

A newbies guide to fishing

I have a son who has taken an interest in fishing. I haven't gone fishing years and so there was a slight learning curve and I decided to write a newbies guide to fishing for anyone else who might be interesting going fishing but aren't really sure where to begin.

Fishing basics



Fishing can be a great time!

Fishing is a great and relaxing past time. Some people fish for food, some fish for sport and others just to relax. Fishing is the act of trying to catch a fish.

There are different tools used to fish but basically you put something out that attracts a fish and try to entice the fish to take it. You then capture the fish and bring it to you.

The fishing rod

In essence, a fishing rod is a tool just like any other tool in your tool box but the most important tool is your mind. While the rod is the tool to present your bait to the fish and bring the fish to you, it is your mind that determines what and how you do that. Since this is a newbies guide to fishing, we will just focus on a few of those tricks.

All fishing rods basically do the same thing. They allow you to cast a line out to where the fish are and present your bait to the fish. There are some subtle differences between types

of rods.

Spincast Reel



A Spincast reel.

A spincast rod & reel features a closed reel to avoid tangling of the line. It also features a way to adjust the drag on the line.

To use a spincast reel, you put your bait on, hold the brake button down, bring the rod back – either overhead or to your side and then quickly flick it towards the water and release the brake. After your bait lands, turn the crank a few times to lock the reel.

Spinning Reel



A Spinning Reel

A spinning reel has an open reel of fishing line with a bail around it. The bail keeps the line away from the reel so the line wraps smoothly as you crank the reel.

To use a spinning reel you take the line and put it through

one of your fingers holding the rod. Flip the bail over and bring the rod back – either overhead or to your side and then quickly flick it towards the water. The line should go out. After it goes out, manually flip the bail back again so you are ready to reel your fish in.

Fly Fishing



Fly Fishing Rod setup

A Fly Fishing reel is different from the spinning forms of fishing in that you place a lightweight lure (the bait) that is shaped like bug that a fish would see above the water and present it to the fish. This requires an almost delicate dance of the fishing line before allowing the fly to land gently on the water.

While the main focus of this newbie guide for fishing is on the spinning and spincast reels, to fly fish you need a special rod/reel and setup to the line. To start you pull out about 3' of line from the reel and hold it in your opposite hand. Pull your rod back and then flick it forward allowing the line to go out. You pull the rod backwards and pull another 3' or so of line out and swing the rod forward again. You do this back and forth repeatedly until you have enough line have the fly land exactly where you want it to. When you

do, you just let the line land on the water and start reeling it in.

Obviously these are a lot of subtle things to learn and have for fly fishing but I thought I would include the description here as part of the newbies guide to fishing but this is a more advanced topic to cover once you have mastered the other fishing techniques.

Bait

You won't catch many fish with a bare fishing line so you need to attach some bait to the end of your line. Bait comes in different sizes and types depending on what you are trying to catch.

For our purposes, we'll focus on two basic types of fish – bass and trout. Bass are found in lakes or larger bodies of water and trout are found in streams. What you use to catch each one depends of which you are trying to catch.

Bass



A Bass Lure

If you are fishing on a lake and trying to catch a bass fish, you are most likely going to use a lure that is shaped like a small fish. The bass will think it's a fish and go to bite it. That's when you can hook them!

To attach the lure, you'll want to attach a swivel to the end of your line to connect the lure to the line. About 12-16" above the swivel you'll want a bobber so that your bait will dangle that distance below the bobber.

Trout



A Mepps Lure is a great tool for catching trout.

Trout are naturally curious fish and like shiny objects or food that appears to have fallen into the water like worms. For trout you can use a spinning shiner.

To attach the lure, you'll want to attach a swivel to the end of your line to connect the lure to the line. About 12-16" above the swivel you'll want a bobber so that your bait will dangle that distance below the bobber.

A note about barbed hooks

Some hooks have a barbed hook and in some jurisdictions they are illegal. If you have barbed hooks, you can always get a small wire cutter and just cut the tip of the barb off and your hook will be legal.

Where to find fish for newbies



You want to look in shady spots and behind rocks to find trout.

Fish like to hang out in the shade where the water is cooler. Look for shady spots or places that are not in direct sunlight.

In a stream, you want to stand looking downstream and find a dark pocket around a rock, under a tree or roots hanging over the stream bank. Fish will go to these areas. That is where you want to try and cast your line and then bring it towards you.

