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5 SIMPLE WAYS TO CATCH BIG FISH

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HOW WATER FILTERS WORK

Introduction to How Water Filters Work

When you're wading in a cool mountain stream, and you can see your to-es in the sand, you assume the water's safe to drink. But even water that looks perfectly clear may harbor a variety of bacteria, parasites and protozoa that can make you very ill. You can't tell from smelling or taking a small taste whether water is safe to drink. Even water from spigots in campgrounds may not be. When you're camping, unless there's a sign that specifically states that water is safe to drink, you should take precaution and treat it.

Portable water filters are probably the easiest and safest way to treat water for drinking. There are many choices in water filters. The least expensive may cost less than \$20, while more expensive filters can cost several hundred. For the average user, it's possible to find a perfectly functional water filter for less than \$100.

You should expect water from different areas to have its own unique flavor, but the process of filtering the water doesn't make it taste funny. Water filters work by capturing the microscopic life that lives in abundance in freshwater. The consequences of drinking untreated water can be severe. Water that tastes fine can contain bacteria, parasites and protozoa that cause nausea, diarrhea, loss of appetite, fatigue and vomiting. Some of the diseases spread through a contaminated water supply are botulism, cholera and dysentery. Parasitic infestations from contaminated water can lead to the development of rashes, muscle aches, fever, chills, coughs, neurological symptoms, jaundice and malnutrition. While most illnesses from drinking contaminated water cause discomfort for a few days or weeks, others can be deadly.

Water Filter Basics

The communities of bugs that live in fresh water supplies include giardiasis and cryptosporidium. The purpose of the water filter is not to kill the creatures, but to capture them inside the filter and prevent you from ingesting them. The effectiveness of the water filter is determined by what is known as the **poresize efficiency**. This is the measurement of the size of the openings in the water filter. These measurements are microscopic. The measurement used to describe the size of the filter's openings is called a micron. One micron is 1/1,000 of a millimeter. Any water filter with a micron size of one or less will remove parasitic eggs and larvae from the water as well as protozoa. To remove bacteria, the micron size must be less than 0.4 microns.

Regardless of the type of water filter, they all work in the same basic way. An intake hose is used to draw water into the filter. If you have a filter inside your water bottle, you'll fill the water bottle up first and place the filter inside. If you have a standalone filter, you can scoop water into a pail or put the intake hose directly into the water source.

Once inside the intake hose, the water is pressed through the filter, either manually, for a freestanding filter, or through suction, with a water bottle filter. The filter traps any microorganisms that may be living in the water -- and, like we said, it doesn't kill them. Once the debris is captured in the filter, clean water passes through and is ready for drinking. The area where the clean water exits the filter is called the filter outlet.

Choosing a Water Filter

The style of water filter that you choose depends on your personal needs. Many people favor water bottles with the filter built in. Others choose a small hand filter that allows them to purify water as they pull it from the water source and dispense it into separate containers. If you have a water pack system that fits into your backpack, it's possible to purchase a water filter system that coordinates with it.

How you decide what water filtering system will work best for your needs depends on a variety of factors. If you travel with youngsters and plan on filtering their water, you'll probably want a separate hand filter. Many hikers like to add powdered drink mixes to their water. If you're one of these hikers, you probably don't want a water bottle filter. This way you can have separate drinking containers, one with your drink mix and the other with plain water. If you add drink mix to a water bottle filter, you won't be able to drink or filter any water until the bottle is empty.

If you're camping in wilderness in most parts of the world, a water filter that filters for bacteria, protozoa and parasites should be more than adequate. If you're headed for a Third World country or an area where the water may be exposed to sewage, your filter also needs to kill viruses.

Water filters that are equipped to kill viruses most often contain an iodine filtering system. Like iodine chemical tablets (which we'll learn more about later), this can adversely affect the flavor of your water. If you want the insurance of a filter that kills viruses, take along some ascorbic acid -- even the granulated orange flavored powders available at grocery stores will work. After filtering the water through the iodine system, add some of the powder. Ascorbic acid neutralizes the iodine, improving the taste. It also neutralizes the effectiveness of the iodine, so make sure that you follow the manufacturer's instructions for how long to let the water set in the iodine filter before adding anything else to the water.

