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## About the Author

Wally Barrett is a keen fisherman. Some of the fondest memories of his childhood were the times he and his parents went fishing.

Wally said, "We did a lot of fun things, but those times when we were fishing were among the best of all."

And my memories!

He added, "They were great times even when we didn't catch many fish or none at all!"

Now, his own children are building a store of fun memories and Wally has written "Fishing with Your Kids" to help other parents share their enjoyment of this wonderful, healthy activity with their kids safely and at minimum cost.

Wally said, "I know that our lives are fast-paced and there are plenty of challenges for all families, but I have tips and experience to share which will help anyone have great fun with their family chasing a feed of fish!

Wally said, "This book will save you time and worry, and help you even if you haven't fished yourself for years!"

## Introduction

Fishing is one of the most popular sports and hobbies in the world.

It is a very healthy activity which appeals to all ages.

My dad was a keen fisherman and the days we went fishing together became some of the most vivid memories I have.

Even those days when we didn't catch many fish, or none at all, were very enjoyable! Dad had some great ideas to make them great anyway.

I wrote this book to help other parents to enjoy similar experiences with their children.

Even if you have little experience of fishing yourself, you can make memories and have fun with your kids too.

I'll include some tips which will help you avoid accidents and save you money by not buying stuff you don't need.

There are many simple ideas which only come from experience. Now, you can use my experience to have more fun with your fishing and possibly catching lots of fish as well!

**NOTE:** I've not discussed fly fishing in this book because of our focus on starting kids as anglers.

Fly fishing is a fantastic way to fish but I feel it should be left alone until your kids have some experience with easier forms of our sport that can give them more chances of catching a fish in their first fishing trips.

## Kids Love Fishing

Well, they really love catching fish. And most kids love eating fish about the same amount.

The rest may not be as attractive to them! But, they will grow to like it if we make the effort to not ruin the experience for them.

### *Spoilers*

Things that might spoil a fishing trip include:

- X Impatience** is understandable when you are fishing with your kids for the first time. But, it can spoil their experience and you may not get them interested in another fishing trip!
- X** Adults who do the fishing while the kids are only allowed to "watch and learn".
- X** Periods where nothing happens. This is something which is a part of every fishing trip. So, we can have other activities which add to the experience.

You might bring out some snacks and drinks.

If you've had a while at that location, think about shifting the area you are operating in.

- X** Overselling what will happen on the first trip! That can bring disappointment with the early experience and doubts about better outcomes in the future.

Try to plan some surprises.

## Hooks



Hooks are a critical part of your fishing quest. If you buy cheap hooks, they may bend or even break and your fish get away.

There are a few different types of hooks.

**“J” Hooks.** The traditional hook shown in the picture still works.

But, many are using the circle hooks and other types instead.

The barbs on the traditional hooks often get caught in the fish’s stomach, making it difficult to remove and causing damage to the fish.

The barb also makes it more difficult for us to remove hooks which catch our fingers.

If you want to reduce these problems, you can use pliers to press the barb against the shaft, reducing the potential damage.

**Circle Hooks:** These hooks have small or no barb and the point of the hook is bent in a curve toward the shaft.

This feature ensures that these hooks catch on the jaw of most fish instead of being snagged in the stomach. This enables the fish to be released more easily and also removes the need for you to set the hook in the fish by pulling against its initial grab of the bait.



## How Weather Conditions affect Fish



Weather affects how anglers feel and also whether fish will be active and whether they will be interested in your bait or lure.

Bright sunlight will have many fish looking for shade provided by plants, tree stumps, rocks or man-made structures. But, they will avoid shallow

water where the bigger fish will be able to see and grab them easily.

When the water is warm, fish will also use more energy and have a greater need to feed.

The fish may become less active if the temperature remains high and they have fed.

Some anglers forget that the temperature under the surface of the water will vary significantly at different depths.

Fish may be scarce in the top layer but more plentiful and vigorous just a few feet deeper.

### ***Watch the Sky***

When the sun shines, fish will go a bit deeper or stay around weed and man-made structures to avoid the direct sunlight.

The sky will also show signs of imminent changes in the local conditions.

### ***Wind brings Food and Action***

The wind stirs up sediment to reveal small creatures which fish love to eat.

