

Fishing Tips



Choosing a Downrigger

Manual or Electric?

Choice of downrigger reflects style of boat, type of fishing, budget and personal preference. One must first decide whether to purchase a manual or electric downrigger. A manual downrigger requires more physical labour, but does not require a power source or wiring for installation. They are generally lighter and more portable. Manual downriggers are generally more affordable and are a great way to get into downrigger fishing. An electric downrigger makes downrigger fishing a breeze, but requires a 12 volt power source and a wired installation. With a press of a button or turn of a dial, you can have hands free operation while you land that fish. In an emergency such as loss of power, these units can be operated by hand, but they are designed for use with power only. Electric downriggers are heavier and thus less portable, but they offer the convenience of hands free operation and easy retrieval of your gear. These are the downriggers that charter operators and serious fisherman use and are perfect for larger boats and heavier use.

Which Model?

Once one has decided whether to choose electric or manual, style of boat and type of fishing should be considered to choose a model. Consider the spots available for mounting and other gear on the boat (ie, swim grid, motor, kicker motor, etc) in order to choose a boom length that will: 1. Adequately get your lines out away from your boat to keep them clear during turns, 2. Allow you to reach your gear when attaching or removing release clips (this might change if you add a pedestal swivel mount) 3. Allow you to store the rigger in the space you have available.

Fishing Trip Checklist

Make Sure

That your downrigger plug and socket are clean and well coated with di-electric grease or other moisture displacing product. Check for power to your downriggers before leaving the dock.

Check:

1. All fasteners and screw knobs are tight and secure.
2. Spares kit is complete and on board.
3. Stopper beads are installed and in the right place.
4. Cable is free of corrosion, kinks, frays or tangles. Replace cable if needed. See replacing cable section.

Spare Kit:

1. Some items to consider for a spares kit are:
2. Fuses for electric downrigger.
3. Terminal kits (including crimps, snaps and bumpers) and crimping tool.
4. Stopper beads.
5. Release clips.
6. Downrigger Weights.

Fishing Tips

For the Dedicated Angler

1. Keep a good bend in your rod while fishing. There is a moment of slack when a fish hits and a bent rod will take up this slack as the release clip lets go. Watch for your rod tip bouncing slightly as you get nibbles and hits.
2. Be prepared to change your lures or bait if you don't see any action. Ask other anglers what they are using and check with local shops to see what is working the best in your area. Use sharp hooks and always check your local regulations for limits and restrictions.
3. Check your gear for weeds or small fish every 1/2 hour. Pull rods one at a time to keep a lure in the water while you reset.
4. Trolling in a lazy zig-zag pattern will often increase strikes due to the increased coverage. This motion also affects your lures as your turn slows the inside line and speeds up the outside, creating a variety of motion to attract fish. You can also change your trolling speed to change the action of your gear. Try to select lures with action appropriate for your trolling speed to get the most out of their design.
5. Use tidal action to your advantage instead of fighting it. Fish with a fast running tide to the end of your tack, pull your gear and repeat from your starting point.
6. Try to practice catch and release. Handle fish as little and as gently as you can, leaving them in the water if possible. A fish which is bleeding from the gills should be considered part of your daily limit.
7. Some anglers use small bells on the end of their downriggers to indicate a strike or a snag. These can be very useful, especially when fishing solo.
8. Always attach your fishing rod and reel to your downrigger while your boat is in forward motion. This helps avoid tangles.
9. Note the reading on the depth counter on your downrigger when you catch fish, then return to that depth for best success.

10. Use caution to prevent downrigger wire from becoming tangled in your prop. Mounting your downrigger as close to the stern as possible will reduce the possibility of getting your wire caught in the prop. Consider the use of a prop guard to eliminate tangles and cut lines.
11. Keep your fingers away from the underside of the downrigger base and remove the lead weight when the downrigger is tilted up or unattended. Be sure to use the red lock lever properly to keep the downrigger upright.
12. Reinforce the downrigger when mounting it to your boat. It should be solid and supported before you fish. Always use properly bedded stainless steel fasteners.
13. Bring your gear to you when retrieving weights or resetting lines. Avoid leaning out, as sudden or unexpected motion by the boat could send you overboard. Consider using a 3025 Downrigger Weight Retriever as a safety precaution.
14. When trailering or travelling on the water, weights should be removed, lines tensioned and brakes set. Downriggers with swivel bases should be turned to the stern; downriggers without should be removed or locked into the upright position. Do not leave weights attached. Always remove and place in a proper holder (ie 3022 Weight Mate). Weights can easily bounce free from a seemingly safe spot and if they are still attached to your wire they can be a danger to both boat and person.
15. Never use heavier weights than fishing conditions require. Heavy weights reduce performance and efficiency and will shorten wire life.
16. Never let the wire go slack. Kinks may form and the wire may also spill over the edge of the spool, causing tangles and damage.
17. Never let your fishing reel spin freely while you lower your weight. Use a slight drag to maintain control.
18. Never use nylon or other monofilament line on your Scotty Downrigger. Nylon may stretch with use and shrink back on the spool with enough force to damage the equipment. Use of nylon line will void the downrigger warranty.
19. Never attempt to retrieve a weighted or snagged downrigger cable by hand. Wave or boat motion could cause serious injury. Always keep a pair of wire cutters handy and be careful not to lean over the boom. Cutting tensioned wire may cause the downrigger boom to fly up unexpectedly.

Troubleshooting

Common Problems & Solutions

Weight comes up too fast and breaks away from the HP Downrigger.

The Scotty High Performance Downrigger is equipped with a high speed, high torque motor. Extra caution should be observed when jogging your downrigger weight near the surface. When retrieving

your weight near the surface you may want to apply the brake while pressing the jog button at the same time. This will help you retrieve the weight at a slower speed.

This should only be done for the final few feet at the surface when you wish to lift your weight out of the water.

Downrigger runs backwards after installation.

Wiring may be reversed at either the battery or the socket.

Auto stop switch won't shut off.

Be sure you are operating the auto stop correctly. Press and hold green button for momentary, controlled power. Turn and release the ring around the green button for hands free auto retrieve. Make sure that you have stopper beads on your cable.

Cable jumps when spooling out or is bunched on one side of spool.

Your rigger may have a slight bend in the boom, causing the cable to spool unevenly and catch on itself. You may need to adjust the fairlead (if applicable), or straighten or replace the boom. This may also be caused by a lack of tension on the cable at some point in time, causing the cable to unwind and then catch on itself. Unspool and respool as much cable as necessary. Always keep tension on the cable.

Motor hums and won't retrieve.

Motor may hum or growl if there is insufficient power to it. Check all your connections and your power source.

Release clip is not holding.

Pads may be worn—replace pads or release clip. Pads may have scent, lubricant or oil on them. Replace pads or release clip. Line type may not be compatible to release clip. Refer to replacement pads on product pages.

Cable hums when fishing.

Downriggers may produce a hum as the wire is dragged through the water. Normally this is not audible, although sometimes it can be high or low pitched noise that drives some fishermen crazy. It is not widely believed that this bothers the fish in any way. However, if the hum bothers you, it can be reduced several ways. Sometimes changing the weight size will do it. Another solution is to hang a piece of styrofoam or other floating material around the wire at the surface of the water to dampen the noise. Or use a ring or pulley on the wire and a cord tied onto the boat (or a bungee snapped from the downrigger to the wire). The 3025 Downrigger Weight Retriever can also be used for this application.

My gear keeps tangling when I put it down.

Make sure you start your trolling motion before you lower your gear. Reduce the speed at which you lower your gear. This will help keep it untangled as it descends. Do not allow the gear to freespool.