Regardless of what type of water filter you choose, you don't want a situation where you are surrounded with water but have nothing to drink. A flow rate of one liter per minute is a good average to shoot for when shopping for a water filter.

Caring for Your Water Filter

The very design of the water filter means that it will eventually clog. Remember, it's not killing those creepy crawlies in the water; it's trapping them in the filter, where they remain. The first sign that your filter may need some maintenance is that it becomes difficult to pump. Don't force the issue. If you try to force the water through the pump, you may wind up with microscopic bugs in your water supply.

To get the longest life out of your water filter, it's important to follow the manufacturer's instructions on care and maintenance. But there are some general tips to keep in mind. You can count on filtering about 100 gallons of water before your water filter needs to be changed. Proper care and a little preventative maintenance will go a long way in reaching this goal.

You can scrub some water filters to clean them. If your filter is one of these, scrub it gently with a toothbrush when it becomes difficult to pump. If your water filter cannot be scrubbed, it may still be possible to clean it. Some water filters can be immersed in clean water and rinsed gently. Of course, this is something that must be done at home with clean tap water. If your water filter comes with a pre-filter, be sure to use it. A pre-filter captures some of the larger debris before it enters the main filter. If your water filter doesn't have a prefilter, and the water around you has a lot of sediment, make your own, using a coffee filter or clean shirt.

Some filters can be backwashed. To backwash your filter, remove the intake hose and reattach it to the filter outlet. When you pump water with the hose attached this way, it will send clean water through the filter, loosening debris that may be clogging it up. It's important to sanitize the filter with a solution of one capful of bleach to one quart of water before using it again. Pump the solution through the filter and let it dry thoroughly before storing it away or using it.

Water Filter Troubleshooting

One of the best ways to increase the life of your water filter is to start with the cleanest water that you can find. While a babbling brook may seem cleaner than a pool of standing water, this is not necessarily so. Flowing water stirs up dirt and sand on the bottom of the water, making it easy to pull that into the water filter. For the cleanest water, choose a pool of standing water, and don't let the hose touch the ground. If this isn't possible, dip some water into a pan and let it set for at least an hour before running it through your filter. This will give the sediment time to settle to the bottom.

Some of the most common problems with water filters are also easily preventable. It's important to be gentle with the filter. If you drop it, it may appear fine and continue to work, but the inside may develop small cracks. The microorganisms that you're trying to filter out can easily pass through these cracks without you knowing it -- until you get sick.

If you're camping in cold weather, it's important to remember what happens to water when it freezes. If your water filter freezes while it's damp, the water inside can expand, causing cracks and leaks to develop. Tuck the water filter inside your clothes during the day, and sleep with it at the bottom of your sleeping bag at night.

Finally, make it a habit to keep your water filter dry. When you're not using the water filter on your trip, carry it outside your backpack in a mesh bag. When you return from your trip, flush the filter with a weak bleach solution and let it dry thoroughly before packing it away. This will prevent bacteria from growing inside of the water filter.

Other Ways to Purify Water

Water filters aren't the only way to purify your drinking water. Boiling is one traditional method. But while boiling is highly effective, it does have its drawbacks. For one, it's time consuming to purify a significant amount of water this way. And, while warm water may be a treat when you're on a winter hike, it's certainly not when the weather is toasty. Even after allowing the water to cool, you'll be drinking tepid water.

Boiling also has a negative effect of the taste of the water. Some people describe the taste as "flat." You can reduce this somewhat by pouring the boiled water back and forth between two clean containers as it cools. This process aerates the water, improving the taste. Probably the biggest drawback of boiling is that you'll use a lot of fuel to boil enough water to keep you hydrated.

Chemical tablets are another option for purifying water. These tablets typically contain iodine. They do a good job of killing bacteria in the water and making it safe to drink, but they have a negative effect on the water's taste. Water treated with iodine is bitter and has a lingering aftertaste.

Also, while they're inexpensive, once the bottle of chemical tablets is open, it has a limited lifespan. Another drawback of chemical water treatment is that it doesn't always work against some types of protozoa. Finally, if the weather is particularly cold or the water is filled with sediment, the chemical tablets will take longer to work.

The biggest drawback of chemical treatment is the adverse health effects it can have on some people. For people with thyroid disease, immunodeficiency and some other health concerns, chemical tablets containing iodine can be a serious threat. Also, if you're pregnant, it's important to speak with a doctor before using iodine for water purification.

