

# RIG GUIDE

## No Perfect Rig!

There are a number of standard rigs in common usage for tench fishing, but there is no “best rig” or “secret rig”. The rig you choose to use will depend on a number of factors, the type of bottom you are fishing over (muddy, silty, gravel etc.), the type and amount of weed present (silk weed, Canadian pond weed etc.), the range you choose to fish at and even the size of tench present (and any carp) and indeed the type of bait you choose to use.

## Safety first

Whatever rig you choose to use it must be safe. That is if there is a breakage in the main line above the rig the hook length must be able to be released. The tackle in use must be strong enough to put up with the rigours of repetitive casting of a fully loaded feeder, which can often be in excess of 3oz, the possibilities of any crack off must be reduced to as near zero as possible and any large carp hooked should be capable of being landed. We don't want to be leaving carp trailing rigs any more than tench. This doesn't mean it is necessary to use what would be seen today as carp tackle, but it does mean we need to be using balanced tackle suitable for the task in hand. The minimum main line I would suggest is 0.28mm for open water fishing, 0.30mm is a good average but I commonly use 0.32mm which is rated at 12lb in the brand I use. These line strengths are for monofilament or copolymer lines, the use of braided or fluorocarbon main lines is rather specialised and not in general usage for tench. Typically I would use rods of 2lb or 2.25lb test curve with 1.75lb rods for the more open water situations. Many of the best tench waters we fish are also carp waters and often run as such, some waters have their own restrictions on tackle that has to be used, but fortunately some fisheries recognise the requirements of tench anglers and have a sub set

of rules, if not then often a friendly approach can be made and exceptions granted. However the onus is on the individual to follow the stated rules.

## Bite Alarms

Just a word on bite indication, for this type of fishing bite alarms/bobbins are very commonly used, one look along the bank will show which are the most popular makes and they are generally popular because of their functionality and reliability. Fundamentally though as long as they make a noise when a take occurs that's good enough, it is not necessary to have top of the range all singing and dancing latest model. If you are new to this type of fishing it is worth considering buying second hand, bargains are to be had, especially after a new model has been launched. A remote sounder is a useful option, not because you will be away from your rods but it allows the alarms to be muted at the rod. On today's busy waters the constant bleep, bleep of others alarms is an annoyance, plus I don't want others to know if I'm catching!!



## Rigs That's Work

So down to rigs, the ones shown all work and work well, it is not a comprehensive list rather a list of tried and tested rigs in current common usage. The components are those that I use and are effective and safe. I have no particular brand loyalty and I am certainly not sponsored or receive any free tackle (or bait for that matter) from anyone. Of course you can substitute components like for like if you have a particular favourite brand, confidence in what you are doing is the key.

### 1 Helicopter feeder rig.

This rig is perhaps currently the most widely used rig and is commonly used to fish the famous "worm kebab" which has become a mainstay for many tench anglers having been popularised by Tenchfishers member Dai Gribble after his tremendous success with this rig on a number of waters. However it can be used equally well with casters or maggots (or combinations). The feeder used is a Korum Combi Feeder, this type of feeder has the advantage of being able to be used as a closed feeder or by removing the end caps as an open end feeder. The 45-60g feeders are a commonly used size but be aware of over loading your rod and casting accuracy can be affected at the higher weights, it's a good idea to be conservative and perhaps cast a bit more frequently rather than risk any mishap.

The hook link shown is for illustration it is commonly use with around 8lb mono with a quick stop for use with the worm kebab and fished at about 6-8". It is important that the gap between the feeder and the hook length is sufficient to avoid and possibility of tangles.

Common variations include shortening the hook length for example when using maggots or using a different hook length material such as a stripped back coated braid or fluorocarbon. However mono or copolymer is a very reliable and simple hook length material. The bait can be fished on the bottom or popped up if required. Three options for the rotary or helicopter components are shown. It is occasionally used with rubber float stops or grippa type stops. However experience shows that these are not reliable and can grip the line to tightly preventing the hook link being released in the event of a mainline breakage and are not recommended. I prefer not to fish the rig with the swivel directly on the main line. The feeder is attached to the line using a clip so it can be changed easily and quickly, the use of a "C" clip can be used to connect the feeder to the clip, this will provide another fail safe device in case of any mishaps.



It is common practice when starting a feeder session to cast out relatively frequently initially to get some bait in the immediate area you can use a larger sized feeder to do this and then change to a smaller feeder when fishing begins in earnest. Of course you can use a Spomb to do this but when using light baits such as chopped worm and caster in deeper water, especially if it is windy, there is some potential for the feed to end up some distance from where you actually intend it to go. Using a heavy feeder can alleviate this problem. It's not a bad idea to use a large feeder on a Spod/Spomb rod instead of a Spomb in any case, tench are not generally adverse to some disturbance and actually will commonly investigate, this is often demonstrated after raking a swim.



## Fish responsibly

Always ensure the rig you are using is constructed with fish-safety in mind and that in the event of a breakage the fish can rid itself of as much tackle as possible. There are a number of items on the market to help you achieve this.

