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Pro Angler Demonstrates 5 Ways to Cast Your Fishing Line

By Jennifer L.W. Fink

Photographs by Brian Payne

Aaron McAlexander has fished his entire life: His first memory is of fishing around a stump on a lake near his home. Today he is a collegiate bass fishing champ and master caster with the Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation. He practices casting an hour a day.

"It's the only way to get better," McAlexander says.

Start with these basics from McAlexander, and you could soon be casting like a pro.

THE SHOOTER



Great For: Fishing Boat Docks and Brush Piles

"Shooting is basically an old crappie fishing technique," McAlexander says. "I just took it and went into the bass world with it."

Step 1: Lower the lure about half the distance between the rod tip and reel.

Step 2: If you're using a spinning reel, flip open the bail, which is the thin wire part of the reel that is flipped from one side to the other. Hold the line with your dominant hand, and grasp the lure with the opposite hand.

Step 3: Draw the rod tip down and pull the lure back to your chest. You can even shoulder the rod like a rifle.

Step 4: Aim straight down the rod, then release the lure with your fingers and point straight down the rod with the finger that was holding your line. The line will come off the spool and propel the lure forward.

OVERHEAD CAST



Great For: Distance

"You can really get a lot of power behind an overhead cast," McAlexander says. "It's very accurate too, because you're looking where you're casting."

Step 1: With your thumb, hold down the button on your bait casting reel and bring the rod back.

Step 2: Bring the rod forward and release your thumb. The bait will drag your line out.

Step 3: Push the button back down with your thumb to slow your spool. "If you don't do it efficiently, you can end up with a backlash (line tangle)," McAlexander says.

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This Month's Issue



Great For: Casting 10 Yards or Closer

"I like to use pitching for up-close, finesse fishing," says McAlexander.

Step 1: While holding the rod straight up, let out enough line so that the lure comes down to the reel.

Step 2: Hold down the button on your reel, holding the spool steady. Grab your lure with your opposite hand. (Watch out for the hook!)

Step 3: Drop the rod tip down, bringing back your lure while keeping the line taut.

Step 4: Raise the rod tip in one swooping motion, pulling the lure out of your other hand. "That will drop the lure wherever your rod tip is pointing."

Step 5: Control the distance by slowing the line with your thumb.

FLIPPING



Great For: Casting Into Weed Mats

"Flipping is a little bit faster than pitching, but it's even shorter range," McAlexander says. "It's extremely effective, especially around shallow docks with mixed timber and vegetation."

Step 1: Pull out a lot of slack line, estimating the distance to your target. Keep your thumb on the spool or keep your reel engaged.

Step 2: Start the lure swinging, then let the lure go out with the slack line. Do not let your thumb off the spool.

Step 3: "You can sit there, jiggle it a couple seconds in that spot, then pull your slack line out and do the same thing for the next spot."

SIDEARM CAST



Great For: Windy Conditions

"If it's windy outside, you want to keep your lure low," McAlexander says. "With a straight overhead cast, the wind will really throw your lure around and reduce your distance. With the sidearm cast, you can skip your lure across the water and under cover."

Step 1: Bring your rod back at your side, holding the button and using a circular swooping motion.

Step 2: Snap your wrist forward, releasing the button, which releases the line.



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