It also pushes small fish into clusters which makes it easy for bigger fish and anglers to catch them.

### ***A little Rain is Good News***

Bends and mounds in the water course are good areas to fish, other conditions permitting. When you see a stream bend, you will know that the

current will drop food in the curve.

The small fish will feed there and the bigger fish will be waiting there to feed on the smaller ones!

### *Atmospheric Pressure*

If you have a barometer or an app which shows atmospheric pressure, it helps you to see what weather changes are on the way. The individual figures are not as important as the way the pressure is changing.

Dropping pressure suggests that a storm may be on the way. Better weather should be indicated by a rising pressure level.

Very low readings may indicate the approach of a severe storm.

## Where to Fish

When you start taking your kids fishing, make sure you start with places that are going to provide fish.

If they don't get any success, however small, on their first trips, they won't be as enthusiastic about doing more.

You may want to share some of your favorite spots but only if they are going to be successful.

I know that waiting for a bite is part of the fishing experience and character building, but kids need to be achieving something if you want them to continue with the sport.

Some places which have good prospects are dams and ponds which are stocked with fish by Government or state agencies.

They do this to attract anglers and their families..

There may be charges for using them but the important point is that these areas are safe and almost certain to provide your kids with a fish or two to catch and take home.

## **When the Fish are not Biting**

The first fishing trip for your kids is critical because they will form their attitude about fishing from it.

It might be worthwhile to put your fishing aims aside for that day and focus on those new chums.

Make sure there are fish where you are. The kids will want to catch at least one fish, a few is better still.

Taking home an empty basket and sunburn could put them off fishing in the future.

Small is okay as long as they get some.

Your gear is likely to get a bigger fish or at least something even when there are few biting. So, cast your rod but let the kid reel it in and claim ownership of the fish.

### **Ration the fishing Time**

Kids have notoriously short attention spans, at least when they are trying something for the first time. If they are just waiting for something to bite for a long period, their enthusiasm will be hard to maintain.

If they seem to maintain their enthusiasm, let them keep fishing.

Change their bait for a lure or vice-versa if there are no signs of action.

### **Pack snacks and fruit juice boxes**

Small kids will probably want to do something different if the fishing is slow.

Go for a walk, look for live bait, watch other anglers, but don't interrupt them.

Find another spot, maybe a pier instead of the water's edge, and try there.

Kids love to throw sticks into the water or skid stones over the surface.

But make sure they only do it where they will not disturb other anglers.

You can attract fish by putting some cut-up fish in the water but you must check with the authorities before you think of doing this because the

practise is illegal in some States.

As part of your preparation for the trip, check on the other local kid-friendly attractions.

If they have a stocked dam, there will be other businesses within a short distance.

## Teaching them to Fish



I hope that my book will help you give your children an interesting and enjoyable introduction to our sport, even if you have not done much fishing yourself.

Fishing is a hobby that's equally enjoyable by men and women and girls as much as boys.

And either parent is likely to be good at starting their kids in their life-long fishing adventure.

When you teach kids or adults something, just give them the basics. They won't absorb a lot of information at first because they are focused on catching some fish! Some won't be clear about the details until they are trying it themselves.

Tell them what you'll show them and why it's important.

Give them a demonstration.

Then, let them have a go.

Don't pick on their technique. They are kids! And, most important, their budding self-confidence won't stand a hit from their parent right at the start.

They will improve by watching you and other anglers and even more when they start trying things out.

Find something to comment favorably on.

Let them cast your rod and reel in a fish you catch on it. That will give them a boost and strengthen the bond you have.

## Where to Buy Your Gear

If you have been fishing recently, you probably have started to sort out some favorite dealers and brands for yourself.

My preference is to buy locally and support businesses that are in your locality provided you find them helpful and reasonable in their charges.

Stores where the staff are also anglers are worth supporting because they will have local knowledge and information about local fishing clubs where you can meet more anglers.

When your child starts to get their equipment, they will be attracted by the fishing kits which are branded with various characters from various entertainment franchises.

Some of these may be okay but they are often low-quality equipment which won't be easy to use or reliable over a few trips. Some kits may not have the accessories you really need while including some things which you will never find suitable for the fishing the child will be doing.