KITCHEN GARDENING 101: HOW TO GROW YOUR OWN FOOD

In its simplest form, a kitchen garden produces fresh fruits, vegetables and herbs for delicious, healthy meals. A kitchen garden doesn't have to be right outside the kitchen door, but the closer it is, the better. Think about it this way: The easier it is for you to get into the garden, the more likely it is that you will get tasty things out of it. Did you forget to add the chopped dill on your boiled red-skinned potatoes? No problem — it's just steps away. To learn more, click through this presentation below or keep reading below.



Starting a Kitchen Garden

If you have to choose between a sunny spot or a close one, pick the sunny one. The best location for a new garden is one receiving full sun (at least six hours of direct sunlight per day), and one where the soil drains well. If no puddles remain a few hours after a good rain, you know your site drains well.

After you've figured out where the sun shines longest and strongest, your next task will be to define your kitchen garden goals. My first recommendation for new gardeners is to start small, tuck a few successes under your belt in year one, and scale up little by little.

But what if you're really fired up about it? Even in year one, you may be able to meet a big chunk of your family's produce needs. In the case of my garden in Scarborough, Maine, we have 1,500 square feet under cultivation, which yields enough to meet nearly half of my family of five's produce needs for the year. When you do the garden math, it comes out to 300 square feet per person. More talented gardeners with more generous soils and climates are able to produce more food in less space, but maximizing production is not our only goal.

We're also trying to maximize pleasure and health, both our own and that of the garden. Kitchen gardens and gardeners

thrive because of positive feedback loops. If your garden harvests taste good and make you feel good, you will feel more motivated to keep on growing.

Preparing the Garden Site

If you're starting your kitchen garden on a patch of lawn, you can build up from the ground with raised beds, or plant directly in the ground. Building raised beds is a good idea if your soil is poor or doesn't drain well, and you like the look of containers made from wood, stone or corrugated metal. This approach is usually more expensive, however, and requires more initial work than planting in the ground.

Whether you're going with raised beds or planting directly in the ground, you'll need to decide what to do with the sod. You can remove it and compost it, which is hard work, but ensures that you won't have grass and weeds coming up in your garden. If you're looking to start a small or mediumsized garden, it's possible to cut and remove sod in neat strips using nothing more than a sharp spade and some back muscle. For removing grass from a larger area, consider renting a sod cutter.

Choosing Garden Crops

The most important recommendation after "start small" is "start with what you like to eat." This may go without saying, but I have seen first-year gardens that don't reflect the eating habits of their growers — a recipe for disappointment. That said, I believe in experimenting with one or two new crops per year that aren't necessarily favorites for the sake of having diversity in the garden and on our plates.

One of the easiest and most rewarding kitchen gardens is a simple salad garden. Lettuces and other greens don't require much space or maintenance, and grow quickly. Consequently, they can produce multiple harvests in most parts of the country. If you plant a "cut-and-come-again" salad mix, you can grow five to 10 different salad varieties in a single row. And if you construct a cold frame (which can be cheap and easy if you use salvaged storm windows), you can grow some hearty salad greens year-round.

When it comes to natural flavor enhancers, nothing beats culinary herbs. Every year I grow standbys such as parsley, chives, sage, basil, tarragon, mint, rosemary and thyme, but I also make an effort to try one or two new ones. One consequence of this approach is that I end up expanding my garden a little bit each year, but that's OK, because my skills and gastronomy are expanding in equal measure, as are my sense of satisfaction and food security.

Planting a Garden: Where, When and How

Next, sketch out a garden plan of what will be planted where, when and how. To do this, you need to get familiar with the various edible crops and what they like in terms of space, water, soil fertility and soil temperatures. KGI also has a new, interactive Vegetable Garden Planner that makes it super simple and fun to handle planning a kitchen garden. Check out a 30-day free trial of the program.

Starting from Seeds or Transplants?

When the time comes to plant your kitchen garden, you'll need to decide which plants to start from seed and which to buy as transplants. Many gardeners choose to plant all of their crops from seed for a variety of reasons, including lower costs, greater selection, and the challenge and satisfaction of seeing a plant go from seed to soup bowl. But whether you're a greenhorn or a green thumb, there's no shame in buying seedlings. Doing so increases your chances of success, especially with crops such as eggplants, peppers and tomatoes that require a long growing season.

