

ILLUSTRATED STEPS / SAVE IT. FIND IT. BUILD IT.

FISHING KIT

Soda-tab hooks, paracord line, a bottle-cap bobber and a trotline: a pocket fishing kit for small fish, plus how to cook them safely.



BEFORE YOU FISH:

FULL RULES / PAGE 03

License and local rules first, especially trotlines. Check fish advisories for the water.

Cook fish to 145°F (63°C), until it flakes with a fork.

START HERE

01

GET READY

Tools + clickable build map

02

FOLLOW THE STEPS

One clearly numbered stage at a time

03

FIND IT AGAIN

Quick reference + PDF bookmarks

For anyone near a creek or pond. Get a fishing license where one is required, and check local rules before you set a trotline.

NUKE ON TIKTOK

MORE FREE BUILD GUIDES

SOURCES / Wikipedia: Fish hook (primitive hooks and gorges) · Take Me Fishing: fishing licenses by state

BUILD MAP

NEXT

YOUR BUILD MAP

Tap a step to jump there. The printed page numbers work offline too.

HAVE THESE READY

- Aluminium can pull-tabs
- Small side cutters or snips
- 550 paracord (or waxed floss)
- Plastic bottle caps
- Nightcrawlers or other worms
- A stone for the trotline weight
- Fishing license (where required)
- Knife; fire or stove to cook

READ IN ORDER

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01	Make the hook	04
02	Make the line	05
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NOTE	Sources and limits	09

QUICK REFERENCE / PAGE 10

BEFORE YOU START

License and local rules first, especially for trotlines. Check fish advisories. Cook fish to 145°F (63°C). Tab hooks suit small fish only.

KEEP THIS COPY

Save the PDF with its guide ID. Use the build map, bookmarks, or your PDF reader's search to find a step later. Video and source links need internet; the instructions do not.

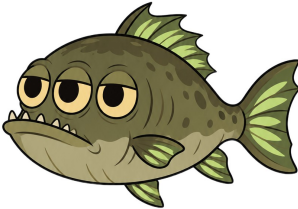
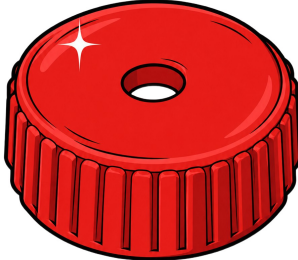
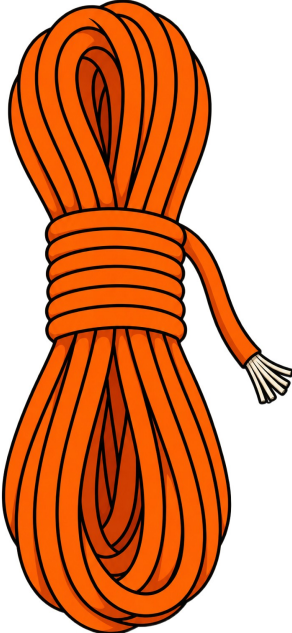
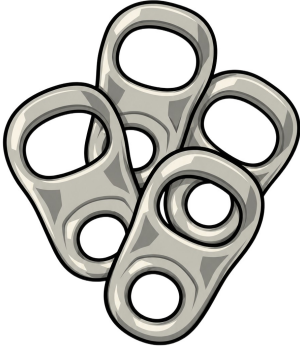
SETUP

Rules, kit and safe fish

READ BEFORE STEP 01

PREP

Four small items make the kit. Two quick checks keep it legal and safe.



CAN PULL-TABS550 PARACORDWORMSBOTTLE CAPCHECK ADVISORIES

RULES FIRST

- **Most US states require a fishing license, and many limit or ban trotlines and set lines.**
- Check your state's rules, and mark and check every line as the law says.

STOP / SAFE TO EAT?

- **Polluted water can make fish unsafe even when they look fine.**
- Check local fish advisories, and skip fish from water that smells of fuel or sewage.
- Cook fish to 145°F (63°C), until the flesh is opaque and flakes with a fork.

SOURCES / Take Me Fishing: fishing licenses by state · EPA: choose fish and shellfish wisely (advisories) · FDA: safe food handling (fin fish 145 F)

STEP

Make the hook

1 OF 4 / READ IN ORDER

01

A can's pull-tab already has a ring for the line. You cut the other ring into a J.



