

SMART

Angler's Notebook

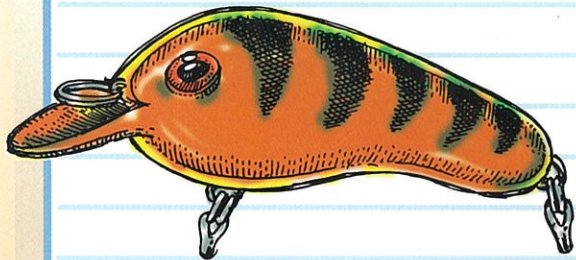
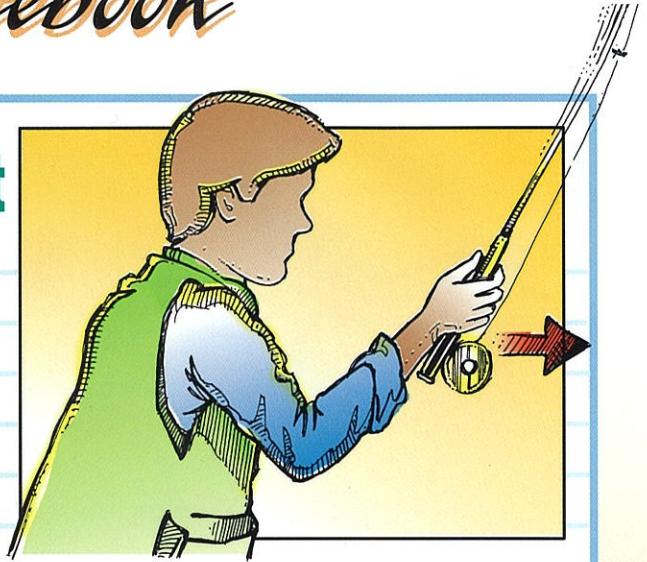
by Carl Richardson

Practice Makes Perfect

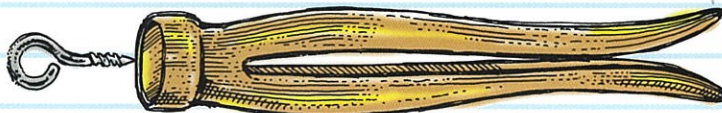
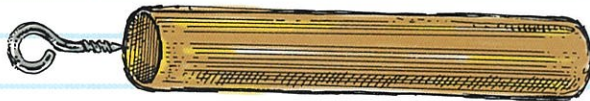
Don't wait until you can get on the water to use your casting skills. Practice in your backyard will make you a better caster on the water. Make backyard casting practice more than just standing out in the yard, casting your arm off. Work on controlling your distance and being more accurate. Use your imagination and this practice may even be fun!

PRACTICE PLUGS

You don't want to throw anything with hooks, but you still need to have something with weight to let you cast properly. Most tackle shops now sell practice plugs, or follow the plans below to make your own.

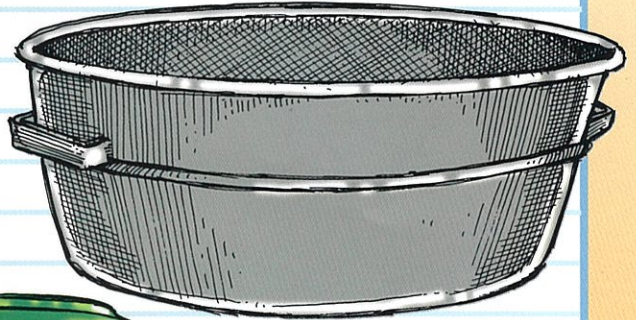


1. CUT OFF OR REMOVE THE HOOKS FROM AN OLD, WORN OUT FISHING LURE.
2. INSERT A SCREW EYE IN THE END OF A WOODEN CLOTHESPIN, OR SMALL SECTION OF A WOODEN DOWEL. TIE THE LINE TO THE EYE.



TARGETS

Hula hoops, trash can lids or wash tubs are ideal. For more of a challenge, use milk or bleach jugs.

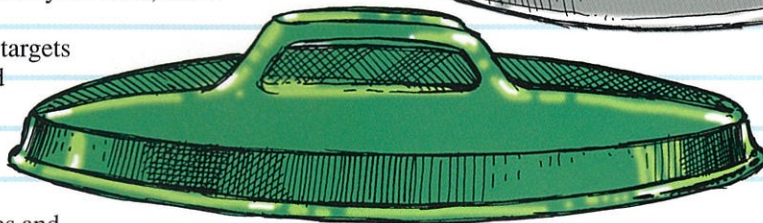


CASTING EXERCISES

Distance without accuracy is worthless. Work on combining the two in your practice. Start with one or two targets 20 to 30 feet away. When you can hit those with most of your casts, move some targets closer or farther away.

For more of a challenge, scatter your targets around the yard so you have to pitch around or through trees or other obstacles. Remember, fish are most often found around cover, not in the open. Give each target some point value and keep score. This is like throwing darts or horseshoes and is more fun with others.

Play FISH, a contest like HORSE, which is played by basketball players. One caster makes a trick or hard cast, and the other tries that same cast. The caster missing the target or not making the cast gets a letter from the word FISH. The casters switch and take turns. The first one to get all the letters in the word FISH loses.



DON'T MIND THE FUNNY LOOKS YOUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS GIVE YOU! TELL YOURSELF YOU WILL CATCH MORE FISH THAN THEY WILL, OR BETTER YET, GET THEM PRACTICING WITH YOU.

ANGLER