

SPREAD BULK RIG

(Shirt button, Strung out shot, On the Drop)

This image shows a shotting pattern where all the shots on the line are evenly spread out in the bottom third or half of the rig. I use this pattern when I tie new rigs and store them on winders.

The shot nearest the hook is positioned just above the loop knot to which your hook link is attached. The rest of the shot used to set the float is spaced out evenly on the line at approximately 5cm intervals (a).

For most of my rig making I use No.9 shots.

If I need to fine tune, or 'Trim the rig' to get the float where I need it to be (about 5mm of float showing above the water is a good start).

Any smaller trimming shots (c) are placed on the line above the No.9's.

Personally, I do not like attaching shot to my hook links (b), so all the shots will be above the hook link on the main line of the rig.

If I want to get a shot closer to the hook to make the rig more sensitive, I will put on a shorter hook link or shorten it and tie a new loop. Always try to match the size of your hook to the size of the bait you want to use.

A spread bulk shot like this will allow the bait to sink more slowly through the water. You will hear anglers talking about 'a natural fall'.

Maggots sink through 1 foot of water in about 8 seconds. No rig I have ever seen with lead weights fixed to it sinks that slowly. But a spread bulk is the slowest of them all. The further apart the shots are spaced, the slower the bait will sink. Move them closer together and the bait speeds up through the water.

With shots spread out like this, the fish will have longer to see and eat the bait, and you can find out what depth the fish are sitting at by how the float behaves.

If it darts sideways, then shallow up (move your float gradually towards the hook a cm at a time) until it starts to go straight under.

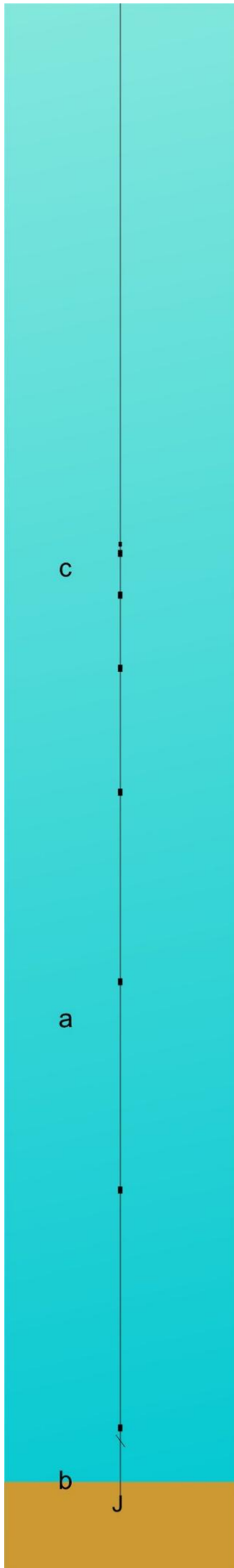
Pay particular attention to where the fish is hooked. You are looking to see the hook in the centre of the top lip. Anywhere else and you may need to adjust your shotting pattern and/or the depth.

If the fish are deep hooked, then I would suggest that your rig is not working properly, and you need to make some changes. A shorter hook link would be a good start to give the fish less time with the bait.

On the other hand if you are missing bites, try shallowing up a bit and/or move the bottom shot further away from your hook. Only millimetre by millimetre though.

Regardless of the shotting pattern you use, always try to have as little of the coloured float bristle showing above the water as you can. The less of float you can see, the more sensitive the rig is and the more bites you will see.

When the water is calm and flat or you are fishing close to you, you get away with the tiniest pimple showing. If the water is choppy in the wind or the float is further away, you may need to see a little more.



TAPERED BULK

The next pattern is slightly more 'positive', meaning the bait is forced down through the water a little quicker than a spread bulk.

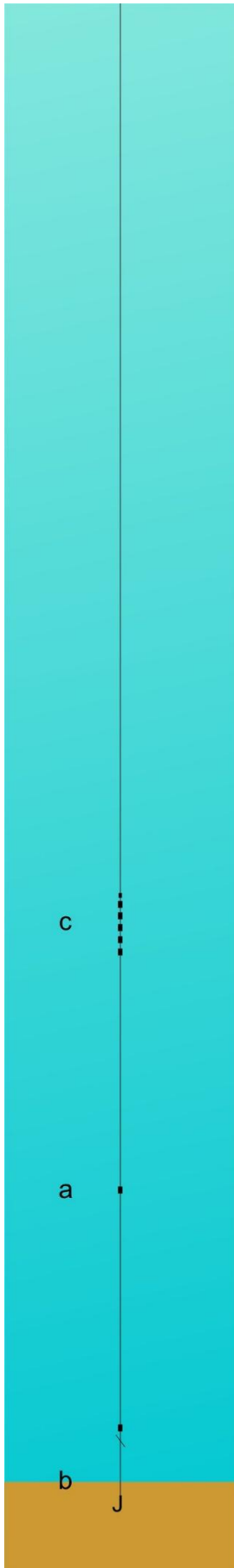
(a) The weights are still positioned in the bottom half or third of the rig depending on the depth. The last shot is positioned at the hook link knot and the shots are spread out as before only this time they are not evenly spaced. They start a bit further apart and gradually get closer together until they are almost touching. (c)

The hook link (a) is 10cm or 15cm (4" or 6").