Much Ado about Mulch

After you've sown your seeds or planted your plants, introduce yourself to the kitchen gardener's best friend, Mr. Mulch. Just about any organic matter you can get your hands on — straw, grass clippings, pine needles, shredded leaves, dead weeds that haven't gone to seed — can be used as mulch. I bring in mulch from neighbors who would otherwise throw it away. Mulch plays three main roles: It deters weeds, helps retain moisture, and adds organic matter to the soil as it decays. I apply it to the pathways between my beds and around all of my plants. (Learn more about building healthy soil.)

When and How Much to Water Your Garden

Fruits and vegetables are made mostly of water, so you'll need to make sure your plants are getting enough to drink.

This is especially important for seedlings that haven't developed a deep root structure. You'll want to water them lightly every day or two. Once the crops are maturing, they need about an inch of water per week, and more in sandy soils or hot regions. If Mother Nature isn't providing that amount of rain, you'll need to water manually or with a drip irrigation system.

Garden Maintenance

Sun and rain willing, fast growers such as radishes and salad greens will begin to produce crops as early as 20 to 30 days after planting. Check on them regularly so you get to harvest them before someone else does. In my garden, those "someones" include everything from the tiniest of bacteria to the largest of raccoons. Various protective barriers and organic products can deter pests and diseases, and if you have trouble with rabbits, deer or other four-legged critters, your best defense may be a garden fence.

Succession Planting: Plant Now and Later

Getting the most pleasure and production from your garden comes from learning the beauty of succession planting. Rather than trying to "get your garden in" during one busy weekend, space your planting out over the course of several weeks by using short rows. Every time you harvest a row or pull one out that has stopped producing, try to plant a new one. Succession plantings lead to succession harvests spread out over several months — one of the key characteristics of a kitchen garden.

As you gain new confidence and skills, you can look for ways to incorporate perennials including asparagus and rhubarb into your edible landscape. And no discussion of kitchen gardens would be complete without mentioning flowers, which should be added from the start. Flowers add beauty and color to the garden and the kitchen table. They also attract beneficial insects while, in some cases, repelling undesirable ones.

FIVE SIMPLE WAYS TO CATCH BIG FISH

When it comes to catching the big fish sometimes it's more about the research than the fishing.

Don't get me wrong, you have to have a solid grasp of angling. But, hedging your bets will pay dividends in the long run.

Fishing for lunkers is a lot like gambling. Knowing when the odds are in your favor and when they're not can make a huge difference in the probability of catching that trophy trout or bass.

And you need a little luck, of course.

An example: In the game of no limit Texas Hold 'em, no player in their right mind is going to bet on pocket deuces when ace, queen, king come out on the flop.

When it comes to catching big fish, no matter the species you're targeting or the or gear you use, it's all about knowing where the big fish are, what they're eating and how you plan to get them onto the bank or into the boat.

There is absolutely nothing wrong with going out on a small stream and catching one 7-inch brookie after another. But when it comes to fishing for a trophy a little more homework and legwork is necessary.

After all, if the big fish were easy to catch everyone would be doing it. If you're active on Twitter or Facebook it sometimes seems like this might be the case.

What follows are a few tried and true tips to putting yourself in the best situation possible in order to catch that monster.

You'll also find an abundance of trojan and phishing tools to trick a person into giving away their secret email passwords. These are types of spyware or computer virus that you may receive via email or an email attachment. Once these programs are downloaded to your computer they will record your passwords and email that information to the hacker.

BIGGER WATER

First and foremost when on the hunt for bigger bass or trout

or whatever you're fishing for is finding the right piece of water. The big fish like big water, with a few small exceptions.



When I say big water I'm not necessarily talking the actual size of a river or lake. It's more about the actual amount of water present in the body of water throughout the year.

Seasonal creeks or rivers that go dry at any point of the season may hold small brookies, brown and rainbow trout, but will not hold big fish. No matter how big a river is at one point in the year, if it dries up during late summer/early fall there's little chance of catching a monster.

On the other hand there are tiny spring creeks throughout the world that hold massive trout due to the simple fact they provide a stable environment year round.

