

## TOP FISHING SECRETS

# TOP FISHING SECRETS.COM

### Proper Wading Techniques

*Take the time to get familiar with these various wading techniques and you won't end up in the river head under feet and increase amounts of fish on the hook.*

#### Timothy Kuserets

Did you know that there are methods to wading other than plunking one foot in front of the other? It seems like a silly question to ask but you'd be surprised how many anglers don't know how to properly do it. Successful wading is based on how it's done, where it's done, and the width of the gait dictates whether or not there'll be fish on the hook. Not knowing how to wade in streams, rivers, and lakes can spook fish out of a good fishing hole for an entire day. Learning how to wade can actually teach you to be able to walk right up on fish close enough to grab them by the tail. One of the more important aspects of wading is to consider safety. The act of wading is really more art than science. There are fundamental things to consider when walking in water, especially if it's water that is unfamiliar. Take the time to get familiar with these various wading techniques and you won't end up in the river head under feet and increase amounts of fish on the hook.

#### Up-stream Wading

Up-stream wading is without a doubt the hardest way to wade, and perhaps the most dangerous. In almost all cases, anglers who opt to use this method are already in the water to the maximum depth waders will allow. Wading upstream should be done in half steps. Whatever your normal gait while wading straight and downriver is it should be cut in half when wading upstream. Outwardly it is obvious that taking reduced steps is a safety precaution, but there is another reason too. Taking smaller steps ensures that holding fish do not get spooked by the increased wake created by your legs in the water. Fish can sense the movements of fishermen using their lateral lines on the sides of their bodies as they move back and forth (side to side). Increased sound means that fish will be able to hear you better. Taking the time to take half-steps will keep fish on the bite while not doing it will keep them off for hours on end.

#### Downstream

Every step downstream is easier, faster, and can be more dangerous if extra time is not taken. As a step is taken, make sure to anchor one foot solidly before taking another. Having a firm foothold in the water is crucial to prevent slipping.

When a fish is flailing about on the end of the line take half-steps downstream and begin to wade backwards. As you wade backwards, constant tension on the rod will bring fighting fish with you so it's not necessary to reel at any time. Only when you've gotten a firm foothold on or near the bank should you stop wading downstream before continuing to battle a hooked fish.

#### Side-Step Wading

## TOP FISHING SECRETS



*It's like moving as a crab does...side-to-side. Even while fighting a fish it's best to move with the current than against it. Note how my feet shuffle too and fro without out facing directly into the current. It is the same kind of step regardless of water depth. Movement like this also has the byproduct of keeping fish on the bite by diminishing sounds of splashing.*

Taking a side step to go up and downriver is one of the best ways to wade. It keeps the wakes from legs very low and quiet, and the side steps are much safer than any other step while wading. Sidestep wading is done to probe waters where fishing pressure has put fish off the bite. When it's in between fishing season sidestepping produces fish on stretches of water where there are no visible holding areas for fish to gravitate towards.



*Look how the current crashes into the side of the legs here. Wading with side steps downriver greatly decreases the amount of colliding water thus making each step quieter than would otherwise be heard by holding fish. The wading technique keeps fish on the bite as you probe water ferreting out strikes.*

## TOP FISHING SECRETS

### Half-step Wading



*Here I'm wading across some high and turbid water using the half-step wading method. The smooth surface of the river is deceptively fast. The color of the water is a dark green clay texture with zero visibility. This wading scenario warranted moving through the river taking half steps the entire width of it. Using a normal to large gait would risk losing the necessary foothold to get across the river. Any other wading method here and I'm off into the drink.*

It's best to take half-steps when in high, turbid, and unfamiliar water. Half-steps are taken as a measure of precaution that aids in keeping fish on the bite. This type of wading technique should always be done when waders do not have felt soles on the boots of waders. While it's entirely possible to fish waters that don't have algae growing in them, it is not reasonable to expect the substrate will not have other slippery components to them.

Felt

### About Hip Waders

Most of the time that hip-waders are sold they do not come with felt attached to the soles. There are easy kits that are specifically designed to fit hip-waders and should be applied to any boots that are going to be used in freshwater systems. I've have found that fishing in the marine environment does not require constant vigilance when it comes to slipping, outside of anomalous substrates like clay-mud and giant deposits of kelp beds, which will never be experienced in freshwater.

Chest-waders have two schools of thought that come with them: Some boots have waders already adhered to the soles, while others don't have them at all, but kits that are sold for hip-waders can be attached to them. More often than not, veteran fishermen who frequent glacially fed systems automatically assume that they should purchase chest-waders with felt soles since being out in wilderness areas offer no chance for drying up near stores that other anglers will enjoy if they slip in the water.

Felt soles always start out as pristine white, but they don't stay that way for long. Take the time to wash felt soles after each fishing trip; wash them out in the driveway with a hose and then hang up the waders upside down for them to dry. Boots that are separate from chest-waders should be turned upside down to dry. Don't

## **TOP FISHING SECRETS**

worry about the gray to green colors that soles will turn into, they are still very functional, and so long as they are cleaned routinely will last for many years.

