

Are Your Hooks Sharp Enough?

by Stan Wright

■ A hook taken right out of the box is not sharp enough to fish with. That may not be true if you're using the new Lazer Sharp hooks, but in general, most hooks you buy could use a little sharpening.

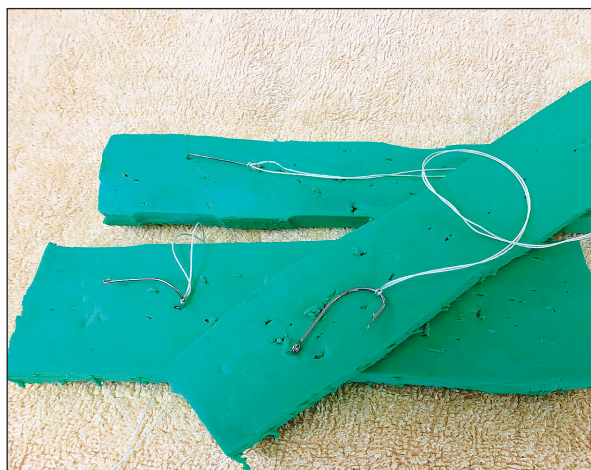
A dull hook won't provide good penetration. The best way to check a hook for sharpness is the "thumbnail test." Place the hook point on your thumbnail, press down lightly, and try to slide the hook to the side. If the hook sticks, it's sharp. If it slides, it should be sharpened or replaced.

I always carry a hook sharpener in my tacklebox. Just a few swipes of the sharpener along the hook point, and the hook is ready to catch fish.

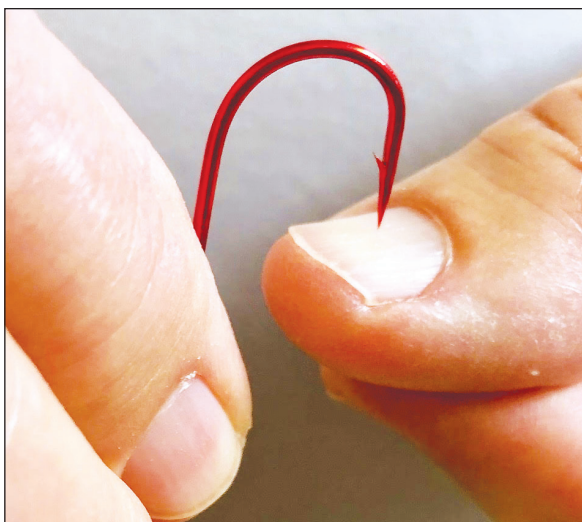
Barbless Hooks

Barbless hooks penetrate better. It's easier to remove a fish hook if you are releasing a fish, or your hat, or your ear. You might wonder, "Won't I lose more fish with a barbless hook?" No, but you will hook more fish. Just keep a tight line, and you'll land the fish you hook. Circle hooks are great for holding fish when you are saltwater dunking. Plus, if your fish cuts your line on the rocks, a barbless hook will work its way out in time.

Why do they put a barb on a hook then? The barb is used to hold the bait on the hook. Having been hooked many, many times over the years, I bend down the barb on *all* of my hooks and lures, thank you very much.



Training aids teach kids how to remove a fish hook. You can make your own with a hook, a loop of strong cord and a piece of rubber slipper.

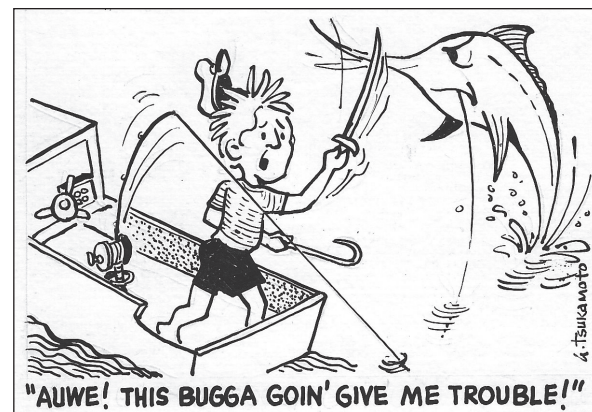


How to tell if a hook is sharp: if the point digs into your nail, it's sharp; if it slides, it needs sharpening.

Hooked!

I got a chance to practice what I preach and teach. Returning to the boat ramp one day, I heard a yell followed by an adult saying, "Hold still. Don't move your hand." A 9-year-old had a fish hook embedded in his thumb. I told them to hang on and I would remove the hook. I keep a piece of string in my tacklebox for just such an emergency.

Speaking calmly, I told the young man what he and I were going to do. "OK, here we go. On the count of one, you press down on the eye of the hook. When I get to three, I'll pull it out." "One." He pressed down, and I jerked on the line. (Jerk the line on the count of "one." If you wait till the count of "three," the person will tense up their muscles and it will be more difficult to remove the hook.)



If the fish hook is embedded in the head or neck, head straight for the emergency room. There is too great a chance of injury to the eye or nicking an artery.

I was amazed at how easily the hook came out. He said, "Wow! That didn't hurt a bit." I squirted a large quantity of alcohol-based hand cleaner into his palm and told him to rub his hands together. I warned him, "But this may sting a little." "YAAAAOOOOooooo!"

I explained to the adults how to treat the puncture wound and how to bend down the barbs of their hooks. You can visit YouTube to see videos on how to remove hooks and bend down the barbs on hooks.

Just as the Boy Scouts tell us after their first experience using emergency first aid, "It worked, just like you trained us!"

This was my second opportunity to use this technique to remove a fish hook embedded in someone's hand. It works just as advertised.

By the way, I got hooked twice during that fishing trip—but all of my hooks are barbless!

Aloha.

... Stan

String-and-Snatch Method

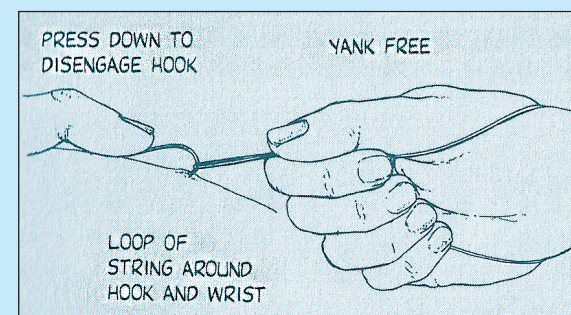
by Jim Rizzuto (From FISHING Hawaii Style - Volume 3)

Big hooks generally require local anesthesia to numb the area so that a lot of wiggling and prodding can be done. So, when you've got a marlin or tuna hook stuck in you, plan to visit a doctor for anesthesia, removal, a course of antibiotics, probably a tetanus shot and a good scolding.

The string-and-snatch is quick, like yanking out a loose baby tooth. You can master it by following the directions shown in the diagram and described here.

1. Make a loop from about 20 inches of fishing line of 30-lb test or more. Cut the leader off the hook, and slip the loop past the eye end of the hook.

2. Slide the loop back along the hook until it is in the eye. The pressure helps stretch open the hook hole and disengage the barb, which is important because the barb is the feature preventing the withdrawal of the hook.



3. While you are still pushing down on the hook eye, yank the string. The hook should come right out of its entry hole.

4. Hook points are dirty, so get medical advice to eliminate any chance of tetanus or infection. You generally have 24 hours after being injured to get a tetanus shot. On the other hand, a serious infection may not show up for several days.