A reliable environment is not just good for the big boys, though—it's also key to the critters they eat. But more on that later.

A good practice when seeking out a prime location to target big fish is to get a sense of how the watershed "behaves" throughout the year. If you can get ahold of flow records that's a great start.

Ideally you want a place with big holes and structure that a fish could have called home for years.

It's also wise to look at the topography of the area using Google Maps or some other map or diagram. By studying the "fall" of a river you can hone in on the sections that are flatter, rather than the steep sections that aren't likely to hold as many fish.

Once you get the hang of scouting good fishing opportunities you should be able to rely less on second-hand reports and more on your own intuition.

And, if you're lucky, that's when you'll find those spots you guard with your life.

BIGGER FOOD

You are what you eat.

Too many Five Guys burgers and if you're like me the waders start getting a little tight.

The same goes for big fish. If a fish is in a stable body of water with a constant food source, chances are they've got the potential to grow to decent size.

If a fish is in a stable body of water with a constant food source made up of substantial feed like chub, shad, minnows, crawdads or scud, they've got the potential to grow into monsters.

A good example is the brook trout population in California's High Sierra lakes.

Most lakes above 7,000 feet of elevation will hold massive amounts of rainbows and brookies. All of them no larger than 8 inches. Most of the brookies you'll catch in these lakes are all the same size from the gills back, but some have much larger heads. This is caused by too many fish in a confined space with too little food and a lack of cannibalistic instinct.

No matter how old they get, these fish aren't getting the necessary nutrients critical to large growth. These underfed brookies are present in most of the high country lakes, but there are exceptions.

On a recent trip up to a lake perched on a ridge at around 10,000 feet, me and a couple of my best fishing buddies found the holy grail of brook trout/hybrid golden trout fisheries in the Sierra.

The lake looks like a thousand others in this area, but with a very small, very important difference.

Fairy shrimp.

The little crustaceans were everywhere and it was clear after the first 18-inch monster High Sierra brookie was landed these high protein morsels had a huge impact on the productivity and viability of the entire ecosystem.

BIGGER BAITS/FLIES

Now it only stands to reason that when targeting large fish that eat big critters using big baits or flies is the way to go.

It's a good idea no matter where you are to get a feel for what naturals the fish might be eating so you can "match the hatch" as it were.

Lots of grasshoppers along the bank or shore and a hopper fished along an undercut bank is a great play if you're targeting big brown trout.

But it's not always necessary to try and fool a fish into taking what you offer. Sometimes it's just about pissing them off. A great way to do that on the fly is with big flashy bead-head wooly buggers or other gaudy streamers and wet flies.

Those big brookies referenced earlier weren't caught on fairy shrimp patterns or anything small for that matter. They were caught on the biggest spinners we had brought along and would only bite on the big stuff the whole trip.

When targeting bass it's even more important to go big to catch big. Large skirted jigs with swim-tail trailers, swimbaits, crankbaits and frogs are all good for natural mimicry. Not to mention these types of baits are great for covering a lot of water.

For a more reactionary bite go for chatterbaits, spinnerbaits and large topwater poppers when the weather and the fishing heats up.

Don't be afraid to throw the kitchen sink out there if you believe the water you're fishing meets all the criteria we're discussing here. You may not get all the possible hook-ups when fishing with the big stuff, but when you do get one on chances are it's going to be a big one.

BIGGER GEAR

Fishing the big water, with big baits means busting out the big gear.

When fishing traditional gear for bass having a few medium and medium heavy rods available is key. A shorter, medium heavy rod is a good choice when flipping jigs with a longer stick at the ready for casting them and for throwing big The heavier power is very important, not only for setting the hook, but for horsing the fish out of structure. Many of the biggest fish will hole up in prime, protected ambush and feeding areas. That means going right into all the snags and snarls is all part of the game.

There's nothing like having a jig absolutely annihilated by a huge bucketmouth only to lose it because the rod doesn't have the backbone to drag it out of the branches.

Investing in some braided line is also important when you're fishing bigger baits and in the cabbage. Braid is a lot stronger, less likely to weaken on rocks and submerged limbs and offers a stretch-free hook set.

