

BALANCE IT

Float Fishing

Using floats means balancing your rig so that the bait is presented at the right distance and depth. Moving split shot weights up the line, removing split shot to use lighter baits - there are many situations you need to make adjustments

Float Fishing Split Shot Tips

Fly Fishing Nymphs

Nymph fishing means casting sinking flies into current. Current changes and water depth changes making subtle balancing changes to the small nymph weights up your leader. This is an essential fly fishing tool for nymph fishing for trout and other species. Read more

Fly Fishing Split Shot Tips

Straight Line - Jigs

Whether fishing a jig during summer, keeping jigs small means using some split shot weights up the line. In Winter, ice fishermen can add small split shot far up the rig to create a faster drop. Read more

Jig Fishing Shot Tips

At Right: Balanced floats show only the tops to be sensitive.



Balancing Split Shot Rigs

All fishing requires balance. Balance to split shot weights makes the bait presentation right to the fish. Making a bait fall and act naturally requires fine adjustments to the split shot setup, moving small stacks up the line, adding smaller split shot closer to the hook. In warmer waters, the fish may be aggressive. Colder waters may dictate that your float rig be low in the water. Some species like trout and carp are very fine biters. Reducing the amount of float above water, will mean more bites are communicated and fewer fish let go. See how to balance a float in a container to get the perfect float and split shot rig.

Balancing Your Split Shot






Great Bite Indicators

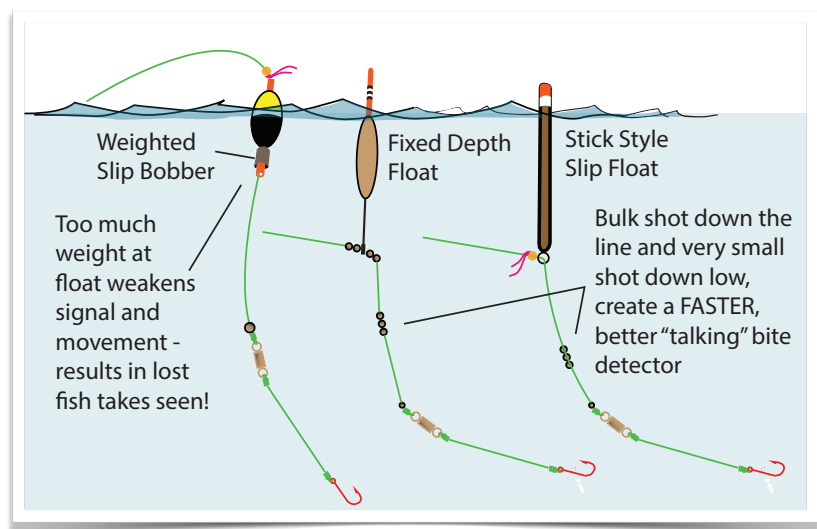
For years many have tried and failed to make a better bobber. Materials from the past make the lightest and best indicators of light bites. Weight and thin shape are everything. In the photo above you see some big, awkward "innovations" which died out for lack of catching. In the center, are superior floats. What makes a great bite indicator (float / bobber)?

- Tall and thin
- Light Materials (no plastic)
- Bright, Visible Tip
- Connects at bottom only

These traits make your bite indicator resistant to wind, and ready to show a subtle take by a fish. Some floats come with balls on the tip to increase visibility which can help you see them. The connection at the bottom allows your line to be completely beneath the water, away from wind. Use better floats and you will actually see when fish are near, yes near, your bait. Great floats give you great timing to set the hook and catch more fish.

Balancing Your Split Shot

It is best to prepare float rigs at home. On the water, you will have wind, sometimes bad light and many places where small equipment will drop and be lost. Grass, a pier slot or a dark spot in your boat. At home you can create a workspace with a tray to catch dropped parts. There is no wind to steal your parts. Use a split shot plier to add shot to line. Shot patterns put larger shot up top by the float, just under the float. Smallest split shot weight should be put near the hook. I position the last split shot above the leader and swivel. If I snag, I get back my setup. I only lose the leader on snags. All split shot come back. Next to my desk, I keep a two foot glass candle stick holder. Fill this with water and store away from direct sunlight. For shallow water rigs (4ft or less) add a split shot to your line. Wet line and slide that shot up a foot. Connect your float and slide it up. Add other shot beneath the float and then dip this into your (float tube) candle holder. Continue this process adding shot and checking the float. Do this until you get 90-95% of that float sunk low in the water. The last shot weight should be added at the bottom. Next add a swivel. Add a slightly thinner line beneath the swivel and a smaller hook to complete your killer float fishing rig. Three shot nearest the float hold it in place. The rest of the split shot should be stacked together about 2 float lengths beneath the float. This setup prevents tangles and is called the "bulk" shot. - 




Floats work better low in the water. Only 5% of the tip should show above water. The slip bobber (left) plastic is inferior because the line comes out the top and it can't be balanced as low as tall floats shown.

