# Underwater Tactics: Fresh line catches more fish

*by Ken_Cook*

Fishing experiences can range from both the pleasure that comes from catching a fish to the pain and frustration that comes when "the big one" gets away. For every successful fish story you might hear at the boat ramp, there are probably many more tales anglers left in disbelief as the fish of their dreams breaks their line -- never to be seen again. Ken Cook is the 1991 Bassmaster Classic champion and a 14-time Classic qualifier. A former fisheries biologist, Cook lives on his ranch in Meers, Okla. For those of you fishing for fun, the heartbreak is usually temporary. For those of us who fish for a living, that same heartbreak can also break the bank. One missed fish can be the difference between cashing a paycheck and going broke. That's why professionals - myself included - make every effort to minimize the chances of this happening to us. First and foremost, we start with our fishing line.Your fishing line is the only connection between you and the fish. Fishing line, as it ages, comes into contact with many things that all work to break it down and make it weaker. The repeated stress and strain of fighting big fish, rubbing on rocks and timber, sunlight, water, even a fish's teeth can cause your line to become weak and more likely to break the next time you're fighting that big fish.The best approach is a proactive approach. That's why I respool my reels after each day of competition. It takes some time and costs some money, but it's better to spend a few dollars on fishing line than those several thousand because I lost a fish. For those of you who aren't fishing every day, the best thing to do is carefully examine your line before each trip, look for cuts and abrasions. If your reels have been sitting in the garage for a long time or if they spend a lot of time in the sun, take the time to respool them. If you use colored line, check the colorfastness. If the color has faded, chances are that it is time to respool. I prefer to keep bulk spools for respooling because it helps me save money and time. I keep them closed in a cabinet in a cool, dry place with the date of purchase written on each spool. It is important to store the line away from sunlight and moisture.Today's technology means has brought us superior fluorocarbon line like Berkley Vanish and superlines like Berkley Fireline, tools that give anglers the strong, manageable line they need to land big fish. But even the best line can wear down after prolonged use. Whether you fish for fun or for a paycheck, it's better to be safe than sorry. Respool often and avoid the heartbreak of a lost fish.