Concluding thoughts on fishing for beginners

Hopefully this newbies guide to fishing helps you on your journey to becoming a fisherman. There are other resources online such as:

- <http://fishingnoob.com/>

- <https://hobbyhelp.com/fishing/>
 - <https://www.outsideonline.com/2393713/how-to-start-fishing>
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How to re-light an oil burner furnace

If you've ever been in a situation where you run out of heating oil, you know that someone needs to re-light your furnace. This can cost over a hundred dollars or more if you have a technician do this. This guide will walk you through the simple process of re-lighting your oil burner.

What you need

To relight your furnace you will need:

- Some diesel fuel (in place of heating oil)
- A wrench (size may vary)
- Collection container

Getting Started

First, you should know that if it's after hours or the weekend that most if not all oil dealers will charge extra fees to deliver oil and will also charge extra to re-light your furnace. You should know that you can use ordinary diesel fuel from any service station. It's more expensive per gallon but it's cheaper than having the service deliver off hours. You'll need about 2-3 gallons per day to heat a standard house on a cold day. You'll use less if it's warmer. The station will sell a 5 gallon container for diesel and you can use that to have 2-3 days of supply and save on fees.

Re-lighting your burner

After you've added the diesel, you need to clear the fuel line of air. To do this, you need put your collection container below the burner. Locate the air release valve – it will have a screw that will open with a wrench. It will be at the end of the fuel line from your oil tank.



The air release valve is to the right of the fuel line entering the burner

Open the valve. Then press the red re-light button. You'll hear the pump start. Wait for the oil/diesel to start coming out of the valve and then close it (turning it the opposite way you did to open it).



The red re-light button looks like this
If the burner does not light when you close the valve, you may need to press the re-light button again.

The key is to have the pump suck the diesel/oil you've put in the tank to the oil burner. Opening the valve breaks the vacuum in the line and once fuel starts coming out of the air release valve, closing it will allow just fuel to make it to the burner.

Good luck and enjoy the savings!

How to create a Website and passive income

If you have a business, organization or even just an idea that you want to share, you need a Website. Perhaps you're looking to earn some passive income – you need a Website! This article

will guide you through the process of what you need to do in order to create a Website.

There are companies that do all the work for you and give you a framework to add your content (such as my service – I know, a shameless plug) but you might want to do it yourself. This will give you a framework to work with if you want to do it yourself.

Domain Registrar

To start, you'll need a domain. A domain is the Website address like "LincOn.com". To obtain a domain you need to go to a registrar like GoDaddy.

Web Hosting Service

You also need a robust host to keep all your data and Website. You might see that the registrar can act as your host but it's good to have a dedicated service that can host your Website. That way if anything goes wrong and you want to switch hosts or your registrar, you can. I have used Media Temple for over 20 years and recommend their services for your host. We can even host your site for you and as I mentioned, do all of this work for you.

How to switch Name Services

Once you have a host and they have configured your service, you need to point the DNS or Domain Name Service name servers to your host. It's really system. Just look for Name Servers at your Registrar and change them to the Name Services of your new host.

WordPress

With everything pointed in the right direction, you need to create a platform for your Website to be built on. One of the

most used platforms is called WordPress. WordPress will create beautiful sites for you!

To install WordPress, your host should have an option to automatically install it. Sometimes this is called “one click” installs or something like that. Follow the prompts to complete the install.

Once the framework is in place you can start to customize it. Before we get too far ahead of ourselves, I would enhance the base version of WordPress with a few Plugins that will give us some extra options.

WordPress Plugins

To add Plugins to WordPress, click on the Plugins menu option from the WordPress menu on the left. Next to the title you will see “Add New”. Click that and you’ll see a list of featured Plugins. Search for, install and activate the following Plugins:

- **WP Statistics**
- **Social Media Feather**
- **Yoast SEO**

There’s thousands of others but these will allow you to see who is visiting your site, what they are looking at and allow visitors to share content that they find interesting. It will also help users find your content by adding meta tags to your pages.

WordPress Themes

It’s also a good idea to add some themes. Themes are how everything looks and how things are laid out. It allows you to artistically change the layout of your site with a click of a button.

To add themes, click on Appearance, then Themes and then Add

New. You can add popular themes or search for features that you'd like to see.