I've included information about many things which you should have in your kit in the extensive "supplies" chapter near the end of the book.

Not everything will be important for you and your family. You will be able to work out which are most suitable for your child's use as well.

Using the information here plus some local knowledge from your fishing supplier, friendly angler, or local club will get you off to a better start and avoid wasting money on junk!

## Rods Poles and Reels

Whatever type of fishing you do, the usual basic kit usually includes a rod or pole, or maybe both.

Some people use hand-lines for some of their fishing. But, most are using rods or poles because of the extra options they provide.

### *Poles*

Poles used today range from the simple line fixed to the end of a pole which you may remember from Mark Twain's stories of Tom Sawyer to hollow models which have a simple reel or line holder and can be disassembled into sections for traveling.

All poles are designed to be like an extension of your arm.

A pole isn't for casting your bait accurately.

When you swing the pole over the water and let the line go, your line and attached bait goes out further than you could throw it.

The length and strength of the pole give you more power for setting your hook in the fish's mouth, battling the fish, and hauling it in.

You can make simple poles yourself or buy one that suits your needs.

Some basic reels are available for making line control on your fishing pole simpler.



## Reels

There are several types of reels with features which can be bought and used for angling.

The type of fish, location and experience of the angler will all affect your choice of reel.

For each type, there are a wide range of models which vary widely in price.

My recommendation is that you buy slowly and buy quality. Bulk buys of unbranded hooks, or other accessories may not be the bargain they seem.

Imagine if you use an expensive lure on a bargain spool of line which breaks, so you lose the lot!

Champion anglers endorse particular lures, reels etc., because they are paid to. The gear is good but probably no better than many similar items from other companies which may be cheaper.

My suggestion is to buy well-known brands or those recommended by actual users that you know. That includes tackle shop employees who fish.

Here's the basics about the most common types of reels.



### *Baitcast*

Baitcast reels are round and large. They are intended for larger types of fish.

The weight of the bait or lure and weight on the line draws out when the rod is swung forward.

### *Spincast*



Spincast reels are often recommended for new anglers, including children, because of their simple method of operation.

They come in a range of sizes. Larger ones are used for larger fish. Small ones are often found in fishing kits because they are easier for small kids to operate. But, I do not recommend spincast reels for anyone,

even kids, that will be fishing regularly.

The reel clips onto the upper surface of the rod. The line is on a spool which is hidden by a cover which has a hole at the front for the line to go up the rod.

The angler presses down the thumb button flick the rod back, then forward. As he does this, he lifts his thumb off the button and the baited line is pushed out.

A click of the button stops more line going out.

The spincaster format is probably a good choice for kids up to, say, 6 years old. But, when your kid starts tying some of his own knots or other stuff with his or her kit, a spinner reel would be a wiser choice.

The popularity of the small spincaster reels is clouded by reports that the line wears more quickly in them, tangles are worse because they develop inside the cover and the reels don't last as long without repair.

### *Spinning*



Spinning reels have an exposed spool of line and a thick wire which wraps the line around the spool on the retrieve.

The reel is fitted under the rod and the angler controls the line with his forefinger.

Small spinning tackle is a good choice for new anglers, especially kids.

As we progress we can add larger reels and rods but a simple kit is all we need

when we start as our type of fishing may change after we have some experience.

### *Fly Fishing*

Fly fishing is very popular but takes more time and effort to reach an

effective standard.

The angler casts small representations of bugs, flies and other critters to attract hungry fish.

The lures are very light and the force to cast it far and accurately is applied to the line!

## Rods

Rods are produced to work with one or two main types of reels.

If you are not an experienced angler, the rods you should consider for yourself would be between 5 ft (about 150 cm) and 7 ft (about 210 cm) long

There are specialty rods which are outside these limits. They are used by experienced anglers willing to pay for special features.

Rods for young kids may be between 4ft (about 120 cm) and 6 ft (about 180 cm) long.

You use **spinning** reels on **spinning** rods.

You use **bait-casting** and **spin-casting** reels on casting rods.

You use **fly** reels on fly fishing rods.

Each reel manufacturer uses a range of materials for their rods.

There are many variations in the construction and materials used for some of the rods within each group.

