

# Mike Gardner's Tip Sheet for successful bay fishing

The following tips and information will dramatically increase the amount of fish you catch every time you go fishing. Remember, it is the combination of doing all the little things right that will help you be a more effective angler.

**How to rig** the fat shad and grub properly. For the shad, insert the hook through the tip and out the back with the paddle-tail down. For the grub, insert the hook through the tip and out the same direction of the tail. The shad or grub must hang straight or the action won't be at it's best.

**Sharpen the hook** and keep it sharp. Remember, you are trying to penetrate the fish's mouth with one hook set.

**Use light line.** 6-pound is the best. You will receive 50 percent more strikes with 6 pound than 8 pound.

**Use light heads.** 0 to 15-foot depth, 3/16-ounce; 10 to 25 feet, depth 1/4-ounce; and 25 to 60 feet depth, 3/8-ounce. If you have a strong current, use the next bigger size.

**Cast Up current::** Why? Because fish movement, including the feeding cycle is controlled by the phases of the moon, which controls the tides. Moving water means feeding fish if you cast up current. The fish will

be facing up current and when your lead head rolls back towards them it will be seen easier by the fish, as he will be oriented towards the incoming tide.

**Keep your rod tip pointed at the lure.** Keep your lure on the bottom. Keep all the slack out of the line. This will allow you to feel the slightest touch by a fish. Remember, fish have no hands. If you feel anything that doesn't feel right, set the hook! It doesn't have to be a tap, tap or tug, to be a strike. Sometimes the line will jump or just set tight, set the hook! Swings are free. It could be the biggest fish of your life.

**Use balanced tackle!** If you are using 6-pound line don't use a 9 foot-tuna rod. The best tackle for this type of fishing is freshwater medium-light bait casting rods and reels. If you do not know how to use a level-wind bass reel, then use a closed-faced spinning reel.

**Fish where the fish are.** Only 4 to 6 percent of any given body of water contains fish, and they will move from place to place. If you don't get a strike in 10 to 15 casts, move to another spot. If you have some type of sonar, look for fish and bait. Remember, where there is bait, somewhere close there should be game fish.

**Fish relate to structure** at certain times of the year. In the spring and early summer the fish will move shallow to spawn. Look for the bass around weed beds, kelp, pilings, rocks and under docks. In the late summer the fish will move to the ledges around channels and big drop offs. They will still move shallow to feed during the low light hours, dawn, dusk and night.