## 2 PVA Bag rig

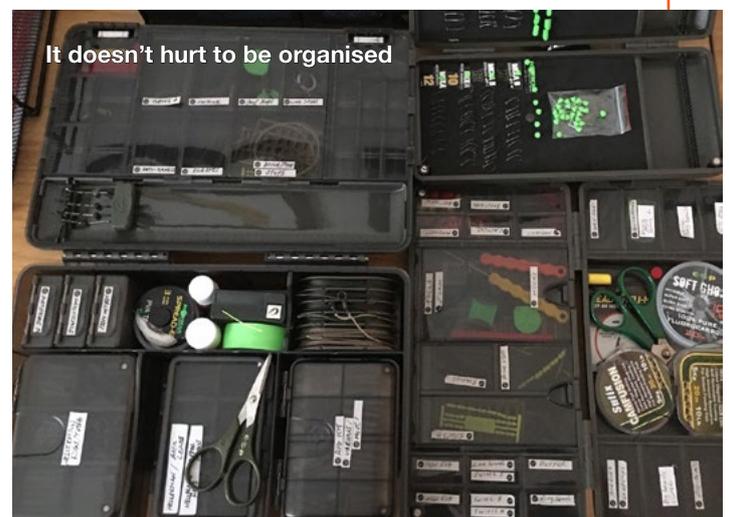
This rig is a variation on 1. and simply substitutes a feeder for a PVA bag. The primary advantage is that it can be fished effectively when it is too weedy for a feeder but still fishable. Using chopped worms in a PVA bag is obviously problematic however if you want to then use small worms and either bait them whole or just cut them into two and then dust them in some ground bait to dry them off a bit. I often use this rig with casters and its one of my favourite presentations but if you use "micromesh" stocking you can use pretty much any bait in it you like. In summer and in deeper water it can be useful to "double bag", to ensure the bag doesn't dissolve on the way down. Using dead maggots (or a mixture of dead and live) ensures that they don't all run off and hide in the light weed. The rig shown is fished on a lead free, woven leader. These are an alternative to lead core and are both softer and heavier than lead core. You can fish the rig naked in which case I would prefer the set-up used in the helicopter feeder rig which is a PB Products extra small heli chod rubber and beads.



## 3 Running rig with feeder

This rig is useful for a number of reasons. It can be fished in sparse weed, for example early in the season Canadian pond weed can grow quickly but still be sparse and fishable or over light silk weed. It provides a running rig option for those who prefer this option over semi fixed lead bolt rigs and because it uses a longer hook link section than typical with helicopter rigs it can be used with popped or critically

balanced bait baits so the feeder (or lead) will hit the bottom first and the hook length will drop down more slowly coming to rest gently on top of what weed it present. This rig is particularly useful in shallower water. The hook length is for illustration, it is typically fished longer at 18-24" depending on conditions. The original rig was devised by Tenchfishers member Chris Babbage and he uses it very effectively with buoyant lobworms or dendrobaenas and a mixture of chopped worm, casters and a few dead reds in the feeder, along with some of the soil the worms are delivered in. If used with buoyant baits then you will required some counter balance on the line set whatever distance from the hook you chose on the day. This weight can be shot or putty or specific pop-up weights, normally just enough weight to counter balance the buoyant bait so it sinks gently and settles on top of any debris or light weed.





## 5 In line lead rig for PVA solid bag fishing.

This is not an especially commonly used rig for tench but it is useful when fishing boilies or w afters or pellets etc. for tench. It has a number of advantages, if fishing over a dirty or "choddy" bottom or even light weed it's virtually tangle proof presentation is a confidence booster. Also, being streamlined and compact it is a very good long distance rig and with the right tackle will present a bait as far as you are likely going to need to fish. It's commonly fished with a semi buoyant bait so that when the solid PVA bag melts the hook bait is visible amongst the free offerings. Pretty much any dry bait can be used in the PVA bag, crushed or chopped boilies, pellets, with care and little patience it will also work with caster or dead maggots, just don't compress the PVA bag as tight as you would. You can off course experiment with any PVA friendly glugs or dips you fancy as well. The final photograph shows a number of components. Top left is a Gardner C clip, this is the smaller sized version and is suitable for connecting leads and feeders to swivels so that if the lead or feeder is caught it will release under pressure. Top right is a 5mm soft bead on a section of silicone tubing and is a useful top bead set-up for helicopter rigs. Bottom right is an open bead on a tapered section of tubing, this is a very good set-up for the top bead, you might find on weedier waters that the bead falls off with some regularity, so ensure you carry some spares. Bottom left is a barrel swivel on a section of Hellerman sleeve. Some tench anglers fish swivels directly on the line and whilst this doesn't seem to present any problems that I've heard of I prefer to afford the mainline some protection.

## 4 Inline feeder with short hook length (pop up)

This rig uses an in line feeder such as a Drennan inline bolt feeder and is fished typically with a short (2"-4") hook length. Stiffer hook lengths of fluorocarbon are often used materials such as Amnesia or IQ or IQ2 are effective, other brands are available. This rig is as near 100% tangle free as is possible to get and the flatter profile of the feeder means it will sit nicely on softer bottom or on sloping margins or bars etc. Tying short hook lengths takes a bit of practice and they should be tested before use, this rig is designed as a bolt rig and takes can be quite savage putting a lot of initial strain on the hook link. Having said that it is a very effective maggot rig and has caught lots of big tench over recent years. The feeder is threaded directly on the line and the quick link swivel kept in place by the rubber grip at the bottom of the feeder, this needs to be a snug fit so it provides the bolt effect but equally loose enough that it can be released by a fish if the rig is lost.



## And there you have it...

The rigs shown offer a reliable set that can be used in a variety of situations with a variety of baits. They can be used as shown and will catch plenty of tench.

They can of course be modified to suit individual needs and requirements or personal preferences as to hook patterns, line, use of a leader etc. However as mentioned at the beginning the **primary consideration is one of fish safety, whatever changes you make please make sure they are safe.**