

**TOP FISHING SECRETS****TOP FISHING SECRETS.COM****Fishing Reel Handles and the Biting Cold**

*“I’ll bet your fingers feel like they want to fall off. Why don’t you get a reel made out of wood or graphite? I just hate to see anyone suffer like that when there’s no need for it.”*

**Timothy Kuserets**



It never occurred to me that fishing reel handles could be anything but a fact of life. I’ve been fishing with various reels for fly fishing, bait casting, and spinning. I’d match the reel to the kind of fishing I wanted to do and that was that until someone pointed out the handle of a reel I had been using during winter months.

*“I’ll bet your fingers feel like they want to fall off. Why don’t you get a reel made out of wood or graphite? I just hate to see anyone suffer like that when there’s no need for it.”*

It was an amiable old-timer who had been fishing next to me. In the beginning I had no idea what the hell he was talking about; I was wearing wool gloves, I had backed them up with some wool mittens, and had some winter insulated gloves just in case I got stuck out in the snow somewhere but he couldn’t possibly have known that.

*“What makes you think my fingers are cold at all?”*

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“I’ve seen plenty of you tough guys come and go. It occurs to me that you all need to really think about the gear with the weather while you’re in the store. Take a look at this reel. I couldn’t find a handle so I modified this one. By putting on some duct tape on the handle I keep the metal away from my fingers and fish all day without a care in the world about the cold.”

“Doesn’t that interfere with the balance of the reel?”

“Not at all, you only need to put down two layers of the tape and you’re good to go.”

It was nice that he had been thinking to share some wisdom but was not convinced that he was right but remained open to the idea. The very next time I went shopping for a reel I thought about what the guy had been telling me. In the past the most important thing to me about fishing had to do with everything but the reels material makeup. It was then that I noticed that almost all fishing reels had some form of metal on them. He was right about that. It took a few stores of shopping before I came across “three” reels that had handles made of cork, wood, and graphite not metal.

It took some time to find a great Shimano reel that had a wooden handle, though it did have metal that was part of the crank. Just like the old-timer had said, I put on two layers of duct tape on the handle and gave it a couple of spins entirely expecting it to wobble. It didn’t.

The very next time I hit the water in the dead of winter everything played out as had any other winter before it. Ice formed on the guides of my rod, the blank, and the fishing line. It was a typical winter day and had completely forgotten about the reel until someone asked me about the tape on the handle. That’s when it hit me. My hands were not cold. As a matter of fact, I had been so comfortable throughout the hours before dawn it wasn’t until another angler asked me about the handle, around noon, that I noticed that I had never been cold, not for one single instant. Wool gloves have long been a part of my fishing gear and accepted that using them meant the tips of my fingers were going to pay the price for the added sensitivity they provide for touching the line throughout the drift, line-mending, and feeling those subtle strikes that lethargic winter fish are famous for. Gusts of biting wind had been plaguing the day and I hadn’t once thought about my fingers getting cold. Even during the early morning hours, catching and releasing fish back into the blue, it had not occurred to me that my fingers should have been cold. Since then I’ve been fishing with either a tapped handle during winter or opting for wood or graphite handled reels; though I must confess that the handle is still one of my last considerations before selecting one.

Isn’t it funny? One tiny little adjustment in fishing and I’ll probably never have to worry about frozen fingertips again, at least they won’t turn blue from my fishing reels anymore. Who knew?

Confidential

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