

# Long Distance Surf Casting 101

The casting style that this paper will refer to is the ground cast. It's a very simple yet very powerful style of distance casting, and the same basic principles can also be applied to the Hatteras cast, pendulum cast... any cast you want to do. Once you learn the ground cast, you can easily transition to more technical casting styles if desired.

The reason so many tournament casters first start training using a ground casting is that there's no swinging the sinker around to worry about where you only get a split second to properly position yourself to begin the cast. With the ground cast, we can take our time and be very deliberate about how we position ourselves before we begin moving.

## Safety Steps for Long Distance Surf Casting

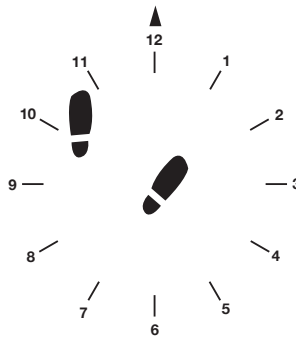
1. Make sure your rod is rated for the sinker weight you intend to cast.
2. Always use a monofilament shock leader when casting heavier sinkers. The general rule is 10 pounds of breaking strain test for every ounce of sinker and bait you are going to cast... but it has been found that at least 50 lb. test shock leader is safe for even ultra-heavy weights like 8 oz. and 10 oz. sinkers plus bait.
3. Make sure that shock leader goes around your spool at least 8 times when you're getting ready to cast.
4. Always make sure the area ahead of you is clear of people and property out to 300 yards. Sometimes crack-offs fly very far. And make sure no one is within 30' behind you.
5. Try to make sure your left is clear out to 100 yards if you're a lefty, and to your right if you're a righty. Every once in a while, a sinker can break off just as you're powering up in the cast and the sinker can fly sideways.
6. If your target is 12 o'clock, do not rotate your rod past the 7 o'clock position when winding up to cast. Any more rotation than that risks loss of control.
7. The bottom line is that the sinker is a massive aerodynamic projectile traveling in excess of 200 mph. It can easily maim or kill a human, and extensively damage property. Considering this, just use common sense.

## STEP 1

### Setting Up

#### 1. Footing

The foundation to a powerful cast is proper footing. As a rule of thumb, you want your feet shoulder width apart. As for how they're oriented, imagine you're standing on a clock face: your target is at 12 o'clock, and your back foot is in the center of the clock face. Your front leg should be between the 10 and 11 o'clock position.



#### 2. Rod and Sinker Position

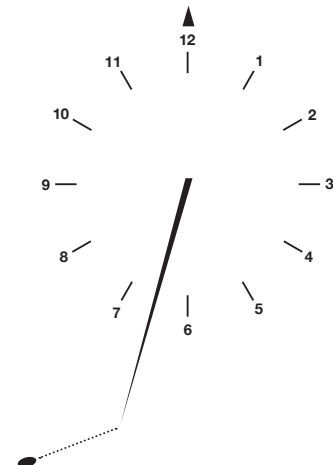
Once your feet are in position, the next step is to position your rod.

1. First, make sure your grip is the correct width between the left and right hands. A good starting point for a 12-13' rod is to hold your reel as you would for a cast, extend that arm all the way out to your side, and when you grip the rod with your bottom hand, the butt of the rod should be

somewhere between your sternum and armpit. A wider grip gives more power but less speed. A narrower grip gives more speed but less power.

2. Next, you will need to position the sinker on the ground. Position the leader and sinker about 45 degrees off the rod tip.

3. Make sure that you start the cast with arms outstretched, like you're giving the rod away. Using the clock face analogy again (with your target at 12 o'clock) you'll want to start your cast with the rod pointed in the opposite direction: 6 o'clock or even 7 o'clock. Hold your arms up to at least shoulder height with the rod angled down so the tip is about one foot off the ground. There must be no slack in your leader when you begin the cast.



## STEP 2

### Rotation

One of the most common mistakes in distance casting is relying too heavily on the arms, which are actually weak compared to other muscle groups. As you placed your feet and then positioned the rod and sinker, you likely felt like you were twisting yourself a little. You will take advantage of that stored twisting energy to initiate and build momentum in the cast.

