

## Angler Profile

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# TIPS 'N' TRICKS FOR BOILIES

# 10

Bait boffin Shaun Harrison reveals ten of his best boilie edges to help you keep one step ahead of the carp.



## What is a boilie?

Let's start by firstly establishing what a boilie is; most of you know, but many readers who are new to the sport may not. Boilie is the universally known word for describing a paste bait that has been boiled to create a tough outer skin. By boiling the paste it makes it much harder for smaller species to eat them, thus increasing the chances of carp eating them. In this piece I have come up with ten tips and tricks that can be used with boilies of all descriptions in order to help give you that much needed edge.



Tip 1

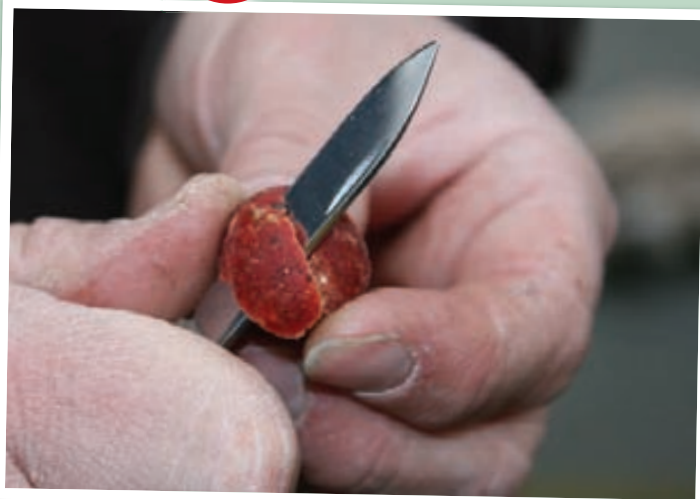
## Try Something Different

Logic tells us that if everyone used 15mm round boilies, then 15mm round boilies would be considered the safest for the carp to eat, quite simply because they come across them so often. Right? Well actually, I have always found the complete opposite to be the case. For many years I felt I had a massive edge because I rarely used boilies larger than 10mm. Most anglers simply couldn't be bothered to roll baits this small, and in many cases the ready-rolled baits many chose to use were simply not available in these sizes. However, in recent years using 10mms has become much less of an edge as many anglers are now using them. The carp in one of my syndicates had seen my small boilies for a number of years, and although my catches were still good, they were starting to drop off a little. Last year, based on this decreasing action, I made the decision to use large 25mm baits on the lake. On the first trip with the 25mm baits I had six good carp! I had done nothing other than presented a bait size the carp weren't used to finding, and it fooled them good and proper.



Tip 2

## Reshape Your Baits



This is a definite favourite of mine, particularly during the colder months. Not only does it give the bait a different visual appeal, it also allows a slightly quicker release of flavour and natural extracts. I sometimes simply nibble the edges off baits; other times I actually peel them with a penknife (the same as you would peel a mini apple). The sky really is the limit on this one. You can make whatever shape you want – it is all down to your imagination and could prove to be the difference between a blank and bagging up.



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### Tip 3 Paste Wraps

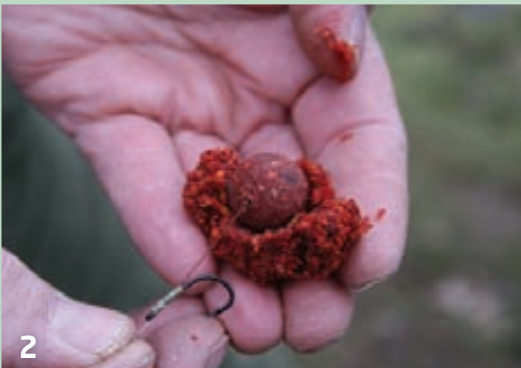
Wrapping hookbaits in paste is another trick I like to use during the colder months. This has been a standard tactic of mine for many years, as I prefer the subtle release of flavour that the paste emits rather than the 'in-your-face' blast, which boilie glugs or dips can give.

**HOW TO...**

#### Wrap hookbaits in paste



1 Wrapping your boilie hookbait in paste can be very effective.



2 Start by placing your hookbait on top of a chunk of paste.



3 Now mould the paste around the whole boilie, like so.



4 Finish by rolling the paste evenly around the bait.

### Tip 4 Mix 'em Up!

Another very successful method, and one I so very rarely see used by others, is baiting up with several different types of boilie at the same time. It amazes me when anglers seem more than happy to mix up particles and pellets yet seem a little paranoid about mixing the boilies. I do this in two ways. Firstly, it is extremely rare for me to bait up with

Why use only one flavour or colour of boilie at a time?



Try mixing up the sizes of your free offerings.



just one size of bait. Usually I like to introduce at least two different sizes of bait and, more commonly, three. This makes it more difficult for the carp to regulate their suck when feeding, which makes it hard for them to detect the hookbait in amongst the freebies. The second thing I often do is to bait up with a mixture of different flavours and colours of boilie at the same time. I have no problems whatsoever with fishing spicy boilies amongst fishy or even fruity ones.

### Tip 5 Try Some Crumb

I always break the odd bait open, or even crumb up a few if the methods and ranges allow. It is a fact that carp are attracted to crumbed-up baits much more quickly than they are to whole boilies because the flavour leak-off is greater, so employing such a tactic can help you to get bites more quickly. When I use stringers, PVA bags, Method mixes or when simply baiting by hand, I always incorporate as many broken boilies as I do whole ones. Keeping things more varied has always helped me put a few more carp on the bank.





