

Kayak Fishing Rigs

Jason Walker covers more kayak rigging, so you'll be ready to hit the water!



Leashes

We start by looking at leashes as these are an integral part of retaining your items on your boat. When you are fishing from such a small craft, so close to the water, it is very easy to lose something over the side; that something could be your \$2 bait knife or your flash brand new \$1000 rod and reel combo. If it's not attached to the kayak you can kiss it goodbye! It has happened to us all at some stage. We can be really careful putting our GPS in its secure little holder on the deck every time, but when you get that grumpy big snapper flapping around in your lap, its flailing tail hits your GPS and knocks it over the side; that GPS is long gone. Not only does it leave you with the pain of having to explain to the bank manager (or your other half!) why you need to buy a new one, it's also the gut wrenching feeling when you realise it's taken with it all those secret fishing marks you've been collecting for the last two years...



of Spectra cord), with a length of 4 mm bungee - approximately 500 mm to 1000 mm long, and on the other end of the bungee add a method of attaching the leash to your kayak (normally a carabiner, spring clip or dog clip). Here is an example of a rod leash I use.

So, there is a simple rule to remember - Leash it or Lose it! There are many leashes on the market but they all serve the same simple purpose - to attach stuff to your kayak. The designs are varied but all follow a simple make-up. A leash to your item on one end (often a length



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Also make sure you leash your paddle too.

You need to be aware though that as much as we want to keep all our gear on board there are a couple of really important rules to follow with leashes. The first is never cross your body with leashes. You do not

want your rod in the left rod holder leashed to the right side of your kayak, with the opposite rod in the right rod holder so you have now crossed your body with two leashes. If you now find yourself in the unfortunate situation of rolling your kayak you will find it more difficult to untangle yourself underwater. The worse case is finding yourself unable to get to the surface without cutting the leashes and losing the rods - although donating a \$1000 combo to Davey Jones's locker is far better than losing your life!

The second rule is never leash your gaff to your kayak. If you end up in the water, your kayak is upside down with all your lovely tackle hanging in the water attached, except when one of those items is your gaff with it's six inch stainless steel and a really sharp hook waiting to embed itself into your leg or other appendage as you tread water. This scenario gets even worse in a surf landing that goes wrong as your kayak is swept towards the beach dragging you behind it by the gaff!

Tackle Storage

So we've got the rods and reels leashed to the kayak now where do we put all our tackle? For the kayak fisher who likes to take everything there are now solutions available allowing you to take all that tackle with you. For many years kayaks the world over had very little or no dry storage

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areas to keep any tackle aboard. Thankfully the kayak manufacturers in New Zealand have listened to us and delivered places for us to store vast amounts of tackle so we can swap the latest bling out on the water. Even though we now have lots of space available it still pays to think about how you package your tackle. We are still out on the water and leaving hooks and jig heads open to the elements will shorten their lives quite quickly, so you should look at storage solutions that will help keep your individual pieces of tackle away from the salt spray etc. Sealable boxes from the likes of Systema and other brands are the commonly used solutions to this problem. It's also worth dividing up your tackle into various fishing methods and then putting these into separate boxes so you are in effect making up mini tackle boxes for each discipline. This enables you to quickly grab the relevant box(es) based on the type of fishing you intend to be doing on the day. For example you grab your soft bait rod and reel and your soft bait tackle box that has your jig heads, worm hooks, deepwater rigs, fluorocarbon leaders, etc in it. If your intention today is jigging then you can grab your jigging tackle box with your jigs and assist hooks in it.

By doing this you can leave behind what you do not need. There is a danger that we try to take everything with us on the water and can end up overwhelmed and overloaded with gear. We do not have unlimited space on our kayaks so the more stuff we can leave behind the better sometimes. I went through a phase of taking four rods out with me and enough gear to run a small tackle shop but I often found that I only used one or two rods and opened only one tackle box in six hours. Then when I got home I still have to go through the process of cleaning down all four rods and unloading all the unused gear.

Transport

Now that we have covered getting the kayak rigged and ready to go we have one more step to get on the water ... getting the kayak from the

garage to the waters edge! Unless you are lucky enough to be living on the beach you are going to have to transport your kayak by vehicle. This presents two choices: the more common method of carrying your kayak on top of your vehicle using roof racks or the other option of towing it behind you on a trailer.

The roof rack option is the most popular due to its simplicity, cost, and no need for a tow bar. With roof racks you also have two further choices; to just tie the kayak to the roof rack bars or opt for specialist kayak cradles? Securing your kayak hull side up to the roof bars is by far the most simple and cost effective solution, it is also a good way to carry your kayak as your kayak is resting on it's gunnels which are very solid and therefore will not distort. Cradles enable you to carry your kayak with the hull down, this can be useful if you have attached appendages to the top side of your kayak that cannot be removed such as fish finder mounts that would hit the vehicle roof when upside down on the roof rack bars.



The alternative option is to use a trailer to get your kayak and gear to the launch point. You could use a standard 6x4 trailer or opt for something like the trailer shown here which provides not only a way to

carry your kayak to the beach but also somewhere to securely carry all your gear too, meaning none of your fishy stuff has to go in the family car.



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Whichever method you choose be careful not to clamp your kayak down too hard to your rack / trailer, your kayak is made of plastic and in the height of summer that kayak plastic will soften slightly. A kayak that is tied down too tight will distort and your kayak can be damaged. You only need to apply enough pressure on your kayak with the tie downs to keep your kayak in place and to stop it moving around.

Trolleys

We have now made it to the beach, the kayak is off the vehicle or trailer all rigged up, and gear loaded but how do you get it from the car park to the waters edge? Don't fret a solution has already been thought of for you - the kayak trolley! As with everything there are several options available with options to suit all budgets and preferences, here are a couple of examples of trolleys that I personally own.