When you start the cast, it will begin with your body uncoiling. The arms will do nothing except hold the rod stationary while your hips and torso begin to turn. As they do, your rod will start to load. Start slow. The whole body rotation part of the cast should look and feel like it's slow motion.

Continue turning with the rod tip staying about one foot off the ground until your bottom hand comes between your face and the target... and that leads us into the finish with the arms discussed in step 3.

## STEP 3

### Punch-Pull

As your bottom hand comes into position, that arm should still be straight, and your top arm should have a slight bend in it.

45 degrees is the optimum vertical trajectory for any object to reach the greatest distance, so we want to cast not at a wave or patch of water we're trying to reach, but up into the sky above it.

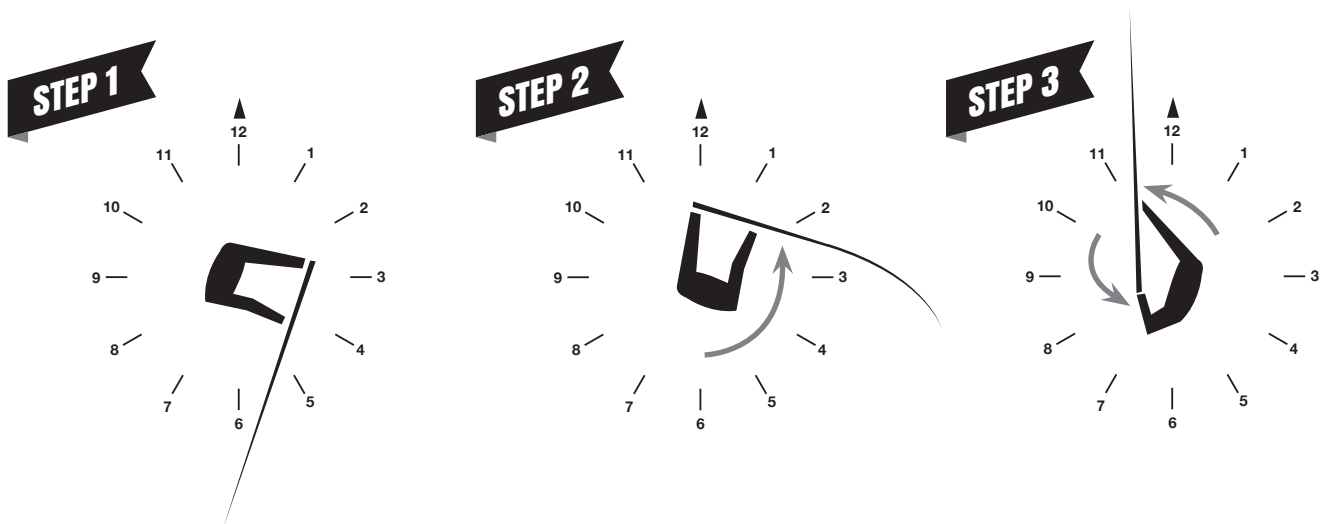
If you want to make sure you cast at 45 degrees up into the sky – that optimum angle – simply *look* there. We say “look up, cast up” in competitive casting.

The motion that your arms are going to go through after your fully extended bottom hand passes in front of your face is what we call the “punch-pull”. When it comes time for this motion, the right arm will thrust forward up into the air and simultaneously, the bottom hand and

butt of the rod should be pulled down hard into the lower chest area. In other words, the top hand does add momentum, but mostly it acts as a fulcrum point. The real power should come from the motion of that left arm pulling down hard thus swinging the upper part of the rod quickly through the air.

To look at it another way: again, the power stroke with the arms should start when the bottom hand is outstretched in front of the face. By the end of the power stroke, you want the top hand to have replaced the bottom hand in that same position in front of your face.

## OVERHEAD VIEW OF THE COMPLETE GROUND CAST



The CSCA is dedicated to helping surf fishermen in North Carolina and beyond acquire the skill – and preserve the heritage – of long distance surf casting. It is also our mission to help promote long distance surf casting as a sport in the United States... to cultivate and support athletes who share our vision of producing internationally-competitive American casters.

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