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## Interested in ice fishing? Learn what you need to get started

For many outdoor enthusiasts, ice fishing is one of the most revered times of the year. Not only can you fish for many different species, but you can create memories with friends and family, spend time outside, enjoy beautiful winter scenery, and can provide you with some delicious table fare.

Like most activities, there are a ton of items that you *could* use but getting set up with the *essentials* is all you need to start. Many anglers start out with second hand gear and borrow from others until they are ready to purchase the rest.

### Essential ice fishing gear:

Anyone over 16 years of age must have a [fishing license](#). Or, try ice fishing during Free Fishing Weekend February 19-20, 2022.



**Proper clothing to keep you warm.** Insulated boots, waterproof gloves, thermal layers, a warm beanie, snow pants, a jacket, and wool socks are some of the staples. Warm clothing doesn't need to be expensive or even ice fishing specific.

**A chisel or auger to cut your ice fishing holes.** An ice chisel is most effective early in the season but can also be used as a safety tool to check ice thickness throughout the season. An ice auger is the most commonly used tool to drill holes through the ice. There are many options whether it's a hand, electric, gas, or propane powered auger. Which one you choose typically depends on your budget, but they all work. A hand auger is most often the

cheapest and best way to get started, paired with a sharp blade a hand auger gets the job done easier than you might expect.



**Traps and tackle:** The real purpose of ice fishing is that obvious; to catch fish. The next essential piece of gear you'll need is a way to catch those fish. Setting "traps" or "tip-ups" paired with live bait is probably the most common way to fish through the ice in Maine. A trap or tip up is simply a device that sits on top of the ice, holds the fishing line, and has an indicator flag that "trips" when a fish tugs on the line. There isn't a trap out there that won't work, but like with anything, more expensive traps tend to be better made and last longer. Some popular brands are Polar, Frabill and some Maine-made brands like Heritage and Jack Traps. In most Maine waters, you can have five lines set at one time, so most anglers tend to own five traps total. For those who enjoy a more active style of fishing, a jig rod is a great option. And remember you will need some tackle to attach to the end of your line (swivel, monofilament line, small nonlead weight, and a hook).

Besides the absolute essential gear needed to cut the ice and a rig to fish with, there are a few other pieces of gear that you'll need: a sled, bait bucket and net, ice scoop or "skimmer," bag to carry your gear, ice cleats, fishing pliers, depth sounder, ice safety picks, and a chisel.