CUT AND SHARPEN

- **Twist a pull-tab off a can.**
- Snip the small ring open on one side so it forms a J with a point; the big ring is where the line ties.
- Sharpen just the tip on rough concrete or a stone.
- No cans?
- Tie a stiff hawthorn thorn to the line instead.

LIMITS

- **Aluminium is soft and has no barb, so this hook suits small fish like bluegill and small catfish.**
- Once a fish is on, keep the line tight or it can slip free.

SOURCES / Wikipedia: Fish hook (primitive hooks and gorges)

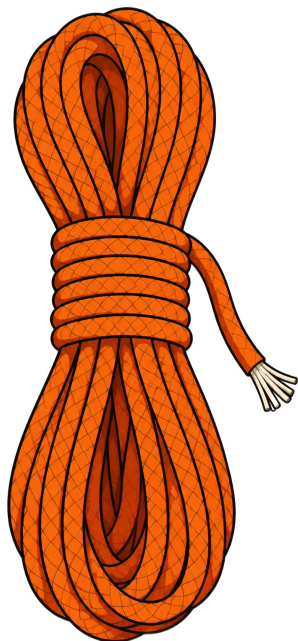
STEP

Make the line

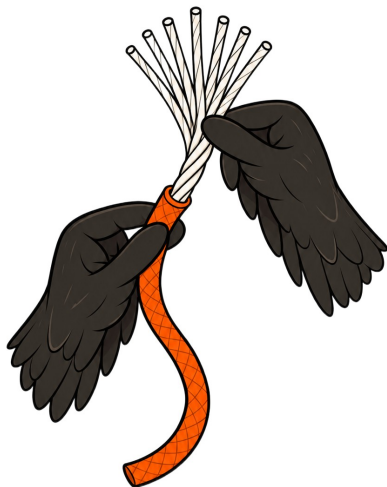
2 OF 4 / READ IN ORDER

02

One cord of paracord hides seven strong strands of fishing line.



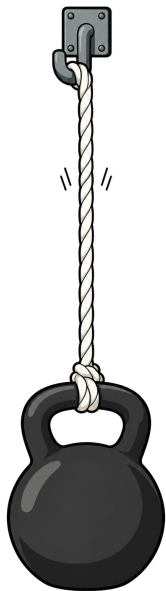
550 PARACORD



PULL THE 7 STRANDS



ONE STRAND



ABOUT 30 LB EACH

GUT THE CORD

- **Cut a length of 550 paracord from a guy line or spool.**
- Pull the seven inner strands out of the outer sheath.
- Each strand holds roughly 30 pounds, plenty for a creek catfish.
- No cord?
- Waxed dental floss works for small fish.

TIE ON THE HOOK

- **Pass the line through the hook's big ring, wrap the tail 5 times around the line, and tuck it back through the small loop next to the ring.**
- Wet the knot and pull it tight.

SOURCES / Wikipedia: Parachute cord (550 cord, inner strands) · Wikipedia: Fish hook (primitive hooks and gorges)

BUILD MAP

PREVIOUS

NEXT

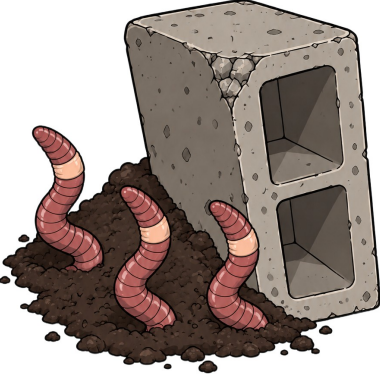
STEP

Bait and bob

3 OF 4 / READ IN ORDER

03

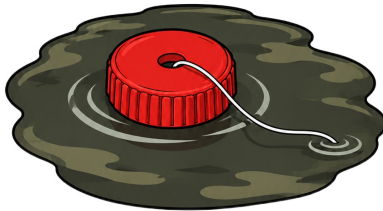
A worm hides the hook. A bottle cap tells you when to pull.



