

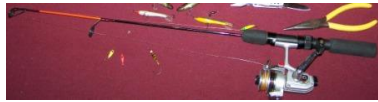
Basic Ice Fishing Gear for the Beginner

So you've decided this is the year to get off the couch and head out onto the ice, or perhaps some new friends have convinced you to join them in their hard water angling pursuits. Now what? Does that mean I have to invest hundreds of dollars in ice fishing equipment? Will I be laughed at if I show up with the wrong stuff? Well you can rest easy because ice fishing in Southern Ontario doesn't need to be expensive and there are no rules about the best tackle to use.



The Rod and Reel

The first thing to remember is that generally you're only fishing through a six or eight inch hole in the ice. Fish don't care about fancy equipment and the thing that really counts is what's on the end of your line. I know many successful ice fishermen that hang a spool of line on the wall of their hut, add a jig and minnow to the other end and lower it into the watery depths. Not real sophisticated but laugh as you will it catches just as many fish as balanced tip-up, rod and reel, or any of the pricy automated inventions.



But I must admit, my favorite is still a small ice-fishing rod and reel combo that is available at most fishing tackle shops or hardware stores with a tackle section.

Jigs and Lures



The next thing to consider is an assortment of jig heads and lures. What you buy will be determined by the species of fish available in the lake you are fishing. I usually have an assortment of jigging lures in my tackle box, but have found that a small jig head and minnow combination works for just about anything.



Hooks and Sinkers



All the hooks, sinkers, swivels, and jig heads you need will fit nicely into a small plastic tackle box. One extra that you might consider is a small hook sharpener. A sharp hook lands more fish!

This is necessary but very inexpensive equipment that can be found at all tackle shops or hardware stores that have a fishing tackle section.

Ice Auger



Unless you are renting a hut from an operator you will need some means of making a hole in the ice. The least expensive practical way is to use a manual ice auger. This device works just like a drill and can be purchased to make 6, 8, or 10" holes. The smaller the hole, the easier it is to drill.

Don't forget to buy a sharpener for the blades of your auger. Sharp blades = less sweat.



The more expensive option is the power auger which operates the same way but is powered by a gasoline engine. If you get hooked on ice fishing and like to drill a lot of holes you'll soon discover the benefits of a power auger.



As you can see ice fishing in Southern Ontario need not be an expensive pastime. All you need to add is an insulated minnow bucket (full of lively minnows) and a comfortable folding chair and you're ready to land the big one.

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