

Painless Hook Removal **Works Surprisingly Well!**

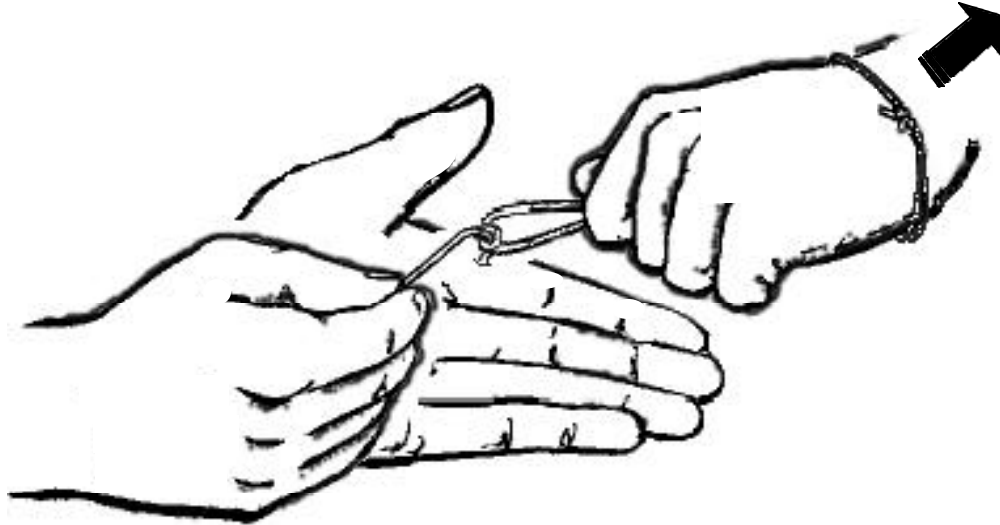
It's bound to happen. Just a matter of time.

Sooner or later your fishing buddy will cast an errant fly and the hook will find its way into your flesh. And he's likely to give the fly at least one good tug before he realizes he's hooked something. . .you. The tug usually drives the fly home, up to the bend. 'Course your buddy never, never, fishes barbless. You don't even ask.

Now you've got a few decisions to make. Do you (1) yank the fly out, tearing skin and muscle as it comes? Do you (2) painfully push the hook on through, then clip the point and barb and back it out? Or, do (3) clip, leave it, finish fishing, and go to the emergency room later.

None of these options avoids the painful rending of flesh. . . your flesh. Fish hooks hurt when they come out. Ask any fish.

Unless you've learn this useful technique for painless hook removal, that is. It's a "must-know" for fly anglers or anyone who uses or works with fish hooks.



Here's how it works:

Step 1. Cut a piece of strong mono or string about 20 inches long. I keep 50# dacron with me to use. Double it and tie the ends together with a strong knot to make a loop about 10 inches in diameter.

Step 2. Clip the leader from the imbedded hook, then wrap the string/mono twice around the bend of the hook.

Step 3. Have the victim tighten the skin around the hook imbed if possible. It's important to immobilize the skin around the hook in some way. You don't want the skin to move or give when you yank the hook out.

Step 4. This step is very important. Use the index finger *and* thumb of your free hand to gently push the eye of the hook downward to the victim's skin and secure it. Note that you do not push the eye backward, nor pull it forward. You just depress the eye and secure it from moving side to side.

Step 5. Slip your hand through the string loop and grab both legs of the loop, gently eliminating slack from the loop.

Step 6. While the hook eye is securely pressed down, sharply pull on the looped hook in the direction away from the hook eye. The hook barb and point will pop out. The victim won't even feel it.

The barb-out method works because the barb follows a channel made by the hook shaft and point. But it only works if the hook eye is absolutely secure, and the skin around the imbed doesn't move.

Tip: Practice this technique on a turkey thigh, a chicken leg, or even an orange.

This technique works. I've used it on others and I've had it used on me. In all cases no pain was reported.