Once you have loaded a number of themes, you can click on any of them and do a "live preview". This will show you the site and how it would look with the new theme. If it's close to what you want your site to look like, you can activate it and start to customize it to make it look like what you want.

Setting up your site

Once you have the framework and theme for your site, you can start creating posts or pages for your site. A page will allow you to setup the page the way you want it and posts will be articles displayed on a page. For basic sites, pages might be the easiest way to create your site.

Go ahead and click on Pages and Add New. Give your page a title and type up some content. You can add images, titles, columns and anything else you'd like to see on your site. When you are ready, click on "Pubish" and then "Publish" again to make the page live.

To setup that page as your homepage or the page that loads every time when someone types up your domain, choose Settings and then Reading from the menu on the left. Here you can tell WordPress that you want a static page for your homepage. Select the page that you just created and save the setting.

Adding Content

You'll want more than one page of information so your homepage doesn't get too crowded. You can create additional pages just like you did your homepage. To create a link, just highlight the word that you want to be the link, select the link icon (looks like a chain link fence piece) and enter the name of your page that you want to link to. Don't forget to save your settings.

You'll want to add pages and posts that are relevant to your topic and fit a need for users looking for information. If you're a physical business or a small business, this might be what you need to drive business to you. However, you might want some passive income from the site and the next section is for you.

Getting Passive Income

If you want to use your site to earn passive income, you'll need to have a site full of content that fills a need. The best way to do that is to find topics that you know a lot about and there aren't many pages out there that have that content. Create multiple articles (pages, posts) and after about 10 months, 100+ articles and you're seeing solid traffic to your site, apply for Google adsense to have ads on the site.

You'll need a plugin that will insert the ads but since people are searching for the content that you have on your site and are going there, the ads will be relevant and you will earn income from the ads.

You can also have an Amazon affiliation which will pay you a small percentage of the item if someone buys it through your site.

Food & Recipes

Choose from among the Food & Recipe topics below. The recipes are our family recipes along with other recipes that look (and taste!) delicious.

Appetizer

- Banana “Sushi” (from Family Fun April 2015)
- Biscuit Crust Pizza
- Broiled Stuffed Pepper Wedges
- Chai Tea Latte (like Starbucks)
- Classic Almond Chocolate Biscotti
- Crab Rangoon Dip
- Cream Cheese with Green Onions and Chives
- Creamy Guacamole
- Creamy Horseradish Dill Dip
- Easy Baked Jalapeno Poppers
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Bread

- Almond Chestnut Biscotti
- Awesome Basic Bread Recipe
- Banana Bread
- Banana Bread-Perfected Recipe for Our Family
- Banana Chocolate Chip & Walnut Muffins
- Banana Pineapple Bread
- Banana Quick Bread (untried)
- Basic Sweet Roll Dough
- Best Baking Powder Biscuits
- Best Ever Blueberry Muffins (Tammy’s Recipes)
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Breakfast

- Apple Brownies (Courtesy Tammy's Recipes)-Revised for Us
- Apple Ladder Loaf
- Apple Spice Syrup
- Best Baking Powder Biscuits
- Best Ever Blueberry Muffins
- Best Ever Blueberry Muffins (Tammy's Recipes)
- Best Waffle Batter
- Blackberry Coffee Cake
- Blueberry Orange Julius
- Blueberry Rhubarb Crisp

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Cookies

- Almond Chestnut Biscotti
- Apple Brownies
- Basic Sugar Cookie Dough

- Chewy Oatmeal Chocolate Chip Granola Bars
- Chocolate Chip Mandelbrot
- Chocolate Chip Mandelbrot
- Chocolate No-Bake Cookies
- Chocolate No-Bake Cookies
- Chocolate Peanut Butter Squares
- Classic Almond Chocolate Biscotti

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Dessert

- “Easier Than Apple Pie” (From McCormick & Co.)
- Apple Brownies
- Apple Brownies (Courtesy Tammy’s Recipes)-Revised for Us
- Apple Ladder Loaf
- Banana Bread
- Banana Bread-Perfected Recipe for Our Family
- Banana Chocolate Chip & Walnut Muffins
- Banana Quick Bread (untried)
- Basic Cheesecake
- Basic Sweet Roll Dough