### **Hard sole Wading Boots**

There are very few locations that I would recommend fishing with just hard sole boots. This type of boot bottom has more risks associated with them than any other kind; however, there is a way to wade with them without making them a hazard.

Hard sole boots should have a deep tread on them to ensure that mud and gravel that get between the tread will keep good grips for wading fishermen. Rather than lifting each leg to wade, try sliding them over boulders, rocks, and gravel. There is no need to take such precautions with mud and pebbles. The larger rocks are the easier it is to “slide” boots over them. When settling into fish holds make sure that you force both sides of each foot into tight places that will not give as you fish. After the hookup, wade backwards while still sliding your feet. Get to the bank and continue to fight the fish.

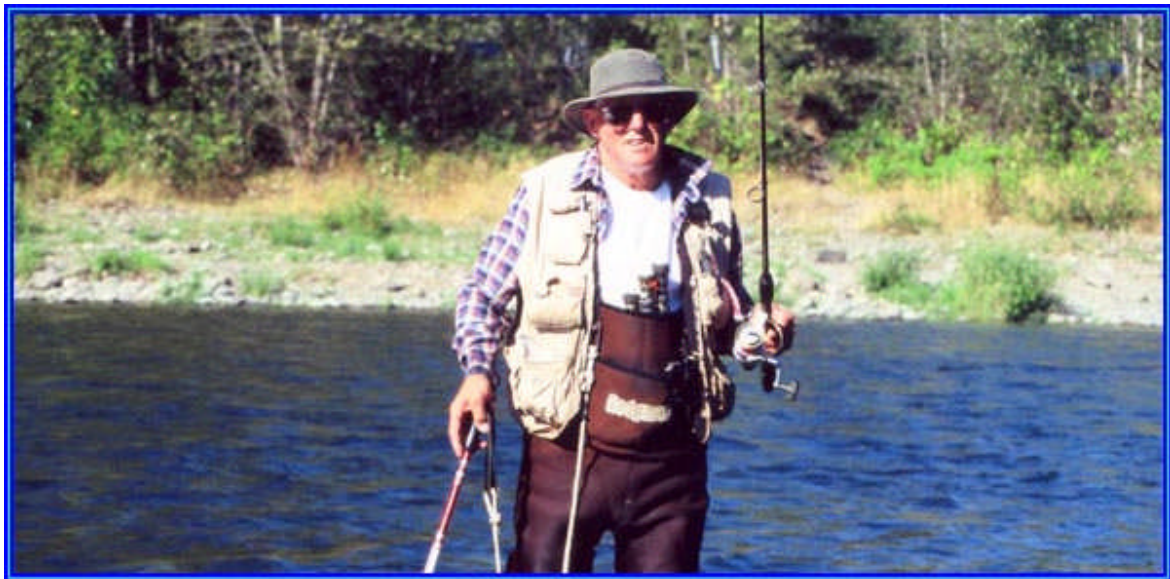
These really are the best ways to use this type of sole under most conditions. There are some places where this kind of boot sole will not have a problem, but when anglers want to move about to find better holds, this kind of boot can be a hindrance.

### **Spike Wading Boots**

Spikes on the bottoms of waders are effective for winter, snow, and ice. Spikes are sold separate from all waders. They're placed on the bottom of boots and held in place with straps. These offer the ability to walk on any surface for fishing conditions, but are almost exclusively worn during snow and icy conditions. Most sporting goods stores offer these but if they're not in the store you go to try a Ski shop. They'll have a lot of gear that anglers can use right along with spikes.

Poles & Branches

### **Wading with Poles and/or Branches**



© Timothy Kuserets 2004/11

## **TOP FISHING SECRETS**

*This angler, who is using neoprene chest waders, knows the value of wading with a pole even during bright sunny days. Algae grow on virtually any substrate that does not have regular significant water current flowing over it. The slippery nature of algae covered rocks makes it a particular hazard for wading anglers who don't know the area. The portable nature of almost all wading poles makes it perfect for fishing in water knee-deep or higher. Put a tether on it and it will simply float by your side as you fish. Ironically, the pull of any fighting fish will give you the balance needed to get back to the bank or beach the same as would be had with wading using the pole.*

Poles and branches are used as a wading staff where waters run fast, deep, and with zero visibility. Each pole should range between four and six feet long; some poles are collapsible for easy transport and storage. They can be purchased in sporting goods stores. When they cannot be found, Ski shops have ski poles that can be purchased individually and work great as poles. Anglers that intend to hike for extended portions of the day can just break off a branch to a nearby tree. It's a bad idea to use fallen branches since they tend to break easy after being dead for such a long time. Branches for poles don't need to be thick they just have to be strong enough to probe water for the duration of the day.

Fishing unfamiliar water is the best time to use one of these. With a pole in hand, walk extra slow and make sure that the pole or branch is submerged in front of you all the time for ever step taken. Never take a step before testing out the water above or below where you have not been; treat it like a third leg and have it out in front of you at all times and there won't be any accidents of falling in the river.