

Beginner Fishing Techniques Practice Checklist Canada 2026

Use this before the first few trips. Practice the basic motions before changing lures at random.

Casting Practice

- Open space chosen: yard, park, dock, or safe shoreline
- Practice plug or hookless lure used
- Ten short casts before long casts
- Target accuracy checked before distance

Knot Practice

- Improved clinch or Palomar tied five times
- Tag end trimmed safely
- Knot pulled firmly before casting
- Retie after snags, abrasion, or a fish

First Rig

- Float rig, jig rig, or simple lure chosen
- Hook size matches bait or lure
- Weight is only heavy enough to cast and control depth
- Rules checked for bait and barbs

Bait, Lures and Retrieve Notes

The retrieve teaches you more when you change one variable at a time.

Bait Notes

- Use legal bait only
- Keep bait natural and small at first
- Set float depth before switching spots
- Watch line movement and float angle

Lure Notes

- Start with a spoon, spinner, jig, or soft plastic
- Cast shallow to deep or along cover edges
- Try slow, medium, and pause retrieves
- Change depth before changing colour

Reading Water

- Look for shade, weeds, docks, rocks, current seams, drop-offs, and baitfish
- Fish the edges before empty open water
- Watch wind direction and water clarity

Hookset, Fish Handling and Trip Review

A good beginner trip ends with safer handling and clearer notes.

Hookset and Fight

- Reel slack before setting the hook
- Set with a controlled sweep, not a wild swing
- Let the drag work on bigger fish
- Keep steady pressure and avoid high-sticking

Landing and Release

- Wet hands before touching fish
- Use pliers for difficult hooks
- Measure quickly if needed
- Revive fish gently before release where appropriate

Trip Review

- What technique worked?
- What did the fish ignore?
- What rule or safety issue needs checking?
- What one thing should be practiced next?