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Healthy

- Banana “Sushi” (from Family Fun April 2015)
- Cauliflower Carrot Herb Mash (Whole 30)
- Cilantro Chicken with Avocado Salsa
- Cilantro Chicken with Avocado Salsa
- Cooked Pinto Beans
- Creamy Guacamole
- Creamy Spaghetti Squash Casserole
- Double Oat Breakfast Cookies (Untried) Potentially healthy with changes
- Easy Refried Beans
- Fish Tacos
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Lunch

- Biscuit Crust Pizza
- Cha-Cha Chicken Salad
- Cheesy Whole Wheat Vegetable Calzones
- Chicken Caesar Wraps
- Chickpeas, Grape Tomatoes & Feta Cheese Salad
- Creamy Dijon Grilled Cheese Sandwiches
- Dilly Tuna Melts on Pita Bread
- Double Decker Tacos (Taco Bell copycat recipe)
- Easy BBQ Chicken Sandwiches (Oven or Slow Cooker)

- Egg Salad Sandwiches

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Main Entree

- “Carol’s Company Chicken” (Courtesy of Smith’s Country Cheese)-Revised for Us
- Au Gratin Potatoes, Ham & Broccoli Casserole
- Baked Cod with Lemon and Dill
- Baked Teriyaki Salmon
- Baked Teriyaki Salmon
- Balsamic Thyme Chicken
- BBQ Chicken Pizza (Like California Pizza Kitchen)
- BBQ Chicken Pizza (Like California Pizza Kitchen)
- Beef Chop Suey
- Beef Chop Suey

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Muffins

- Banana Chocolate Chip Muffins
 - Banana Quick Bread (untried)
 - Best Ever Blueberry Muffins
 - Blueberry Shredded Wheat Muffins (untested, online source)
 - Blueberry Streusel Muffins
 - Cranberry Apple Muffins
 - Cranberry Orange Muffins
 - Cream-Filled Pumpkin Cupcakes
 - Lemon Poppy Seed Muffins
 - Lemon Poppy Seed Muffins
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Salads

- Amish Potato Salad from Cook's Country
 - Apple Harvest Chicken Salad (like Red Robin)
 - Apple Harvest Chicken Salad (like Red Robin)
 - Apple Harvest Chicken Salad (like Red Robin)
 - Caesar Fish Salad
 - Cauliflower and Broccoli Salad
 - Cha-Cha Chicken Salad
 - Chickpeas, Grape Tomatoes & Feta Cheese Salad
 - Cobb Salad and Dressing
 - Cobb Salad and Dressing
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Sauces/Dips

- “Carol’s Company Chicken” (Courtesy of Smith’s Country Cheese)-Revised for Us
- “Easier Than Apple Pie” (From McCormick & Co.)
- Alder Plank Grilled Potatoes
- Alicia’s Negative Calorie Soup Recipe
- Almond Chestnut Biscotti
- Almond Joy Hot Chocolate
- Amish Potato Salad from Cook’s Country
- Apple Brownies
- Apple Brownies (Courtesy Tammy’s Recipes)-Revised for Us
- Apple Harvest Chicken Salad (like Red Robin)
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Slow Cooker Main Entree

- Crockpot Pizza
- Easy BBQ Chicken Sandwiches (Oven or Slow Cooker)
- Hearty Beef and Lentil Chili
- Hearty Beef Stew (modified Martha Stewart recipe)
- Honey Garlic Chicken (direct from Stephanie at A Year of Slow Cooker Meals) Untested
- Slow-Cooked Herbed Beef and Potatoes
- Slow-Cooked Pepper Steak

- Sweet and Sour Meatballs

Soups/Stews

- Alicia's Negative Calorie Soup Recipe
- Beef and Barley Soup
- Broccoli & Cheddar Cheese Soup
- Broccoli-Potato Soup w/ Greens
- Chicken Barley Soup
- Chili
- Cream of Asparagus Soup
- Cream of Asparagus Soup (Courtesy of Mapleline Farm)
- Crusty Home-Style Bread Bowls
- Easy Lentil Soup
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Starchy Side Dish

- Alder Plank Grilled Potatoes
- Best Baking Powder Biscuits
- Butter & Herbed Gnocchi
- Creamy Mac N Cheese
- Creamy Macaroni and Cheese
- Easy Grilled Salmon with Lemon
- Grilled Scalloped Potatoes
- Mom's Potato Salad
- Potato Cake
- Potato Gratin with Horseradish