Trout are a little more leery of solid lines like braid so you'll want to invest in some 14-30 pound fluorocarbon depending on if you're fishing for 20+ inch rainbows, 15-pound steelhead or 30 pound king salmon.

Most fly anglers going for big fish won't drop down below a 7 weight fly rod, but it all comes down to the species and water they're fishing.

Bigger fish, bigger line weight. Bigger water, more rod length.

Bass fly rods are generally 8 or 9 weight and 8 feet. The short, stout rods are good at moving large, heavy, windcatching streamers or poppers. Sage makes bass-specific fly rods that come paired with a special ultrashort custom taper line.

A favorite of big-water steelhead and salmon fishers is the spey or skagit rod and lines. These big, 13 to 15-foot twohanded rods are difficult to master, but can carry tons of line in the air and cast a mile. Very important when covering lots of water is important, as it is with steelhead fishing especially.

Another reason it's necessary to have heavier rods is to cast the big bugs referenced above. Personally I fish a 6 weight with small poppers for bass on occasion, but to be honest it's not something I can do all day. Trying to push these huge flies through the air with a smaller rod can wear on an angler and may put unnecessary stress on big fish during a long fight.

BIGGER CONFIDENCE

The last thing I'll talk about here may be the most important, though it may seem trivial.

Fishing with confidence is everything, especially when you're targeting big fish on unfamiliar water.

Confidence in your gear, your techniques and your bait or fly can mean the difference between a bad day and a great day on the water.

A lot of people say trout will take any fly that looks remotely buggy and that the only reason there are so many variations is fisherman always want the newest, coolest looking thing.

It's true that baits and flies have caught just as many fishermen with their snazzy colors and aesthetics as they have fish. And there's nothing wrong with that.

If getting the newest, nicest gear and that super buggy new pattern make you feel more confident, it's totally worth it.

Confidence has a way of keeping an angler on the water longer, fishing harder and having more fun than one who is timid or unsure about what they're doing.

So, the next time you get the itch to catch a real trophy to show off in the forum or on Facebook, apply these techniques and remember to reach into your vest or tackle box and apply a little confidence before that first cast.

Be safe out there, good luck on the water and remember: No skunk, no funk.

SOLAR POWER BATTERY CHARGER: AN ECO-FRIENDLY FORM OF ENERGY

Solar energy is the most eco-friendly form of energy which can be utilized in order to perform our everyday activities. People all over the world have come conscious regarding the safety of the environment and they are looking for ways of utilizing this solar energy.



There are many different kinds of solar power battery chargers which can be found in the market and some of them have exclusive functions. They are also available in different price ranges. The best method of operating the solar power panel is by making use of a solar power battery charger. The process of operating the solar power panel becomes a lot easier when a solar power battery charger is used.

One of the most important advantages of these solar power battery chargers is that they are easily portable and hence they can easily carried to different places in order to charge various appliances. People can also decide to take these solar power battery chargers even when they are going on a vacation or on some kind of long trip. The need to carry extra batteries will not arise when a solar power battery charger is available. Most gadgets and appliances can be charged by making use of a solar power battery charger.

The main advantage of these solar power battery chargers is that they can be used many times for charging purposes without having to pay for the extra power. The casings for these batteries are made using light material which is tough and uses low heat transmittance. They will also protect the body of the battery from extreme weather conditions and also from being taken away by thieves and intruders.

It is possible to find solar power battery chargers in many different sizes as well as varieties. There are many homes where solar power batteries are being used in the event of a power failure. Their presence will ensure that all tasks in the home will continue without any hassle despite a power failure. Solar power battery tanks can also be constructed. These battery tanks consist of many different batteries which are connected to each other using wires in the solar energy system. This is a foolproof energy system which is also extremely pocket - friendly.

A solar power charger will also help in converting the energy from the sunlight into solar energy. A portable solar power charger will make use of solar power for the purpose of recharging. Mobiles and laptops are some of the most common appliances which can be recharged by making use of solar power battery chargers.

A lot of advantages can be gained by deciding to make use of solar power. The most important benefit of a solar power panel is that people can learn to use it easily and the amount of wiring required is minimal and hence it is not complicated. Solar power is a source of energy which can be replenished easily since the sun contains a never-ending supply of energy which will never depreciate. The cost of purchasing a solar power system is not very high and this is one of the main reasons why people consider it as a viable option.