## Tip 6 Presoaked Baits

This is possibly one of the biggest edges you can give yourself! Everything the carp eat in their natural world is, basically, wet and soft. Even the snails and mussels are soft inside. The only dry item of food they eat is anglers' bait. It is little wonder that carp will often take a few days to move onto a baited patch and feed confidently. Many put out the theory that it is down to the fact that there was too much flavour in the bait in the first place and the carp have waited for it to dilute away before eating the bait. Now this can be the case with baits that are heavily flavoured, but we also see it happen on baits that aren't heavily flavoured. In my own mind I am satisfied that carp really do prefer to feed on baits that have been totally penetrated by water. Not only does it make the bait appear to be much safer, as it gives the impression it has been sitting there for a long time, but it must also be easier to eat and more comfortable to digest rather than taking in a lot of dry food. Food for thought perhaps?



## Tip 7 Air-dried/rehydrated baits



This is something I first did many years ago as a method of preserving my fresh frozen baits in the days when I had very little confidence in shelf life boilies (how things change). I would leave the baits air-drying for several weeks at a time to ensure all the moisture was removed, thus preventing mould forming. To start with I was happy to simply bait up with these and fish slightly softer baits on the Hair, knowing that the carp were

more than capable of crushing the solid air-dried baits. That was until I went to fish a particularly silty lake with them and realised the baits were taking on a very strong smell of silt – much more so than the softer hookbaits. Quite simply the air-dried baits were absorbing all the smells from the lake bottom and probably leaving very little bait taste for the carp. I had the idea of re-soaking the baits – thus rehydrating them before baiting up. I reasoned that if I filled the baits with liquid before baiting up, they would be less likely to take on board any of the silty smell. For what it is worth, I found that a pint of air-dried baits would soak up around half a pint of water before turning back into conventional-looking boilies. This worked a treat and suddenly I started catching more carp. I moved this on several stages by rehydrating the baits with various other liquids instead of water. But as they say – that's another story for another day.

**“ Quite simply the air-dried baits were absorbing all the smells from the lake bottom and probably leaving very little bait taste for the carp ”**

## Tip 8 Play With Your Presentation

We have looked at ways to alter the look of your bait to make things different, but there are also many ways to make the baiting situation different. A dissolved PVA bag of bait really stands out and looks like a danger zone when it is the only one out there. I see very few anglers cast out free bags. One of my favourite techniques, and one that gives a very different appearance below the surface but is so similar to PVA bagging, is to use a bait dropper as used by many barbel anglers. This gives a very different situation to that offered by spodding. You release tiny mounds of bait on the bottom rather than it spreading as it flutters down through the depths. It may seem a subtle difference but when the carp have seen it all before it can help to trick them.



Ever tried a bait dropper?



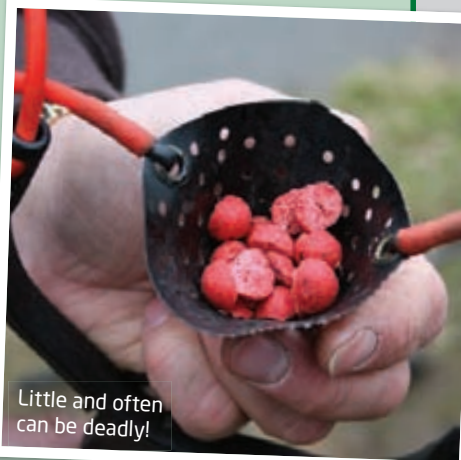
## Tip 9 Spread Out Your Free Bait

It often amuses me when I see anglers trying to bait incredibly tightly – particularly with small baits. All you end up doing is discouraging the carp from moving along the bottom between each mouthful of bait. This, in turn, means they are less likely to hit the lead hard enough to prick themselves into panicking and bolting off giving good indication. I personally like to spread my free offerings about – as long as there isn't a putrid-smelling area of silt in the vicinity. The more you have the carp moving between baits, the more chance there is of them slipping up on your hookbait.



## Tip 10 Carefully Does It

One thing that is pretty sure to scare potential feeding carp is clumsy baiting. Now this can be a tricky one to judge, as carp in some venues definitely get turned on by the sound of bait being introduced, yet in others they will bolt from the area. From my own personal observations I have found that carp spook far less if several boilies are fired from a catapult at the same time, rather than firing one at a time. That noise appears to upset them far less. If the range allows, try baiting with very small baits, even broken baits, and generally build up the baiting once you have the interest of the carp. Don't be in too much of a rush to get your bait out there. There is a lot to be learned from match anglers who employ a little-and-often approach. So few carp anglers use this constant-trickle baiting that it can prove a deadly method when you do! It is little coincidence that the waters where carp are turned on by the sound of bait going in just happen to be waters which are regularly match fished. Does this ring any bells?



Little and often can be deadly!

## Conclusion

I have always been a particularly stubborn type of character, refusing to conform and always trying to go my own way. I think this has stood me in good stead in many carp fishing situations. I really do feel that if you limit yourself to doing the same as everyone else you will only catch the same as everyone else. Make things very different and you may well end up catching much more than is the norm. You may get it wrong at times and find you need to experiment again, but one thing is for sure in my own fishing – it has only ever been when I have approached things differently to others that I have experienced better than average catches.

Keep your mind open at all times, and don't be afraid to experiment. Best fishes,

Shaun. 

A stunning boilie-caught common.



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