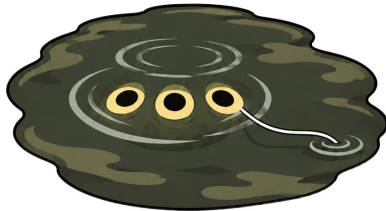
WORMS UNDER A BLOCK



COVER THE POINT



CAP FLOATS



CAP DUNKS: PULL

RIG IT

- **Look under cinder blocks, boards or logs on damp soil for nightcrawlers.**
- Thread one onto the hook so it covers the point.
- Punch a small hole through a plastic bottle cap, run the line through, and knot it so the cap sits about 2 feet above the hook.
- Toss it out near cover and wait.

WHEN IT DUNKS

- **When the cap dips under, pull up sharply to set the hook.**
- Then keep steady pressure and bring the fish in.

SOURCES / Wikipedia: Fish hook (primitive hooks and gorges)

BUILD MAP

PREVIOUS

NEXT

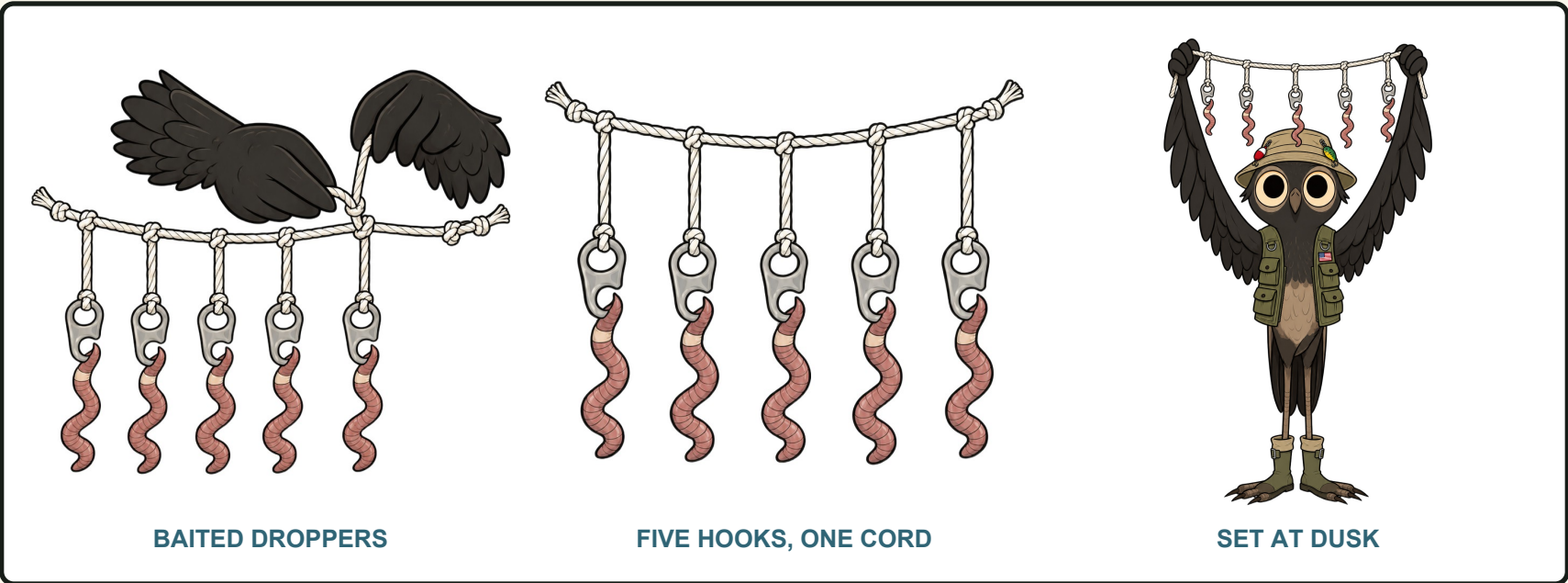
STEP

Run a trotline

4 OF 4 / READ IN ORDER

04

Several baited hooks on one cord fish all night while you sleep.



SET IT

- Tie five short droppers along one main cord, a few feet apart, each with a baited hook.
- Tie a stone near the middle so the hooks sink.
- Stretch the cord across the creek between sturdy anchors at dusk, and check it at sunrise.

