

Cutting Through the Ice



The first step in ice fishing is figuring out where on the lake or pond to fish. Dropoffs, submerged cover and structure are good places to start. Knowing where these places are under the cover of snow and ice might be a little hard. You might try fishing a lake or pond you already know. Another way to find a spot to fish is to look for other anglers. Once at your hotspot, the next step is to cut through the ice.



photo- Mike Bleech

Augers

You might want to buy an auger. Augers are like large drills. Augers have sharp cutting edges and a drill bitlike blade. They can be “human”-powered or gas-powered. Hand augers can be purchased for as little as \$30 to as much as \$100. Gas-powered augers use motors to turn the bit. They cost hundreds of dollars. Augers come in different sizes, which dig holes from 6 inches in diameter to 8 inches.

Tool shed

There are several tools in your tool shed that can help you cut through the ice. An ax or hatchet could be used to cut through thin ice (at least 4 inches thick, though). This requires some skill and should be done by a grownup. A square hole can be chopped in a few minutes. Digging bars or post hole diggers can also work. Digging bars are like large chisels. You chip away at the ice using the bar. Be sure to tie a rope to the digging bar! Anglers have lost digging bars just as they broke through the ice.



photo- Vic Attardo

The Hole Truth

Cutting holes for ice fishing is good exercise. Remember that in Pennsylvania, holes can't be bigger than 10 inches wide in any direction. Also keep in mind that the bigger the hole, the more work it takes to dig it!

You also need something to scoop pieces of ice and snow out of the hole. You could buy an ice skimmer for less than \$10. You could use a slotted spoon or ladle, or a mesh strainer from the kitchen, too! The skimmer picks up the small pieces of ice and snow and lets the water drain.