

# Tried *and* True **TROUT TACKLE** *for* Spin Fishing



by Tyler Frantz    photos by the author

Trout season is a great time to be outdoors, as sunshine peeks through the clouds, green shoots break free of damp soil and birds once again take to nests. But, few springtime experiences are more pleasing than the steady wriggle of a trout on light spinning tackle.

After all, that is the primary reason we retreat to the water—to catch fish, right? A 5½- to 7½-foot ultra-light rod, open-faced spinning reel, and 4-pound-test fluorocarbon line, paired with the right tackle to match the conditions, will do the trick more often than not.

A variety of lures, bait and techniques will catch trout, and everyone has their favorite methods. But in my experience, a few old standbys seem to perform better than others. If I want to catch a quick limit or work a stretch of water to maximize my catch rates, I typically rely on the following “tried and true” trout tackle when spin fishing.

## Inline spinners

Whether wade fishing streams or lake fishing from my boat, an inline spinner is one of my all-time favorite trout lures, because it mimics baitfish and triggers a trout’s natural predatory drive. Spinners are highly versatile and are available in a variety of sizes, shapes and colors. Inline spinners are especially good early in the season when the water is high and fish are eager to chase and feed.

I affix a snap swivel to the end of my line to quickly and conveniently change spinners depending on which styles fish are responding to best. This avoids putting a twist in the line. Generally, I do better on clear days with silver bladed spinners and reserve gold blades for when the water has some color to it.

In pools or other still water locations, I cast out, allow the spinner to sink to the anticipated depth of the fish and reel the spinner back on the slowest retrieve possible while still allowing the blade to spin.

In flowing runs, I cast upstream and reel slightly faster than the current with my rod tip low and facing downstream to keep the blade running. This will often



*An inline spinner is equally effective in lakes and streams, as it mimics the baitfish trout love to eat.*

prompt fish sitting low in the column to strike. If fish are holding high, simply reverse directions, and your lure will work higher since it is fighting against the current rather than sinking along with it.

Spinning lures are great for covering lots of water quickly, and it is my number one choice when walking a stretch of stocked trout stream for catch-and-release spin fishing, as it can often lead to double-digit hookups in just a short period of time.

## Jigs

If the water is clear enough to spot fish lying in the bottom of a pool or below a logjam where vertical access is readily available, a small jig can be highly effective at enticing a strike from resting trout.

The plan of attack is simple. Use a pair of polarized glasses to “sight-fish” likely holding locations to find trout. Drop a weighted jig head with plastic grub, such as a Trout Magnet, several rod lengths ahead of the fish, and let it sink.

As the jig ticks along the bottom toward the fish, high stick your rod to bounce the jig vertically off the bottom several feet in front of the trout’s face, while keeping it just beyond reach.

This repeated up-and-down motion seems to either irritate or induce aggressive feeding from trout. Regardless, it works. Once fish catch on to your game, however, it may require a few color changes to keep interest before strikes eventually fizzle out.

## Dough baits and live bait

Dough baits and live morsels, such as earthworms, mealworms and butter worms, are extremely desirable to trout. However, due to a trout’s susceptibility of swallowing the hook before anglers can react in time for a quality

hookset, it is advisable to avoid these baits if your primary goal for the day is catch and release.

However, if looking to catch a creel limit for an evening fish fry, scented dough baits and live bait offerings are difficult to top. Both can be float-drifted or weighted to fish the bottom, depending on where trout are holding.

To float-drift, simply attach a splitshot or two a few inches above a size 8 to 12 hook baited with a worm, grub or artificial dough bait. Then, add a small bobber the distance of the desired depth up the line from the splitshot. In most scenarios, 12- to 24-inches is sufficient for a good float without compromising casting ability.

Cast far enough upstream for your bait to sink, let it drift past the holding cover and set the hook when you see the bobber dip under the water’s surface. If

fishing bottom, do the same thing but without the bobber, only this time feel your line for a bump indicative of a strike.

It doesn’t hurt to slowly “crawl” the bait back upstream at the end of your maximum drift either, but loosen your drag and be ready for a fight when a trout takes the bait.

If targeting trout with spinning gear this spring, give this tried and true tackle a try. ☐



*Early in the season when water runs high, fishing for trout with light spinning tackle can be a real treat.*