

Put it Away Right!!

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Except for the “hard water” anglers (as far as I’m concerned, any recreation involving ice that doesn’t include a swizzle stick is absurd!), most of us have winterized the boat, put the equipment away and, with the exception of the Novi Fishing Show, Gibraltar trade Center Boat/Fishing Show and Outdoorama, limit our fishing related activities to TV fishing shows, reading fishing magazines and waiting for spring.

Not So!! NOW is the time to prepare your tackle for Spring, not next March. After a season of fishing, you should inspect/clean/service/repair all of your rods, reels and tackle BEFORE you put it away. You don’t want to hit the water in March and have your drag freeze, a guide insert crack cut your line or a crawler harness break off when you have a wall hanger on!!!

Start with your rods and reels – Closely inspect the guide wraps to see if any are loose or have cracked finish leaving exposed thread and visually inspect the ceramic rings (preferably with a magnifying glass) for cracks or looseness. Running a Q-tip through and over the ring surface will show any non- visible cracks by snagging. One note- braided line will NOT cut/groove the ceramic ring guides on any quality ceramic ring used today. Braided lines will, however trap sediment from dirty water in it’s fiber which can act as an abrasive. The guides with metal rings (not often used today) can groove so if you have them, keep an eye out for any sign of grooving! It’s also a good time to hit your grips with some sandpaper or a liquid cleaner such as Mean Green with a tooth brush to clean them up. When this is done, give your rods a coat of wax (car paste wax or furniture polish is good). I recommend this a couple times a year! This will not only provide it with protection but also make it very easy to wipe down after use.

Be aware that leaving rods standing against a wall is really NOT a good way to store them. Over a period of time the curve that this puts on the blank may actually become set, possibly weakening the rod. The same applies to the habit of storing/transporting rods with the line tightened down, creating a bend in the rod, putting unneeded stress on the rod is NOT a good idea!! Constant stress is never good and can weaken a rod.

Along the same lines, loosen the drags on your reels before storing. Many reels have graphite drags that can easily become “frozen” or compressed if left tightened and you’ll never realize it until you lose a trophy because the drag was locked up. Now is also the time to clean and lube them so that they will be ready to go in the spring when the run starts!

Check your line for nicks/abrasions and trim or replace it if needed. **Great tip from Tom Dinneweth** – Instead of replacing all of his expensive braided line every year, he simply transfers his line from one spool to another, effectively reversing his line, not only taking care of any line memory but also placing any nicked/damaged line on the inside of the spool.

It’s also a good time to inspect your lures and sharpen and or replace hooks any hooks that are “iffy”. You might even think about replacing the standard hooks with higher quality, sharper ones! Check your harnesses for nicks, etc. Now is the time to sharpen the hooks and replace any older, damaged ones. It doesn’t do much good to replace your line and then lose the fish of a lifetime because you’re using a 5-year-old crawler harness!! Harnesses and stingers can be inexpensively tied up in a few minutes while you’re watching TV!

Don’t put it off when a little time and minimal expense spent NOW can prevent the loss of a “wall Hanger” in the spring!!