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Uses Maple Syrup

- Apple Brownies (Courtesy Tammy's Recipes)-Revised for Us
 - Balsamic Maple Brussels Sprouts and Cauliflower
 - Cranberry Oatmeal Blender Pancakes
 - Fasting Bread, Black Beans & Rice, Ash Wednesday
 - Glazed Winter Squash
 - Granola (adapted for our family from Tammy's Recipes)
 - Homemade Belgian Waffles
 - Korean Teriyaki Chicken w/ Maple Syrup
 - Maple & Walnut Pie
 - Maple Glazed Walnuts
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Snacks

- Almond Joy Hot Chocolate
- Apple Brownies
- Apple Ladder Loaf
- Banana Pineapple Bread
- Blueberry Cheesecake Bars
- Blueberry Orange Julius
- Broiled Stuffed Pepper Wedges
- Butter Tarts
- Caramel Apple Pie

- Caramel Pecan Cheesecake

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Click Here for a listing of All Recipes

Note: Most of the recipes are from our family archive and other sources but a few of the recipes are from a former site called Tammy's Recipes which was at TammysRecipes.com. The site is no longer available but she had the best tasting recipes so I wanted to include them here for people that might be looking for them.

How to Homeschool

Use the guides below to help with homeschooling:

- Homeschooling for the 0-5 year old

Simple Budgeting

Creating a Budgeting | Household Expenses | Debt Payments | Travel Budgeting

As a single income family, I'm often asked how we make ends meet. It must surprise people that we can get by on a single income but it's not that difficult with a few tips and tricks which I hope to share with you in this guide. I know that there are lots of books on this subject but many are written by someone who really doesn't have to live month-to-month. I can offer real-world experience and examples and you'll find many in this guide.

I'll cover a number of different areas like how to potentially increase your take home pay without asking for a raise, how to put aside some money without even realizing it and how to cut your bills and increase your quality of life at the same time. We've done a good job of mitigating our expenses so our monthly non-debt related expenses are under \$700 a month. If you add in a mortgage and care payment, our total expenses are just over \$2000 a month. This gives us a nice cushion to work with and a way to be able to pay for things when they pop-up (and they always do!).

Lots of times we go through life and just accept how we do things until someone suggests a different way and I'm hoping that my approach will be simpler and allow you to have more money left over in your pocket each month and help you plan so when an unexpected or one of those periodic bills comes along, you don't have to figure out a way to pay that and your regular bills at the same time. These are just suggestions and examples and you're welcome to take what you want and ignore the rest.

There are two sides to having a balanced budget – income and expenses. I'll cover both sides as we walk from your paycheck

through your monthly expenses.

One word of caution. I am not a financial expert and I am only sharing real world experience so you should consult with friends or other people that you deem to be experts in a field if something doesn't seem right to you. What works for me might not work for you but the general advice is sound and I hope you benefit from some of the ideas contained in this book.

Creating a Budgeting | Household Expenses | Debt Payments | Travel Budgeting

Unlimited* Mobile or Home Internet for \$40/mo

Are you some who is tired of paying hundreds of dollars a month just for basic Internet service? Some cable companies charge \$70, \$80, \$90 or more a month. They then make ridiculous claims of high speed service as if you need it. I'm here to show you how you can get unlimited* mobile or home Internet for \$40/mo.

What unlimited really means

I have to qualify unlimited* with an asterisk because every company, even cable companies put limits on your Internet access. They limit how much data you can transfer and I didn't want someone to think that I was saying something that didn't exist. The limiting factor is that after 70GB's you *MIGHT* have your speed slowed down if a lot of people are using the tower that you connect to. However, that happens even with cable Internet and most cell phone plans regardless of how

“unlimited” they claim to be.

Also, the speed seems to be capped at 5MB/s. This is plenty fast enough for general Web browsing, game play and streaming 1080P HD video to your TV. I know the cable companies make it sound like you need “Gigabit” Internet just to watch TV and browse the Web but you really don’t. For 95% of the population this would be more than enough.

One other caveat. This is going to involve tweaking settings on a phone and in a wireless router. If you are not comfortable doing that, this guide might not be best for you. For folks like that, you might want to consider a Verizon unlimited* plan that is one stop package. It’s is \$75 a month though once you consider taxes and fees.

Other thoughts...

This setup uses Verizon’s network without charging Verizon’s rates and would be great for home users as well as full-time RVer’s or those RVers just going away for a weekend in their RV and needing to stay connected to the Internet.