One of the most popular kayak trolleys is the C-Tug trolley, this trolley has been designed and made here in NZ for our kayakers. It is constructed from plastic and stainless steel, and has been designed in such a way that the trolley will break down into several pieces so it can easily be stored in the front hatch of your kayak, saving you a trip back to your vehicle to drop the trolley off. The C-Tug trolley first came out with pneumatic tires but these have recently been replaced with new hard wheels which help when you are crossing soft sand.

The Canoe & Kayak Stainless steel trollies are robust and will last in the harsh marine environment. For the more budget conscious, there are aluminium framed trollies with pneumatic tyres to get your trolley to the waters edge.

Even if you don't have a trolley do not despair, all you need to do is find a friend! Even a fully laden kayak is easily carried to the shore line by two people, another good excuse to paddle with a group!

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Fixings

If you want to attach items to your kayak such as rod holders, Railblaza mounts, fish finder mounts etc. then there are several options available to you, here is a quick run down of each type.

Rivets

These are an easy to use solution where you do not have access to the inside of the kayak at the attachment point but rivets are hard to get a good waterproof seal with.

Self Tapping Screws

Another easy to use fixing that can also be used where you do not have access to the inside of the kayak. With screws you do need to be careful you do not over tighten them as you can very easily strip the thread in the soft plastic.

Well Nuts

A very easy to use and very waterproof fastening, the nut is captive inside a rubber sleeve and as you tighten the screw the rubber will expand and form the seal.

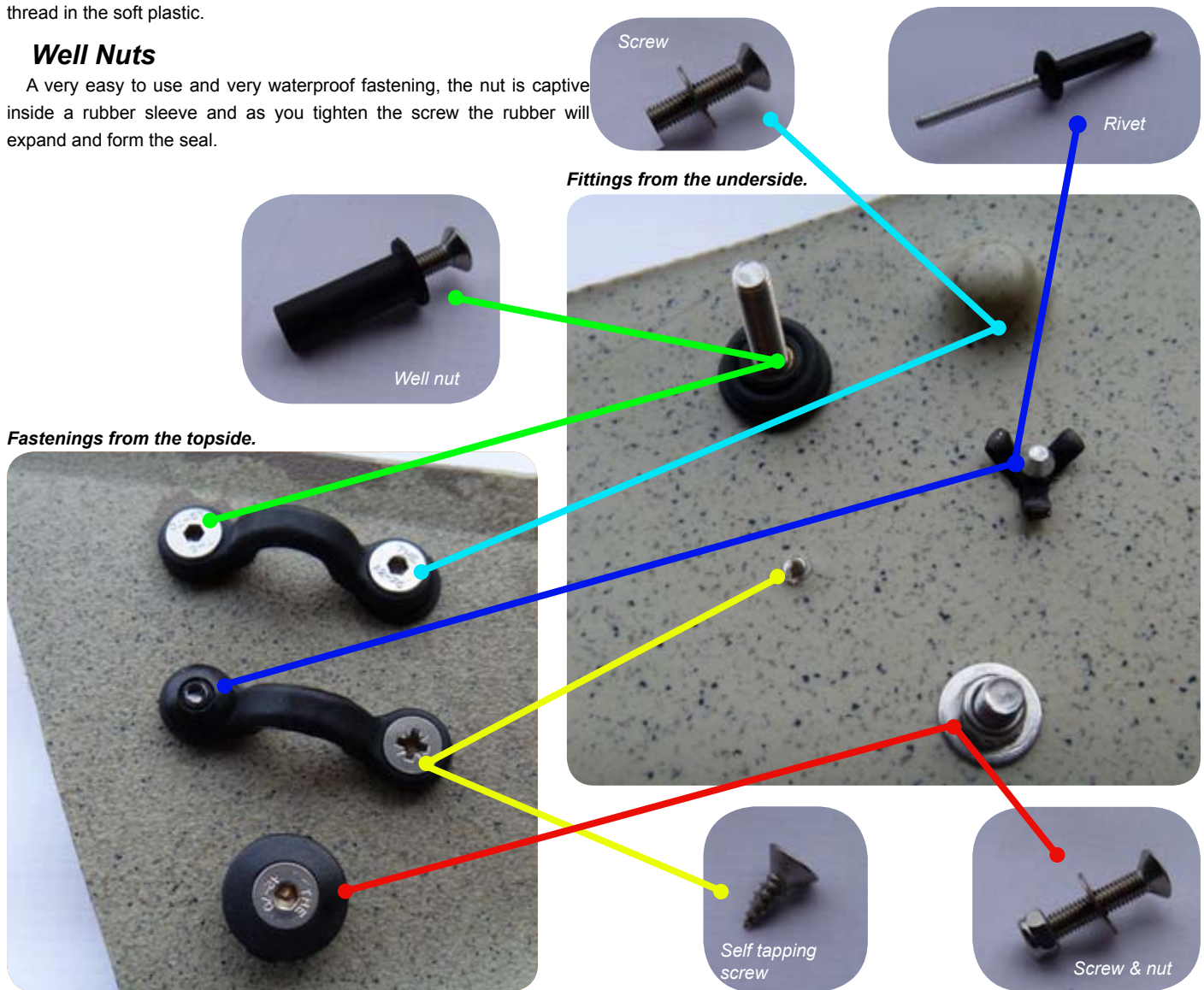
Screw and Nut

A good solution where you need a strong fixing, you must, of course have access to both sides so you can put a spanner on the nut. You will need to use some form of sealant to make it waterproof.

Inserts

Many kayaks now make use of moulded-in brass inserts, these are added to the kayak during the manufacturing process and as such they are 100% waterproof.

In the next article we'll get out on the water and do some fishing, I'll also look at some electronics options for your kayak.



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