



Spinning

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Best Time: This lesson can be taught as the first lesson on casting. However, depending on the age group and time you have available, recommend that you start with start with the Can-Casting Lesson, followed by the Equipment and Casting Basics, followed by spin-casting.

Best Location: Large enough open area to spread the number of kids out that you want casting at one time. Park, playground, a parking lot that has been marked off from cars.

Time Required: 30 to 45 minutes

Objectives:

Participants will:

1. Learn about the spinning equipment
2. Learn to hold a spinning outfit
3. Learn to safety considerations
3. Learn to cast using a spinning rod and reel

Youth Objectives:

1. Develop a skill
2. Develop self-esteem and confidence
3. Develop coordination
4. Develop responsibility

Evaluation:

1. Can participants on a regular basis cast with a spinning rod and reel with little effort
2. Can participants get close to a target.

Equipment/Materials

1. A spinning rod and reel (filled with line) for each participant
(If there are not enough rods and reels to go around, split the kids into groups and have them take turns.)
2. Casting plugs (no hooks)
3. Some kind of target
4. Encourage students to wear glasses or sunglasses

Safety Considerations: A flying casting plug is the greatest safety consideration particularly if it should hit someone's eye. A casting plug hitting someone on the body can also cause a bruise. The ends of rods can also poke into someone if participants are not careful. Have participants follow safety rules.

Outline

1. Spinning Equipment
2. Safety Considerations
3. Grip
4. The Drag
5. Overhead Cast
 - a. Stance
 - b. Cast
 - c. Retrieval
6. Other Casts
7. Avoiding line problems with the spinning reel

Summary Activity: Have participants practice the overhead cast casting at a variety of targets.

Narrative

Spinning Equipment

The spinning reel is often referred to as an "open face reel," since the line and spool are exposed at the front of the reel. The spinning reel's spool is primarily stationary on both the cast and the retrieve, except that it does oscillate up and down as the bail turns allowing the line to wind evenly on the spool rather than piling it up in one spot. It is the momentum of the cast lure which pulls line from the spool.

Spinning reels are properly mounted under the rod. Sometimes you'll see people using spinning reels with the reel on top (Former President George Bush). Today, most reels have handles that are easily changed for left handers, but many left handers prefer to just turn the outfit over with the reel on top. Spinning rods have a straight handle with large line guides that are on the bottom.

Casting with a spinning outfit is similar to using spin-cast equipment. Some people find it just as easy as spin-cast and others just a little more difficult. Spinning rods and reels allow for more line to be quickly peeled off the reel, allowing for casting longer distances.

Line is freed for casting when the bail wire is opened, either mechanically or manually. After making a cast, turning the reel handle normally trips the bail and allows the line to be retrieved. If turning the handle does not engage the bail, you can trip in manually.

Spinning rod and reels permits the casting of lighter lures, further, with less effort. Many freshwater spin-cast and spinning reels are limited to 10 pound test line and under. They used to be limited also to monofilament line but new developments in line have given the angler greater choices.

Spinning and spin-cast are preferable over the bait-cast in windy situations.

Safety Considerations Before the Cast

Participants need to learn that they have to take responsibility for their actions. Casting plugs can hurt but once hooks are added great pain can be inflicted if someone does not get in the habit of

paying attention to where there plug is at all times. An angler needs to be aware of where his/her plug behind, overhead and in front.

The back cast is the greatest concern. Fishermen get so intense about where they are going to cast to that they sometimes forget to look behind them to see if their back cast is going to hit someone or get hung in a tree. When you are fishing from the bank, someone may come up behind to watch you or just be causally walking by. When in a boat, most anglers know their partner(s) are there, but don't realize that their back cast can reach their partner(s).

On the forward cast most anglers are aware of other people, but sometimes forget about power lines and overhanging trees. Be cautious also of throwing over someone else's line.