I also want to mention that I am not an affiliate nor representative of any of the companies mentioned so I do not get a kickback. I’m just here to help folks as I have for 25 years.

Still Interested?

If you’re still interested, click below and I’ll walk you through what devices you’ll need and how to configure them for your setup and have unlimited* mobile or home Internet for \$40/mo

[Click Here for Instructions on how to configure your unlimited mobile or home Internet for \\$40/mo](#)

Office Talk Dictionary

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Introduction

If you walked off the street and into an office for the first time you'd probably be utterly confused by some of the language that you would hear. Not only is it more formal than casual conversation and contains business specific jargon, but it contains words and phrases that you would hear nowhere else besides an office.

Consider the following conversation that could take place in any home:

Husband:

I think we need a new TV.

Wife: I don't think we can afford one.

Husband: I think if we eat out a few less times we could.

Wife: OK, that's makes sense.

Now let's convert that to an office conversation:

Employee #1: I've written up a proposal based on the need for a new digital content display.

Employee #2: I don't know that we can support that in the current fiscal year.

Employee #1: My analysis shows that we would have the ROI but I'm not sure about the resources to implement the project. I'll work through channels to see if we can actualize on this.

Employee #2: Are you sure you have the bandwidth to make this happen?

Employee #1: Sure, I just hope there aren't any red flags that turn out to be show stoppers.

This talk can be confusing to anyone not in an office on a daily basis and so this dictionary of office talk or office speak was created for people who are new to the office environment. It contains over 500 words and phrases that you will hear in an office setting and almost never hear outside of the office with that meaning.

A word of caution – many, if not all, of these words are disliked when they are used too often. Some are just annoying in their own right. Your best bet is to just use them sparingly. You can spread them out occasionally and you'll sound like an up and coming business professional. Use them too often and you'll start to sound like someone who doesn't know what they are doing and people will start questioning everything that you do.

My suggestion is to use this guide to understand what it is that others are trying to convey to you. After a while you'll start to spot the folks that just like to scatter their speak with buzzwords just for the sake of doing do and those that know what they are doing.

Here are my top 10 tips for using this dictionary

1. Start small – Try a word out. If it feels right, go with it. If it feels awkward, try again.
2. Use them sparingly – Don't use too many at once .
3. Make sure you know the context! – Some words or phrases need to be used in context. Look at the example sentences to understand the context a little better.
4. Don't go up against an expert – If someone is a professional buzzword user, it's best to not try and out "business talk" them. They already know that they are superior. You can't win.
5. Know your industry – Some of these words are used in Information Technology shops. Others in Financial shops. Try to keep terms relevant.
6. Be a listener – Listen to how people are talking. You might be the quiet one at first but you're taking it all in.
7. Know your position – If you're talking to someone who is above you, try and use positive actional words (like that's even a word!)
8. Be yourself – Like I said in tip 1, don't try to use or say words that don't reflect you.
9. Be Flexible – This dictionary is a snap shot in time. Some new words may come into parlance and some may go out of style. Using a cutting edge word (see how I did that?) can reveal to someone if you are on the bleeding edge or old fashioned.
10. Don't carry this around – You'll automatically looks like someone who doesn't know what they are doing!

Office speak or jargon is a relatively new phenomenon but it's become the way people talk in professional settings. You won't hear it outside of a business setting. While there have always been words that are coined to suit the technology and times that it

comes be, it
wasn't until the 80s that things started to shift. Personnel
departments became "Human Resources"
and terms started shifting reflecting the increased use of
computers. E.g. Bandwidth.

By the 90s the phenomenon became so popular
that words were entering popular vernacular and cartoons like
Dilbert© were
making fun of it. Despite attempts to
slow the tide, the speak became the norm and it is with us
whether we like it
or not.

This dictionary attempts to chronicle the most popular words
in Office Speak but does not include every word.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

How to book cheap hotel rooms

Hotels are going to be a mainstay of your travels. There are
a lot of different puzzle pieces and everyone is different
about what they want in a hotel and hopefully my tips can help
you get the best deal on a hotel. Hotels will charge the
highest rates Friday and Saturday night so expect to pay more
on these nights. Also expect to pay more in peak tourist
times. It's all a matter of supply and demand – if a lot of
people are travelling to a location, there will be fewer rooms
so the rooms that are available will be more expensive.