It is worth noting that I never let my shots touch each other. I always leave a tiny gap between them. This is because if the shots are allowed to touch, they can create weird curves or kinks in the line that look a bit odd and just not right. Touching shots can make the line stiff and not supple as it should be, and I feel it could change how my rig works. So, I always leave a slight gap.

I mentioned before that weights positioned close together sink faster. On the Tapered Rig Pattern, the closer shots will sink quickly and, as the shots are further apart, the bait will slow down as the line straightens out.

Use this pattern when the fish are in the lower layers of the water, but not necessarily on the bottom.



BULK AND TWO DROPPERS

(Bulk and Two)

The next step in shotting patterns is the 'Bulk and Two Droppers'.

This is a very positive rig used when the fish are feeding confidently hard on the bottom. There is no point in using 'Faff rigs' when you need to get your bait down through the water quickly.

The Bulk of the shots are pushed together (without touching, remember) and positioned in a group roughly 50cm (18") from the hook. Two more shots are then spaced out evenly between the bulk and the hook.

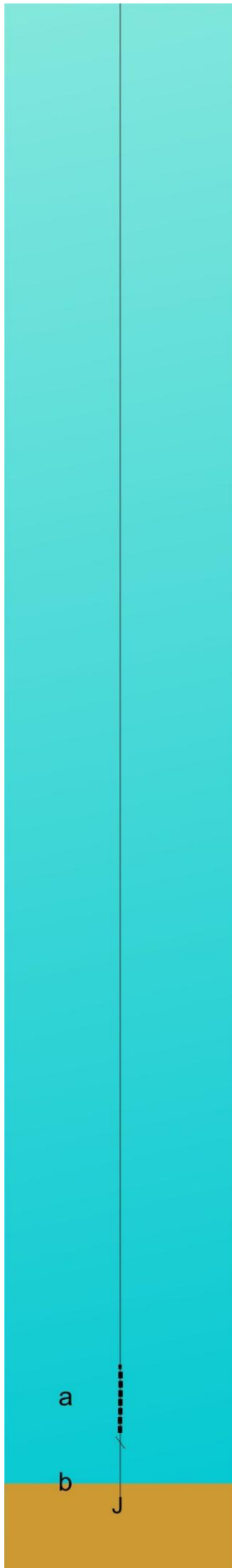
The idea is that the bulk plummets like a stone, dragging the droppers and the bait with it. Once the line is tight on the bulk, the droppers will keep you in touch with the bait as it falls to the bottom.

This pattern can also be used when a windy lake has a tow pulling your float one way or the other. (see the Coarse booklet for info about wind tow). You can add some depth to your rig so that the bait acts like an anchor as is dragged across the bottom, slowing your float down.

You will find that deeper venues will use this pattern more than shallower waters which will most commonly use the previous two.

A bulked weight with dropper shots is also used on rivers. The bulk weight of river rigs will most likely be an Olivette lead (see booklets).

The first two patterns are most commonly used in modern fishing, but the 'Bulk and Two' still has its place.



BULK DOWN

The ultimate in positive presentation with a pole.

All of the shots are pulled down in a group (with gaps) just above the hook link (a).

A great pattern for fishing in shallow margin areas when big fish are tearing up the bottom in search of food.

With a 10cm hook link (b), the bites will be very positive. There will be very few bobs or 'dinks', the float will just bury, and the fish will be on before you know you've had a bite.

A bulk down pattern will hold your bait hard on the bottom and prevent big fish from kicking your hook bait everywhere.

There is no room for fancy droppers. They will just get tangled up on fins causing foul hooking which nobody wants.

Use this for margin rigs in the summer in shallow water (2 feet/60cm or less).

I have used this pattern on my paste rigs in the past with good success.

SUMMARY

Spread bulk – Fishing from surface to the bottom. Search the water for fish at all depths. Good silverfish set up when along the whole rig fished with a tight line to keep in touch with the bait. Good cold-water pattern.

Tapered Bulk – A pattern for fishing in the lower layers or on the bottom. A good general shotting pattern for pellets and Carp.

Bulk and Two Droppers – For deeper water, fishing hard on the bottom for skimmers, or in rivers. Very positive rig to get bait down to the bottom quickly.

Bulk Down – Best used for margin fishing or paste. A very stable pattern when fish are feeding hard in large groups.

As usual, all of this is my own experiences and findings. None of it is gospel or written in stone. But I believe this is a good guide to help juniors choose the right patterns for any situation.

Juniors Sec...