## What Line to Use

The two types of fishing line you'll be offered are monofilament and braided. My recommendation is for you to set up your kids with monofilament. When they have some experience and desire to try different types of fishing, they can start using braid without the possible problems that new anglers would have.

As with all your accessories, get branded line of whatever type you use. The bargain unknown brands are cheap but could break when you have that trophy fish on your hook!

Monofilament is easier to handle.

Tying knots in braided line is not so easy.

Mono is not as expensive.

But, braid is more durable and is preferred by many anglers.

Tangles in braid are harder to unravel and braid isn't as easy to cut!

There's no reason for sticking to one type for all tasks. Get a spool of each and try them both.

Don't get line which is rated for higher weight of fish than you are likely to catch.

## Supplies

This list is a reminder of what may be useful for most and essential for some anglers.

Pare your list down to what you believe are essentials, then pack those items and fit any other items in

where space is available without compromising safety or convenience.



**Dry clothes:** Some items of extra clothing will be necessary for each person on each trip so you'd better have these with you each time.

**Spare eyeglasses:** These will prevent you being stranded if you are the only adult and your regular glasses are damaged.

**Whistle:** A whistle is essential for attracting attention. Each person should have one if you are going to walk any distance in rural areas.

**A small horn:** Electric or gas operated, is worth having if you will be in an isolated area.

**Batteries:** For every device you've got with you. Carry them in resealable strong plastic pouches.

**Juice boxes:** Are useful for quick drinks and they are easy to flatten for the return journey. Avoid any which have a lot of sugar or additives.

**Tweezers:** Useful for splinters.

**Hats** (for everyone). The risks of skin cancer are very real. When you are near water, that risk is magnified by the extra rays which reflect off water and

sand. Children are especially vulnerable. Make sure the hats have a wide brim so that they deflect direct light from your neck and shoulders as well as all areas of your head.

**Cloths:** Have a number of uses. Wrap them around your head to keep sun off. Wrap them around other supplies to protect them.

A couple of bright orange pieces are good for attracting attention if you become lost.

**Diary or notebook with pen:** Make notes about good and bad occurrences for later review. Better than an electronic diary because you can add pictures.

**Camera or smart-phone:** I'd rather use a dedicated camera and save my phone's battery if it is needed for urgent messages.

**Two flashlights:** So that your child can carry one. Led globes are very bright (don't point them at any person or creature's eyes).

**A snakebite kit:** Is a wise investment. It is worth getting your doctor or other reliable source to show you how to use it. You also should be aware what snakes are likely to inhabit the area where you are fishing.

Snakes and other critters like to hide in holes at water level which some anglers explore for bait fish!

**An I.D. sheet:** For each person should be filled in, then put in a sealed plastic sleeve and stitched into clothing. It should have personal details, medical information, who to contact in emergency, etc.

Get trained in first aid. Your family may not need it but you could save a stranger's life some day.

A **first aid kit** is something which we all should have. It's false economy to buy a cheap, department store kit which has little beyond scissors, tape and swabs. Get a kit from a recognized authority or build your own with materials you, and those with you, need.

**Knife:** You can get a "fishing knife with features to help you cut line, etc.

**Tweezers, forceps:** Tweezers are usually carried to help remove hooks. But, forceps will do a better job. Don't use them for anything else and get training before trying to remove hooks from people or animals.

**Magnifying glass:** (Make sure it is sufficient quality. Many cheap magnifiers are useless trinkets).

**Latex gloves:** Get **latex-free** if you need them.

**Stronger gloves:** (Thermite or similar) for things that might hurt or infect you. Use gloves for holding line when you want to apply drag to it. If there is a strong fish pulling the line, the gloves will protect your fingers.

**Sunscreen:** Should be at least SPF 30, preferably DEET-free. Apply often as exposure to weather reduces coverage and effectiveness. Always replace your sunscreen after 12 months unless it has a specified longer shelf-life. Most don't.

**Bug-spray:** Is very important for immediate protection. Use a strong spray which controls most bugs. Use care when applying. Wipe excess off clothes and gear. Avoid the face, especially your eyes.

**A cigarette lighter:** Can be very handy even if you don't smoke. Also carry a flame-proof mat for smothering any burning material.

