

Compared to parachuting, rock climbing and hang gliding, fishing is a relatively safe outdoor activity. But weather and water create hazards smart anglers do their best to avoid.

Watch your step on riverbanks: Tufts of grass may give way or conceal deep holes. If you're wading in stream, step carefully; rocks covered with algae are slippery. Don't underestimate a river current. Carry a walking stick and cross where the current is slowest, angling toward the opposite bank as you walk upstream. If you fall in, float with the current - don't try to fight it! keep your feet forward and up and try to work your way to the nearest bank.



**Stay safe and dry on a fishing expedition with a life jacket and rain gear.**

Wear a personal floatation device (life jacket) if you're in a boat or canoe. Know your boat's limitations and keep it in good repair. On the water, watch for dams, logs and rocks. If you must move around in the boat, stay low and in the center. Don't stand up! If the boat capsizes, climb onto the boat and make noise to attract attention. Stay with your boat - don't attempt to swim in if the shore is some distance away.

Proper dress makes any outdoor activity safer. Wear layers that you can take off or put on at will, and carry rain gear. A wide brimmed hat offers protection from the sun and a place to hang a lucky lure.

It's best to fish with a buddy and carry a small first aid/survival kit for emergencies. When the weather's cold and damp, watch each other for signs of hypothermia and head for shore before a chill sets in. If it's a hot day, wear a hat and drink lots of water to prevent heatstroke.

There's one more outdoor hazard anglers should be aware of: other anglers. Be cautious when you cast or you may land that lure or hook in your partner's earlobe (or even your own). If only the point of the hook punctures the skin, the hook easily can be removed. If the barb of the hook is poking out through the skin, clip off the barb and you can slide the rest of the hook out. If the hook is deeply embedded, it's best to have a doctor or nurse remove it. Avoid any complications by getting a tetanus shot as soon as possible after you've been hooked if you have not had one in the past 10 years.