Once the cast has been made, the plug can get hung up including during practice. Caution, participants about putting too much pressure to retrieve the snagged plug. Once it comes loose it can shoot back like a bullet and hurt whomever it hits.

Grip

The first step in casting is properly gripping the rod and reel.

(Everyone's reel should be equipped with line, appropriately threaded through the line guides with a casting plug tied to the end of the line. If the equipment is not set up have the participants assist in threading their own line and tying on their own casting plug.)

1. Place the reel stem between your second and third fingers. Your thumb should be on top of the handle and your forefinger extended to touch the spool cover.
2. With your other hand, rotate the reel's cowling until the line roller is directly beneath your extended forefinger.
3. Pick up the line in front of the roller with your forefinger. Hold the line with a relaxed finger, but do not hold it against the rod handle.
4. Open or cock, the reels bail with your other hand. Some reels have a lever so you can grasp the line and open the bail in one motion.)

Drag

All reels have an adjustment called a drag that controls how easily the line is pulled off the reel. The drag on a spinning reel can be located in different positions depending on the brand. Some drags are on the spool head, others are on the back or underneath the reel toward the back of the reel. Follow the directions that come with your reel to set the drag correctly.

Your drag should be set loosely while in storage, so when you pick up the rod for the first time it will be important to adjust the drag. When practicing, it is good to have the drag set so that you can pull the line out with a little tug. If you are using actual targets like Yard Sharks, participants will learn quickly to adjust their drags or they will not be able to reel in their catch.

When fishing, you need to adjust your drag according the line size, to the type of fish you plan to catch, and the environment that you are in. If you are fishing with light line, you may need your drag set a little looser than you will with heavier line. If you are fishing for a fish where you have to set the hook solidly, then you'll need a tighter drag set than fishing for fish such as bluegill or trout.

With experience, you'll learn how to adjust drag setting for different situations.

Overhead Cast

The overhead cast is the most basic cast that can be used at all times, unless branches or other obstructions are in your way, or someone/something is directly behind you.

Stance

The most comfortable stance for a right-handed caster is to face the target, take a quarter turn to the left, so that your right shoulder is pointed toward the target. Place your right foot slightly ahead of your left with the weight on your left foot. When casting, your body weight should be shifted to the right foot. Reverse the procedure for a left hand caster.

The Cast

- a. Hold the rod so that the tip is at eye level with the shaft centered on the target. Center the rod on target with tip at eye level. Your elbow should be close to, but not touching your body; your forearm, in line with the rod.
- b. With a smooth upward motion, start the cast by raising the hand almost to eye level, pivoting at the elbow so that the forearm and rod come to a vertical stop.
- c. When the rod reaches the vertical position, the weight of the lure will cause the rod to bend to the rear. As it does, bring the rod immediately forward in a crisp downstroke with the forearm, applying only the slightest wrist emphasis.
- d. Line is released from the forefinger at the starting point (or between 1 and 2 o'clock). The correct release does take some practice. If the lure goes straight up into the air, you released the line too soon; if it takes a nose-dive at your feet, you let go too late.
- e. Follow through by lowering the tip of the rod slightly as the lure takes flight and the line flows through the guides.
- f. As the lure nears the target, you can slow the speed to prevent overshooting the target by bringing your forefinger back toward the spool to create friction against the uncoiling line. This is called feathering. To stop the lure completely, touch the spool rim with your finger.

Retrieval

Even if you make a perfect cast it is important to place your finger on the edge of the spool and lift the rod tip as you turn the handle to engage the line pickup. This will help prevent slack line build-up on the spool. When fishing with a buzzbait that you want to keep on the surface, you may want to stop the lure by turning the reel handle to engage the line. This way you can begin your retrieve automatically and the buzzbait does not sink. However, be sure you do not get a loop in the line as it winds on the reel.

