

How to Retrieve a Hung Up Lure

Written by The Online Fisherman Team on 20 April 2013.

An article teaching you *how to retrieve a hung-up lure* might sound strange if all you have ever fished for is bluegill in a wide open pond on a gulf course. There is nothing to get hung-up (fishy talk for stuck) on. If you fish near structure, you're going to get lures, hooks, bait, and just about everything but your shirt in the mangroves, on rocks, on docks, and on anything hooks can get caught on.

The problem you encounter is the fact that - if you're not getting hung-up - you're simply not casting close enough to where the fish are. The edge of a mangrove is a perfect example; drop a live whitebait underneath the edge of the shadow, and you might have a snook grab the bait. Drop the same whitebait four feet away from that light edge, and that snook will watch it bounce every single time you cast it – without moving an inch. So if you cast close to structure, you're more likely to catch fish. And more likely to hook something, which is why we're going to teach you how to retrieve a hung up lure.

When a lure or bait hits something, one of two things happen: it either instantly hooks hard into the surface, or it hangs on something. In 99% of the cases, it's going to hang – not hook itself so deeply you can't get it unhooked.

We did this image over the edge of a chair – but it could be a mangrove branch, a rock edge, and certainly the railing on your absolutely favorite dock to fish for snook under in the depth of the winter months.



To show how this works, it was easier (and safer) to simulate getting stuck on something. You can get stuck many different ways, but the one that happens a lot when you're fishing in the mangroves is just what you see here -- the lure swings over a branch and gets stuck in the line it's attached to. This short story will show you how to get it unstuck. Most -- but not all -- of the time it will work.

If you **gently swing the lure, you can sometimes be lucky enough to swing it up – and subsequently off – the object it's hung on.** Do it wrong – or have the bait hit the structure just right (which lures with treble hooks are really good at doing) it will swing itself, and hang the hook on the leader. Pull now, and you're stuck.

If gently swinging the lure doesn't work, try this: **Reel down and put pressure on the line (make the line tight). Hold the rod with one hand and use your pointer finger from your other (free) hand and lift the line up (keeping pressure). Quickly let go of the line while holding the rod very tight still with the other hand.** This will create a popping noise and sends vibration all the way down the line and sometimes it's just enough to shake the lure or hook free. Try it. It works.

Losing your \$5 Lure

Losing lures is something that happens. You can't always get them unhooked. We will say that you're far less likely to get a single-hook lure (like a jig) than you are something like a plug that has two – or three – treble hooks hanging on it. Treble hooks are very, very effective at hooking into anything. Fish are a side effect of putting it in front of them; they'll catch anything; animate or inanimate.

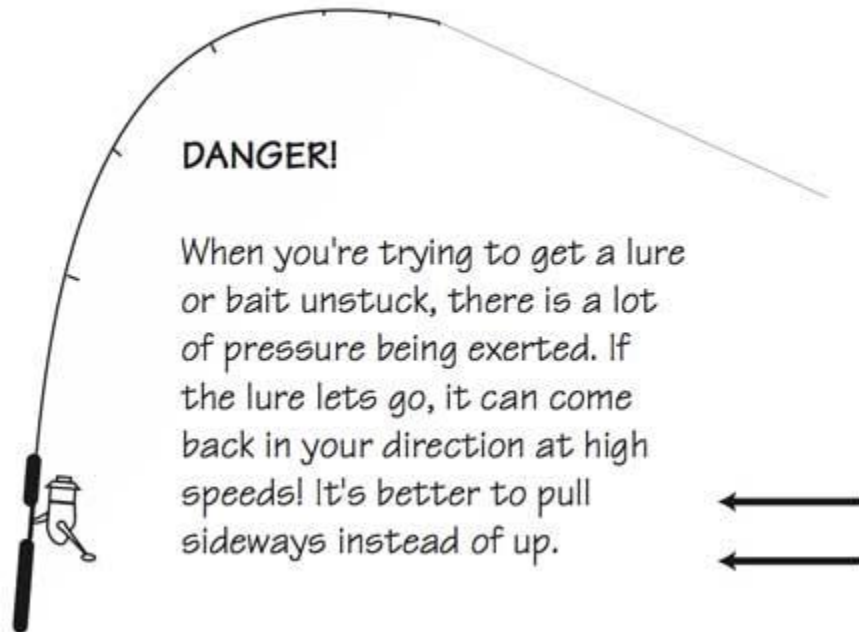
When we're fishing with 'newbies' (something we love to do and do routinely), they're often sort-of embarrassed when they get a lure or bait hung-up. We tell them something we've believed ourselves for as long as we've been fishing the bay: "If you're not getting hung up, you're not casting close enough to where the fish are". Believe it yourself and learn to deal with getting stuck. It's a critical and often-used skill set.

Once you do get hung up – and again, believe us when we say it will happen a lot of times if you're casting correctly – you might be able to shake, wiggle, and gently play with the lure or bait to see if the Fishing Gods (more accurately the Lure Gods) will grant your object freedom to live. Usually they're playing dice or something else that Gods do in their spare time, and you ain't gonna get that thing out unless you push the boat into the mangroves, run it onto the rocks, or get out of the boat. None of the three options seem worth the price of a single Mirrodine 😊

The only choice you have left is to break the lure off. You can always go get it before you leave, if it's safe and relatively easy – and won't ruin the mangroves. Please don't ruin our mangroves to save your stupid lure, OK?

Here's what to do if you have to break off

First. Do NOT pull the lure like it was a snook you're trying to pull out from under a dock. You will have a really good chance of that lure breaking out of whatever it's stuck on, and come flying directly at your face at about 50 mph. THEN it will hit something so hard the hooks go directly in – only to be removed by a medical professional.



Next, point the rod as close to the stuck lure as you can, and make sure you cover the face of the reel. If it's a casting reel (we're using a spinning reel here, but the idea's the same) with your hand or thumb.



Again, make sure you're pointing at the stuck lure, and covering the face of the reel with your hand or thumb. Don't use the strength of the rod to 'bend' the lure out of the structure.

Something to consider when you first try this is that what you're trying to do is break the lure/leader and retie. Sometimes, however, the leader won't break – the lure will release itself and come flying back at you.



1. **Reach forward**, holding the reel so the drag won't release line. Reach as far as you can.
2. **With the reel frozen with your hand or thumb, pull slowwwwwly**. The leader will break. (Most of the time; sometimes the braid will break above the knot connecting it to the leader).
3. **The line will break or the lure will come flying out**. Keep the rod/hand/pulling effort away from your body, as you can see in the image right below. Look down -- NOT UP -- at the water and not the lure. If you open your eyes and stare, the lure will be drawn to your eyes like a bolt to a magnet.