Nymph and Streamer Fishing Split Shot Tips


The art of fishing a wet fly in deep holes such as the Gapen Muddler Minnow, takes adjustments. Small adjustments and changes in your split shot weight will give you success. Presenting the wet fly means getting the depth and action right. A great tool for nymph fishing for trout and wet flies is the Split Shot Ninja. Nymph and Streamer fishing is popular for Salmon, Steelhead, Bonefish, Redfish, Permit, Smallmouth Bass, Rainbow Trout, Brown Trout, Crappie, Bluegill, Largemouth Bass, Pike and even Muskie.

In order to reach fish in deeper water, adding lead split shot improves the drop speed and depth reach. Fly anglers on streams will find different nymphs or streamers won't go deep at times. If the current is strong in one section, adding split shot to the rig is the key to diving down to get big rainbow trout and brown trout.

On the side of the stream or wading, the fly fisherman will want to also take shot off at times when the current is slower in a hole. Both adding split shot and removing split shot, using the Shot Plier tool will help get small shot on the line safely. You can also very quickly cut a single split shot off your nymph or streamer setup with the Split Shot Ninja's shot tooth. This is a specially designed split shot tool that will not harm your leader! You can remove a shot and even save it for later use! Having quality split shot is the key to easy split shot. Anchor, Super Doux and Thill are the best split shot for you. Their pure material is 3x softer than tin shot. Don't fall for their trick using cheaper materials, jacking up the price and saying it is better for the environment. Only quality split shot is both soft AND stays in place on your line. When I fly fish, I almost never lose my split shot. The leader of the fly may break, but I get my shot back. I keep old split shot in a tin on my workbench.

The split shot plier is a key tool in getting your nymph drift in the right zone. Before and during fishing for your next adventure - be sure you have this tool (along with quality split shot) to make your adventure excellent. 

Environmentally Safe Shot Fail

The use of tin and "environmentally safe" weights tried to take hold (pun intended). They do not hold in place. These weights are so expensive and they do not work. In truth, these do damage to the line. Tin is very sharp and will smash and nick the line. This bad shot causes a weak spots where your line will break when strained. You will lose fish. Tin, "environment shot" are harder to work. They are very, very difficult to bend. Working with them is not only a pain- it will wreck your line and you will lose that trophy fish because you used "environmentally safe" split shot. No states have banned the use of lead shot because the science is that the infinitely small amount of weights lost in water can't be measured on any sampling equipment. All the weights in fishing can't effect an area of water. If you want to have high-performance split shot, the excellent stuff is Anchor and Super Doux. Thill also sells a very good split shot. In the field, the ability to move your shot on the rig is essential. Quality split shot sticks in place. When you cast with good shot, your rig stays at depth. Even after adjustments, this shot stays. The split shot's soft make-up is all-around many-times better. Don't fall for "environmental" split shot! 

Straight Jigging? Add Split Shot to Score

All fishing requires balance. Balancing split shot weights makes the bait presentation right to the fish. Making a bait fall and act naturally requires fine adjustments to the split shot setup, moving small stacks up the line, adding smaller split shot closer to the hook. In warmer waters, the fish may be aggressive. Colder waters may dictate that you use very small jigs.

In straight line jigging - some anglers add a small set of split shot a couple feet up the main line. This allows for you to use a very light jig at the point of attack - yet more weight for getting down to depth or fighting current.

A light jig will fall last if you use heavier shot above. The presentation would mean a fast drop to a couple feet above the target. The second action would be the smaller jig, dropping slowly after the split shot reaches depth. This slow fall is a trigger to the fish and it keeps the bait in the kill zone longer. Slow drop is a killer presentation in summer and winter.

Split Shot Plier - Adjust the Speed

Adjusting the number of split shot on the drop jig setup may be necessary. If you need to knock a split shot off for a slightly slower drop, use the split shot plier. You can slice one single shot off of the stack with the Split Shot Ninja without damaging your line. You can do this quickly. This means not missing a school of fish if they swim under you. If you need to add as shot because you move to deeper water, use the other end of the Shot Ninja to flatten and lock on another split shot. Ice fishermen and summer fishermen need to have this tool I they wish with jigs. 🐟

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Plier and make working with shot easy!