STOP / TROTLINE RULES

- Trotlines need a license and are restricted in many states.
- Follow local rules on hook count, tags and check times.
- Never leave a line for days, and take it out when you are done.

WHY IT WORKS

- Catfish feed at night, so an overnight line with several hooks catches more than one rod.

SOURCES / Wikipedia: Trotline · Take Me Fishing: fishing licenses by state

NOTE

Clean and cook the catch

KEEP THESE LIMITS WITH THE STEPS

REF

Cold, gutted, and cooked through.



A NIGHT'S CATCH



ODD FISH? SKIP IT

HANDLE AND COOK

- **Keep fish alive or cold until you clean them, and gut them soon.**
- Catfish have sharp spines in their fins, so grip them from behind.
- Cook until the flesh is opaque, flakes with a fork and reaches 145°F (63°C).

SKIP IT IF

- **The fish smells bad, has sores or comes from water under an advisory.**

SOURCES / FDA: safe food handling (fin fish 145 F) · EPA: choose fish and shellfish wisely (advisories)

BUILD MAP

PREVIOUS

NEXT

NOTE

Sources and limits

KEEP THESE LIMITS WITH THE STEPS

REF

Checked October 3, 2026. Tap a source in the box to open it.

SOURCES / TAP A TITLE TO OPEN IT

Wikipedia: Fish hook (primitive hooks and gorges)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fish_hook

Wikipedia: Parachute cord (550 cord, inner strands)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parachute_cord

Wikipedia: Trotline

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trotline>

Take Me Fishing: fishing licenses by state

<https://www.takemefishing.org/fishing-license/>

EPA: choose fish and shellfish wisely (advisories)

<https://www.epa.gov/choose-fish-and-shellfish-wisely>

FDA: safe food handling (fin fish 145 F)

<https://www.fda.gov/food/buy-store-serve-safe-food/safe-food-handling>

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

- This is an editorial source review, not a tested catch log.
- Strengths and sizes stay approximate: about 30 pounds per strand, a cap about 2 feet above the hook, droppers a few feet apart.

STOP / WHERE THIS GUIDE ENDS

- Fishing rules vary by state and water body.
- This guide does not replace your state's regulations or local fish advisories.

SOURCES / Wikipedia: Fish hook (primitive hooks and gorges) · Wikipedia: Parachute cord (550 cord, inner strands) · Wikipedia: Trotline · Take Me Fishing: fishing licenses by state · EPA: choose fish and shellfish wisely (advisories) · FDA: safe food handling (fin fish 145 F)

QUICK REFERENCE

Read the full steps first. Tap any row to return to its instructions.

BEFORE STEP 01

License and local rules first, especially for trotlines. Check fish advisories. Cook fish to 145°F (63°C). Tab hooks suit small fish only.

- 01

Make the hook

Twist off a tab, snip the small ring into a J, sharpen only the tip. Big ring takes the line. Or a hawthorn thorn.

P04
- 02

Make the line

Pull the 7 inner strands from 550 paracord, about 30 lb each. Or waxed floss. Tie on with 5 wraps.

P05
- 03

Bait and bob

Worm over the point. Bottle cap knotted about 2 ft up. Cap dunks: pull sharply, then keep it tight.

P06
- 04

Run a trotline

5 baited droppers on one cord, a stone mid-span, bank to bank at dusk, checked at sunrise. Legal only.

P07

NUKE SAYS

Soda tab, string, worm, patience. The apocalypse diet.

STOP / LEGAL AND SAFE TO EAT

FULL RULES / PAGE 03

- Fishing license if required

▪ Fish advisories checked
- Trotline rules checked

▪ No fish from fouled water
- Mark and check every line

▪ Cook to 145°F (63°C)
- Remove lines when done

▪ Mind catfish fin spines

Tab hooks are soft and barbless: keep the line tight once a fish is on. Big fish can straighten them.

SOURCES / Wikipedia: Fish hook (primitive hooks and gorges) · Wikipedia: Parachute cord (550 cord, inner strands) · Wikipedia: Trotline · Take Me Fishing: fishing licenses by state · EPA: choose fish and shellfish wisely (advisories) · FDA: safe food handling (fin fish 145 F)