A few words about hotels

Hotels are rated in stars, typically 1 to 5. A one star hotel

is your entry level amenities and a 5 star hotel will have the most amenities along with services not found elsewhere. I typically try to look for 3 or 4 star properties but there are many 1 star and 2 star places that are perfectly fine but you just have to know how to find them and we'll go over that. 5 star properties are very special places that most of us will only stay at once or twice in our lifetimes. I suspect if you're reading a book on saving money while travelling that 5 star hotels are not your usual lodging choice but it's OK if they are or are not.

Today we have lots of tools to judge a hotel such as online reviews. The problem is that most places know this and they try and skew the reviews by paying people to write great reviews of their properties and you need to know how to spot these. I do read reviews of target hotels so I can make sure that I'm spending my money wisely and I mostly look at the negative reviews. I start there because of most of the issues that people report are petty or out of the hotels control and all the other reviews are mostly OK, I know that the property is OK. You want a place that has a healthy mix of reviews. If they are all glowing reviews, take caution.

When checking into a hotel, they will typically ask for an ID and a credit card. I like to ask the clerk how much they need to pre-authorize on the credit card because it will put a hold

on those funds. Some places put a very large hold so it's a good idea to ask. Most clerks are very accommodating. If the amount is very large and I've already pre-paid for the room, I'll always ask for a lower rate or ask that it be removed upon check out.

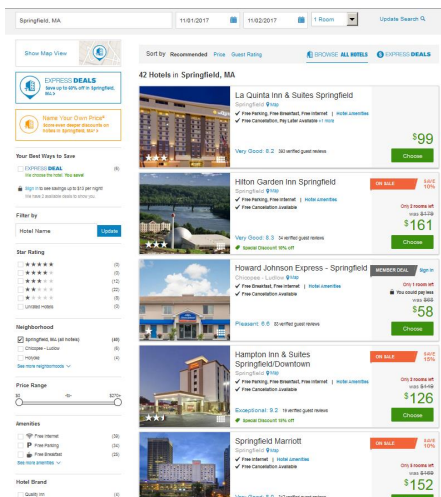
So, how do you book cheap hotel rooms?

Now I'm going to go through the tools that I use to find and book hotels at a discount. I typically save about 10-50% off the advertised rate but that savings does come at cost. First, I typically don't choose the exact hotel that I'll be staying at. Second, if I pre-pay for the room, sometimes I lose the ability to choose what bed types I have. However, if I book things far enough in advance, it's nice to know that my hotels are already paid for and it's one less expense that I need to worry about while on the actual trip.

Priceline

My main booking tool for hotels is Priceline. Priceline allows me to look at hotel prices from a couple of different perspectives. First, it lets me see the hotels regular rate. This lets me see the names of the hotels, their ratings along with their rates. This allows me to see how a 3 star hotel lines up with another 3 star hotel. Second, it allows me to see "Express Deals" which are hotels in a particular area at a certain star rating for a set price. These are typically 10-40% less than the regular rates displayed. Finally, it allows me to make a bid or set my own price which can be up to 50% off the regular rate.

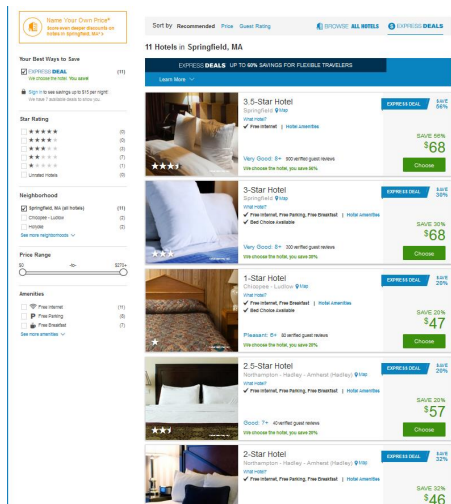
Priceline Express Deals



I typically start by looking at the regular rates, then the Express Deals. The Express Deal is going to tell me what area and what star rating the hotel is. It will also tell me approximately how many reviews the hotel has and what that rating is. You typically want a 7+ rating but 8 or 9 is better. This Express Deal is going to tell you what the lowest price that is available to you without bidding.

