

# How to make single strand leaders

By Gerard Hellenbrand

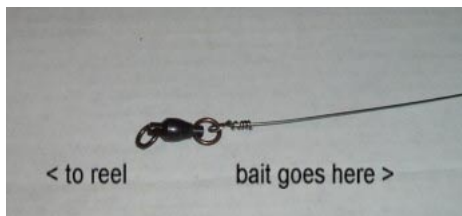
A list of tools needed for this project includes **small needle nose Vise Grips**, **diagonal wire cutters**, and **Du-Bro E/Z Twist** Standard Leader kit #1099. I also like to use the small vise grips to hold my hooks when I sharpen them – it keeps my fingers clear of the file & hook point. Another item that I use is looping pliers (also called round-nose pliers). You can use the Du-Bro E/Z Twist, but they make only one-size loop – small. The looping pliers may be hard to find and it will allow you make different size loops. Larger loops will allow some baits to swing more, like Reef Hawgs & Jackpots. I found mine in Sears a number of years ago & they are not available now.



R to L – **Tools** includes diagonal wire cutter, looping, pliers, Du-Bro E/Z Twist and a needle nose Vise Grips.

Leader hardware includes .022 wire (105# test) for bucktails & cranks and stiffer .029 wire (174# test) for jerkbaits & surface baits, snaps, & ball bearing swivels with solid rings. These items can be purchased from Moore's Lure's (715) 356-6834 or Rollie & Helen's 800) 453-5224. Call them for their latest catalogs of all their hardware.

First you cut off about 16 inches of wire (for a 9-inch leader). Place the wire about 3 1/2 inches from the end in between the two pins in the end of the Du-Bro tool, we will call the short end, the tag end. Bend the main wire towards you about 15 degrees. This bend will place the eye in the center of the leader when it's done. Next grab the tag end and wrap it around the center pin (counter-clockwise) and keep bending till you pass the wire over the leader side of the wire till it's almost perpendicular. Add your hardware (snap or swivel). The correct way to put on ball bearing swivels is having the narrow side towards the leader if your line is attached to the swivel (see photo 1).



◀ Note: When installing a ball bearing swivel, the tapered end is towards the bait.

If you put it on the other way, the swivel may catch weeds inside the bearing joint and fail. Then place the Du-Bro tool on leader shank and wrap the wire around the shank at least three times. If you place the tag end on the wrong side of the leader the Du-Bro tool will open up when you try to wrap the wire around the shank. I suggest that you hold the loop with a plier, as your fingers will not be strong enough. Next, **break** the tag end off. This is a very important step. If you just cut it, the tag end it will be sharp and will cut you when you remove weeds or even just grabbing the wire. To do this, bend a ninety in the tag end about a quarter-inch from shank.



▲ Bend a 90 in the tag end to grip it better, like the photo to the ► and you break the tag off for a clean finish to the wrap.

Grab the tag end very close to the shank with the needle nose vise grip, lock on and twist on its end (like a screwdriver). The ninety-bend in the tag end of the wire allows the vise grip pliers to keep a hold of the wire when twisting. The wire should break at the last place it bent, which is close to the leader shaft. When done right, the break will be so close to the shank it will not cut you when you handle the leader. Repeat the steps to the other end. When using the looping pliers, the procedure is the same as using the Du-Bro tool pins. The closer to the bottom of the jaw of the pliers that you bend the wire, the larger the loop will be.



I would **highly** recommend quality snaps like Roscoe & ball bearing swivels with solid rings. When using jerkbaits & cranks, I prefer to use split rings instead of snaps. I always use a minimal amount of hardware whenever possible. Like using no swivel if using a jerkbait – they seldom rollover and your bait will work better. The combinations of different type leaders are many. The ones I use most are the standard ball bearing/snap combo, ball bearing/plain loop, plain loop/snap, & plain loop on both ends. The bearing/snap combo I use for bucktails and rotating topwaters like Topraiders. The bearing/plain loop would be use for cranks with a split ring on the bait. The plain loop/snap would be use with jerkbaits without a split ring. The plain looped on both ends is use for jerkbaits and some topwaters like Hawg Wobbler, Creepers, & Jackpots. With no forward weight on the nose of the Jackpot and a split ring on the bait, you will get a better swing and jumping motion with this combination. I will also add that if you start using split rings, put them on your baits, you must leave them on the bait. If you start taking on & off the split ring from the eye of the bait, you will ruin the split ring in no time. The diameter of the leader wire will easily slip in & out of the split ring without causing fatigue to the split ring. The last thing I should mention and this goes with store bought leaders, inspect your snaps after long use. The lure eye will wear on the snap and cause the snap to become soft and/or break. The ball bearings can take years of use and can be reuse many times over.