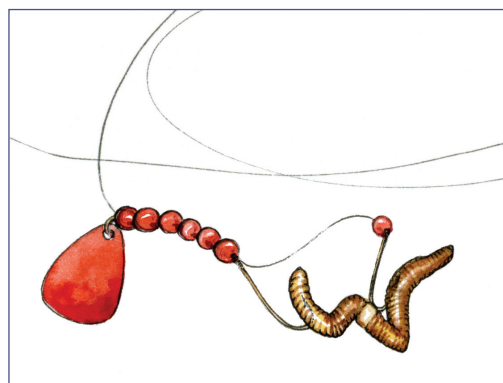
Multi-Purpose

The **Uni Knot** can be used for most knot purposes and can be tied in the dark. It is not as strong as some of the other knots, but it is very versatile.



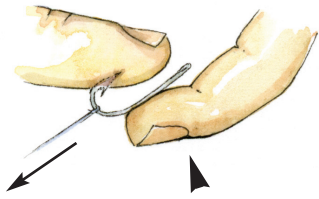
The combination of tackle used at the end of your fishing line is called terminal tackle. The type you use will correspond to the type of fish you want to catch.

What combination of tackle would you rig up for use on a bluegill? How about a walleye? A catfish? Consider where you will find your fish, what it likes to eat, and what method of casting will work best for the fish. As you go through this activity, take notes on the tackle your classmates used:



Bottom: heavy terminal tackle set-up for bullheads and catfish: sinker, artificial natural-scented bait.

Finger Bait



Watch your fingers when baiting a hook! One of the most common fishing accidents is getting stuck with a fish hook. If this happens to you and just the point of a fish hook is stuck, pull it out! If the hook goes into your skin past the barb, however, the wisest thing to do is to have a doctor remove it. If that's not possible, have your trusted fishing buddy loop a string around the shank of the hook, push down on the eye, and pull the string straight out. Flush the wound with hydrogen peroxide and make sure your tetanus shot is up to date!

Cast Away



Bait live minnows through the mouth or dorsal fin.

Being able to cast well enough to accurately place the bait increases your chances of catching fish. Casting games help to develop your casting ability and improve your skill. The more you practice, the more control you have over your fishing success.

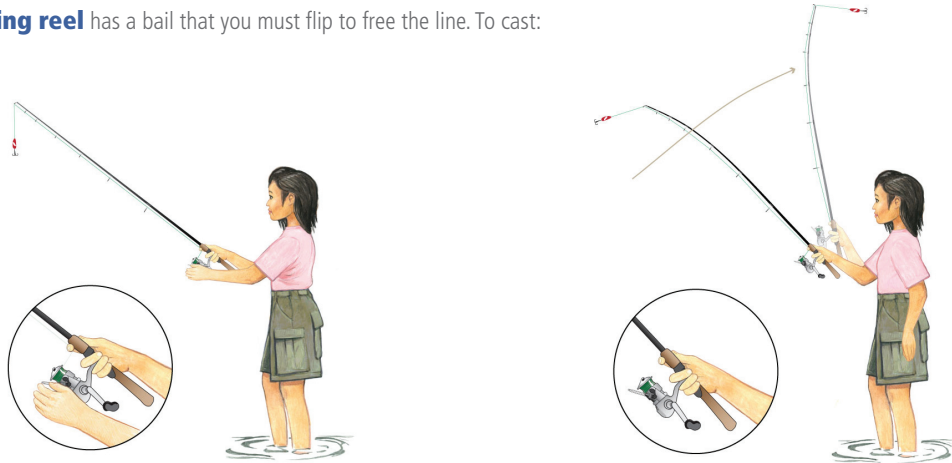
Before you cast ALWAYS look around you to make sure no one is nearby. Look behind you for trees and bushes and overhead for power lines. Make sure your line isn't wrapped around the tip of the rod. Lines can quickly become tangled messes!

A **spinning reel** has a bail that you must flip to free the line. To cast:



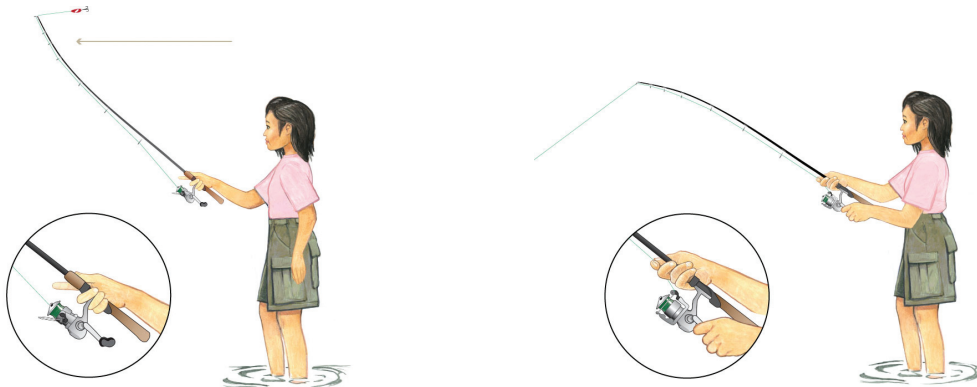
Similar steps apply to a **spincasting** reel (above), which has a pushbutton mechanism to free the line. In this case you do not need to grasp the line when casting, only when reeling.

For **baitcasting**, (below) hold your thumb over the line as it feeds off the reel to prevent snarling the line as it pays out.



1. Grasp the line under your index finger, hold it against the rod, and flip the bail.

2. Point the rod in the direction you want the bait to go and bend at the elbow for an overhead cast, or extend your arm for a side arm cast.



3. Smoothly throw forward and let your finger off the line to release it.

4. **Reel It In!** Apply tension by holding the line between your thumb and first finger to take up the slack. This helps the line wind snugly around the spool minimizing tangles.