The Express Deal is not going to tell you what the name of the hotel is, but you can usually make an educated guess by going back to the regular rates and displaying only hotels that are in the area that the deal is in along with hotels that are at the same star rating. Then looking at those results, look for one that has a similar review rating. So if it tells you that you can get a 3 star hotel which has rating of 8+, look only for hotels that 3 star properties and have 8+ review ratings with a similar review count. Further, the Express Deal will tell you what percentage off the regular rate the deal is so you can guess from there. Using all of those criteria, you usually can make an educated guess and figure which hotel or narrow it down to one or two.

Bidding for Hotel Rooms



If the Express Deal meets all of your criteria, you can pay for it right then and there. If you have time though, you can also make a bid a little lower than that and see if you can get the hotel for the lower rate. You have nothing to lose because you know you can always get the hotel at the Express Deal price.

We're going to do the same process that I suggested for bidding on a rental car. So once you know your lowest possible nightly rate, we can usually get up to 40% off of that rate if things align right but it will probably be less than that. Priceline allows you to bid once every 24 hours so that's what we will do. I like to increase my bid about 5-10% every day, so you'll need at least 4 days before you need a hotel to allow for maximum savings. I like to start about a month out which will give me the best regular rates and enough time to put in daily bids. However, if you need a room for that night, you can always bid about 5-10% less than the Express Deal to see if you can save a little more off that deal.

Making your bid

If the regular rate was \$140/day, we'll start by bidding \$84/day. That's 40% lower than \$140/day and I got that number by multiplying $\$140 \times 0.60$. If I wanted to get 30% less I would multiply \$140 by 0.70 and if I wanted 20% I would multiply it by 0.80. I'm basically taking 100 and subtracting whatever percentage I want off.

So on day 1 I'll bid \$84 and if I'm denied, I will wait 24 hours and then bid another 5% more or $\$140 \times 0.65$. I'll keep going up 5% every day knowing that I can always get it at the daily rate if needed. Just remember to wait 24 hours between bids and check the daily rate every day. They may initially tell you that there is a small chance of it being accepted and I've even seen counter bids that are higher than the daily rate on an Express Bid! So ignore those and just keep trying.

Also, if you are bidding in a place that has multiple "zones" or areas, and you are bidding for a three/four star hotel in one zone and know that there are no three/four star hotels in another zone, go ahead and add that that zone and you can do a second bid right then and there. It's safe because you know there are no three/four star hotels in that zone and you are only looking for three/four star hotels. The way you can tell is to check the box for each zone before you bid and it will tell you what the maximum hotel star rating is available in that zone. Once you start bidding, you won't be able to tell.

Keep in mind that things can change day to day so the Express Deal might be higher or lower each day so you take a look at that to give you extra guidance on what you should bid or if you should just take the Express Deal.

Final thoughts on booking cheap hotel rooms

One word of caution about Priceline's Express Deal or Name your Price bookings. They are not for everyone. If you are someone that needs to be in a specific hotel or you have special room needs (handicapped, bed types, etc.)

some properties may not honor those requests or make you pay the difference in

rooms to accommodate them. Also, some

properties will have special fees like valet parking or "Resort" fees that you

have to pay even if you are not using those facilities. Don't get me wrong, I love Priceline and

sometimes not being able to get a room with two beds is an issue and sometimes

it's not. If you're willing to work with

that you can save a lot of money. I just

wanted to make sure you knew about that limitation.

Free SSL Certificate

Do you have a Website? Do you need a free SSL certificate? Search engines penalize Websites that are not secure. To be secure you need an SSL for your Website. You can purchase certificates from several vendors but if you are the least bit handy with working with your Website, this guide will walk you

through the process of getting a free SSL certificate.

Before we begin, I suggest that you read through all of the steps to make sure that you feel comfortable with doing each of them. The entire process will take about 15-30 minutes your first time doing it but it will get easier. The certificate will be good for 90 days so you'll need to do this quarterly to maintain a secure Website.

Getting started

Begin by making sure that you have the following:

- An account for your domain that has telnet or SSH access
- You have downloaded and installed PuTTY
- You have generated a Certificate Signing Request (CSR) for your Website. This needs to match the root URL for your Website. e.g. If the Website always goes to something like `www.LincOn.com`, then your CSR needs to reflect. If it goes to just `LincOn.com`, then it needs to reflect that.

If you have all of these items, [CLICK HERE](#) to go through the process of obtaining a free SSL certificate.

Following these steps you can have a free SSL certificate that is good for the next three months! Free is better than hundreds of dollars!