Unlike bait-casting, you do not switch hands, but use the hand that is already free to make the Retrieval

When you retrieve your bait, you have the choice of having the anti-reverse in lock or unlock position. The lock position immobilizes the crank handle, except when you want to take line in. The unlock position, allows you to take line in but also allows you to reel backward and let line out. Many people prefer to leave it in the lock position and let the drag do all the work when they get a fish. However, fish that can make a quick dart or turn such as a smallmouth or silver salmon will often times break the line. A good angler can anticipate the pull and backwind as the fish makes its move. You have a much greater chance of catching a large fish on light tackle

using this method. However, if you get an extremely large fish and you lose control of the reel handle, the loose handle can do some damage to your hand.

Other Casts

The overhead cast can be done with one or two hands. See which is most comfortable for yourself. To adjust the distance of your cast with a one-hand cast while your plug is in the air depress the button to slow the plug. To stop the plug completely, fully depress the button and allow the plug to drop on the target.

The overhead cast cannot be used in all situations and anglers are encouraged to learn a side cast, flipping, and pitching. You utilized the same grip as explained in this lesson, but the stance and arm action are essentially the same for all types of casting and spinning gear. See other casts under the Bait-Casting Lesson for advanced casting methods.

Avoiding Line Problems

Follow the steps as you close the bail on your cast. However, a loose loop may slip by anyway. Therefore always keep an eye on your spool for any loop and remove immediately. Leaving the loop in will result in a major snarl later on if you don't. To remove the loop, open the bail, pull line off until you reach the loose loop, then straighten the line. If you can cast your line out to an area that won't get hung up, you can cast downwind. Rewind, using your thumb and forefinger to apply tension.

Drag slippage from fighting fish or hang-ups can cause twists in your line which will eventually cause your line to continually loop. If you are fishing from a boat, you can take your lure off your line, open the bail and trail 50 to 75 yards of line behind the boat for about five minutes. This will straighten the line.

Catching Fish On Shore. As part of each casting lesson, include a section on how to appropriately use the equipment to catch a fish. Feel the bite, set the hook and reel in the fish. This exercise allows you to help anglers correct any problems.

Is the line tight? Teach the angler that they must have a tight line in order to feel the bite. With the line loose, tug lightly on the angler's line. Can he/she feel anything? Have angler tighten line, then tug again. Can they feel the difference?

Set the hook. Teach the angler how to set the hook. This time when you tug on the line, ask the angler to set the hook. In most cases, only one sharp snap of the rod is needed to set the hook on a fish. Do not let the casting plug fly out of your hand! Review with the angler if he/she has done it properly and do again until he/she gets it right. You may want to discuss that you set the hook a little differently depending on the fish you are trying to catch. They won't have to set the hook very hard on bluegill or trout, but will have to use a little more force when setting the hook on a bass.

Reel in the fish. Remember, as the fish, you are a bluegill or a bass, not a whale. Be careful that you do not ruin the rod and reel. Begin by having the angler reel you in. Watch to see that they have the rod tip up and that they are using the rod to help fight the fish. Is the drag set correctly? You may have to help them adjust the drag. Return to the angler as many times as necessary to assist them make adjustments. Do they have the correct grip on the rod handle? With the casting plug in your hand, run away from them. It is very important to tell them not to reel while the fish is running away so it won't twist their line. Explain, that their drag is set so that line will come out when the fish makes its run. Let the fish make its run and do not reel, but be prepared to reel once the fish stops so that the line does not go slack. They need to always keep their line tight. Run toward the angler and ask them to try to keep the line tight. Run to each side and show them how to adjust the rod direction. As they get you close to shore discuss how they

should leave some line out to bring the fish to shore. In other words, do not reel to the top of the eye, which can knock the fish off the hook.

Congratulations. Once the angler has successfully brought you ashore. They deserve congratulations.

References:

Basic Casting from A to Z booklet developed by Zebco.
McClane's Secrets of Successful Fishing
Sportfishing and Aquatic Resources Handbook