A couple of small squeeze applicators of a quality **hand sanitizer**. It's no better than proper application of soap and hot water but easier to store and use when fishing.

Check all your gear at least two days before your trip so you can replace anything which is not usable before the day of trip when you will have too much to do.

**Plastic bags:** (Strong ones) for carrying **all** your trash away with you to your home or a designated trash disposal area.



## How to Section

### *Casting a Spinner*

Set your spin reel with 6lb line and put a small weight about the weight of your usual bait or a lure on the end of the line. Don't use the lures you fish with unless you have some identical spares.

Hold your rod handle in your dominant hand with your wrist on top and the forefinger curled down, pointing to your reel.

Your thumb lies on the top of the rod, the other fingers are curled around the underside of your rod and behind the metal connecting the rod and the reel.

Use your free hand to pull down the curved metal bail in front of the reel until it is set in position.

Lift your rod hand to about 15 degrees above horizontal and then move it to the side.

#### **Now, you cast the line:**

Quickly move the rod forward and lift your thumb off the line when the rod is about midway between the front and the side.

Your weight on the end of the line should hit a spot in front of your position.

Then, get your kid to join you and demonstrate the cast to them on your lawn or other wide cleared area.

Get them to put a flat object on some part of the area for you to aim a couple of casts at.

Then, you set up a couple of targets for them. Make theirs fairly easy and continue sharing the shots with them as long as they are interested.

## **New Line on Your Spinning Reel**

You may want to put your first spool of line on your new reel or you may want to replace the first hundred yards of your current line with some fresh line.

An older child might be able to assist with this . But it is monotonous and the tension must be kept as even as possible during the whole transfer. So, I suggest that you get an adult to help you do this to reduce the possibility of tangles later on.

### ***Replace first 100 Yards of line on reel***

Get a friend to reel off about 100 yards of used line while you hold the reel.

While letting the old bruised line leave the spool, notice whether the line curls clockwise or counter-clockwise.

Check that the line which you will continue to use is still good condition.

Cut the discarded line away.

Take the first few inches of the new line. Before attaching it with a strong knot to the remainder of the old line on the reel, check that the curl of the new line is the reverse of the curl of the old. That means the new line will spool onto the reel and off again when in use. I use the same direction as the old line does.

This reduces the possibility of line curl tangles significantly.

Another way to check this is to confirm which way your reel spins as it retrieves line or takes on new line – clockwise or counter-clockwise. Then, you get your friend to present the new line to the reel in the reverse direction.

Maintain some tension on the incoming line a few inches from the reel. That tension is important – it also helps to avoid tangles occurring later on.

Keep that steady pressure as you and your friend transfer the new line onto the reel.

Leave about 1/8<sup>th</sup> inch between the top of the spooled line and the edge of the side of the reel.

Cut the line, put the spool away and then thread the end of the line on the reel through the eyelets and tie to the end of the rod for now.

***Putting line on a new Reel***

This can be done in a similar way. Pull the end of the new line around the empty reel a couple of times and tie a strong knot which won't shake free before you get your friend or partner to hold the spool of new line and start the transfer.

## Resources

To find public accessible fishing spots in your state and local area, you can contact your state and federal agricultural and wildlife departments.

State tourism offices will also have information and be able to refer you to local organizations involved in the type of fishing which you want to do.

Fishing Clubs will also be a good source of up-to-date information and local knowledge.

### **U.S.A.**

#### **Weather Information and more**

The weather Channel has weather information and advice on its website for anglers in the U.S.A. They also show links to a fishing forecast and fishing-related stories from around the world on their homepage.

<http://www.weather.com/sports-recreation/fishing/>

#### **Recreation Places and Resources**

<http://www.recreation.gov>

#### **Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation**

This organization is devoted to promoting the increased participation in recreational boating and fishing and thereby increase public awareness and appreciation of the need to restore the nation's aquatic nature resources.

<http://takemefishing.org>

## **Fishing is Healthy Fun**

I hope that you will have a lot of fun and build good memories when you go fishing with your kids or grandkids.

There are so many types of fishing to try and anglers are a friendly, helpful bunch of people, wherever you go in this world.

*Wally Barrett*

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