

# BT Quick Tip

# Crankbait Anatomy

EXPERT: CHRIS PITSILOS

## LINE

Pitsilos said Dr. Steven Holt and Mark Romanack in their book *Precision Casting* reveal how casting distance, line size, rod position, and rate of retrieve influence depth.

For example, if the same crankbait is thrown 70 feet with the rod positioned 2 feet above the surface and retrieved at a moderate rate, it will dive 1 or 2 feet deeper with 10-pound-test monofilament line (.012 diameter) than with 14-pound-test monofilament line (.014 diameter).

With everything else equal, the smaller the line diameter, the deeper the bait will run.

Therefore, “burning” a crankbait back to the boat doesn’t necessarily increase its running. But it appears that “kneeling and reeling” will result in some additional depth.

## HANGERS

Hook hangers are fastened to the lure’s body by a pin or screw-eye system with the hooks attached by split rings. Changing the size of the hooks can affect the balance and action of the crankbait. Therefore, anglers should exercise caution with modifications and should “test run” lures which feature replacement hooks.

## BODY

The body provides weight for casting and influences the bait’s balance and action. Its inner cavity may house lead, steel, brass or plastic balls for weight, balance, sound or motion.

Motion and balance have priority over body color or other decorative features, according to Chris Pitsilos, project development manager for Pure Fishing.

## PULL POINT

A split ring attaches to the pull point and usually serves as the line tie. The line should always be tied directly to the split ring. If a snap is used, it also should be attached to the split ring.

“When we test baits, we use snaps so we can change lures quickly,” Pitsilos said. “I haven’t noticed any significant change in a bait’s action with the use of snaps in conjunction with split rings. But removing the split ring and tying directly to the pull point can affect the bait.”

Many shallow running lures have pull points located at their noses, such as jerkbaits and suspending baits. This setup limits what these baits can do, which is why some pros recommend loop knot connections with a jerkbait.

The pull points of diving plastic baits are fastened to the lip via screw-eye or pin systems.

“Our baits use the pin system,” Pitsilos said. “It’s more stable than a screw-eye which can loosen and affect the balance and motion of the bait.”

Wooden baits, like those from Poe’s and Bagley, employ wire frame systems. A wire strip is molded into the plastic lip with a rise or loop in the wire for the line tie. Some wire arrangements continue into the face of the bait.

The pull point is a critical crankbait component. It influences depth, balance and motion. Despite modern technology, Pitsilos said its placement is based upon trial and error.

Not all factory baits run true out of the box. If a lure runs too much to the right or left, slight pressure should be applied to the pull point in the opposite direction the errant bait is running.

If the pull point becomes loose, the bait will not run true. The pull point must be set fast again with glue so pressure can be applied to fine-tune the bait.

## BILL

Most crankbait lips are made of plastic and they determine a lure’s movement and running depth. Shallow runners, like the Bomber Balsa Model B, utilize wide-angle lips and produce wide wobbles, though some are configured to act otherwise. Deep runners feature narrow-angle lips, such as Xcalibur’s Fat Free Shad and Berkley’s Frenzy medium diver and tighter wobbles. Mann’s Bait Co. even employs curved, paddle-shaped bills for its deep divers.

Square bills, also called coffin lips, associated with wooden baits deflect better off of objects because of the buoyancy of wood.

Thin plastic bills slice through the water more efficiently.

“Angler-shaved” plastic bills act similarly but risk affecting the balance and action of the baits.

The more the lip extends past the pull point (line tie eye), the deeper the crankbait will run because of additional leverage. The Luhr Jensen Hot Lips Express and Norman DD 22 are two examples.

Deep diving bills are often countersunk at the front. Pitsilos said the recessed cavities provide convenient places for pull points and split rings. They also create more surface area to catch water, thus providing energy to make the baits achieve their running depths.

