

## TOP FISHING SECRETS

# TOP FISHING SECRETS.COM

### Value in Vests

*Increase the amount of time hooking, fighting, and landing fish!*

*Timothy Kuserets*



*It's possible to hook, fight, land, and release a fish without ever looking into a single pocket of a fishing vest when time is taken to load it correctly. Here I'm taking out a pair of needle nose pliers to take out the hook from this fish's mouth. Streamlining the vest allows me to act quickly to take a photograph and to return this fish to the water thus ensuring less stress on the salmon.*

Fishing is the last step in a series of events on any fishing trip. I didn't think about it for a long time until I was out on a river where I found time to ponder fishing practices as I watched other anglers make their way back to shore to change their leaders and terminal gear. The amount of time that it took to get to the bank each time was over three minutes and then to put everything together was about two more. Ultimately the time spent not fishing was more than fishing itself.

Every fall, before I head out the door, I prepare for the fall run of salmon and steelhead by memorizing the way my fishing vest is packed. Tools, Fishing Line, and Backup Gear are general necessities that must be considered when memorizing and packing any fishing vest. The time of year dictates each available species of fish, and each species dictates what tackle to consider when packing a vest.

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The species of fish really dictate the kind of tackle to use and how much to pack, but there are some universals that apply to every species of salmon, steelhead, and trout.

Some of the basic components to packing a vest are Baggies, Scents, Leaders, Terminal Gear, and Backup Gear. The frequency of which all these basics are used show you how to pack a vest in sections and packing in sections increases the amount of time spent fishing.

One of the most essential starts to packing a vest are baggies of various sizes. The smaller the bags are the better off you're going to be. Each area of the vest should match each other, that is, tools with tools, terminal gear with terminal gear, and so on.

The very first thing I think about when packing a vest is the kind of scent I intend to use which has a huge impact of how the entire vest will be organized. Scent tells you the species of fish, size of fish, and the availability of fish, and that in turn will tell you the specific location of scents. The foremost pockets of any vest is where you want all your scents to go regardless of the location. Scent location on the vest is the only item that doesn't need to consider right or left-handed people. Each scent should be packed in their own bag and each bag should have its own pocket due to the adherent nature of scents to plastics and fibers.

The single best way to approach packing a vest is to put frequently used gear out in front where access is easy.

If you're right-handed then terminal gear should be placed on the right side of the vest with leaders on the left.

The school of thought is on the basis of how many times you'll reach into your vest to retrieve something.

Anglers know from experience that they'll be retying terminal gear more than anything else and to that end will need the easiest access. Leaders, for drift-fishing, should be on the left and more laid out than anything else, that is to say, if the leaders are pre-tied then they should be placed in a pocket that is both wide and easy to get to, but still out of the way as to not interfere with fighting fish.

When using leader holders, like plumbing insulation, the holders should be placed in separate pockets. All leaders and holders should be assigned positions on the basis of water clarity and weather. Forecasting weather has never been easier with the advent of the Internet and the intensity of the weather will tell you the color of the corkies (lil' corky's), spinners, and other artificial baits to use and those should be placed on the amount of time you intend to fish with them.

Tools that are rarely used should be placed to the inside of the vest; when I say tools I mean peripheral devices that have something directly correlated to fighting, landing, and storing fish. Stringers, pliers, screwdrivers, toothpicks, and hemostats are all tools that can be placed out of the way but with easy access. Make sure to consider whether or not the tools you intend to use, but not often, are not mixed up with the tools associated with terminal gear, such as, needle-nose pliers, tooth-picks, and forms of weight. After these things have been considered then you can think about gear used for back-up scenarios.

Fishing line and reels are the very first things associated with backups and the last things that go in the vest ironically in the back of the vest. Almost every vest made with have pockets on the back on both the inside and outside of it.

Backup fishing line should be packed individually and should vary by a couple of pounds in test.

Scent will cling to almost every form of monofilament and braided fishing line which is why they should be packed individually. Reels are of the same mindset, but can be less scrutinized due to nature of metals used.

Backup fishing reels should be placed in pockets that are low and out of the way. It is entirely reasonable to expect that you'll never actually need to use these items so inconvenience is really not a problem.

After all the gear has been gathered and stored there is one more thing to do that absolutely must be done to avoid wasting time out on the water. Each vest, regardless of how it's packed, must be memorized and to do that you must take things out of the vest without looking for them. Each vest that has followed the premise of packing like-items with each other should have no problem with this. All tools are with tools, terminal gear with terminal gear, scents with scents and so on. Have someone who absolutely knows nothing about fishing ask you to find something in the vest. Believe it or not the best way to do this is without looking. The generalized locations of groups of items will help you find things immediately. If you're having trouble finding anything at all then the packed vest should be reconsidered. The best rule of thumb to follow is to consider frequency and

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that all starts with scent, and finishes with backup gear. Memorizing a vest should take a matter of minutes so the exercise really saves an enormous amount of effort in the field.

There have been a few fishermen who told me that packing a vest is just a big waste of time and that it takes away from the mystique of fishing, but I take issue with that. By taking the time to prepare for the fall runs of fish you actually increase the amount of time availing yourself to finding, hooking, fighting, and landing fish; these are the foundations of great fishing stories. Did you ever hear about an angler's tale that began and ended with how a fishing vest was packed?

Fishing really is the last act of a series of events that predicate fishing trip, as it should be. Being in the great outdoors communing with nature has very little with fumbling around a poorly packed fishing vest when fish are in the water just begging to fight. A well thought out packed fishing vest creates the certainty you'll need to win those fall battles with salmon and steelhead that you're sure to encounter.



*One of the great things about fishing with a vest on is the portability. No matter where I land a steelhead, I can always either release or string it up right where I'm at; here you can see a steelhead take me downriver.*