

## SLIK - WHEN, WHERE AND WHAT SIZE?

If you haven't heard of Slik elastic, where have you been for the past year or two? Slik has taken the pole fishing world by storm. When an angler of the calibre of Jamie Hughes says he won't use another elastic ever again, you have to stand up and take notice!

I've been using it ever since it came out and still have prototype spools in my tackle room from when I was field-testing it.



I didn't take much persuading to switch, as it has all the properties I want: It's super stretchy, durable, extremely versatile, relatively fine diameter, available in a wide range of sizes and it's got a good lifespan. To begin with it's nice and soft, regardless of the size of fish you hook, but it's got power in reserve when the bigger specimens pull back. The extra stretch is the biggest property some people have to get used to, but it really helps to reduce hook pulls. It's also cheaper than the top hollow elastics out there.

Another key property of Slik is the way it works in cold weather. Hollow elastic is notorious for 'locking up', flattening and doing all sorts of weird things when it gets cold. With no internal core to flatten that's simply not a problem with Slik. It works equally well in summer and winter, so there's no need to swap it.

As I do all sorts of fishing I've got a great appreciation of Slik on lakes, canals and rivers. So many people I coach use it, too, so I regularly get to see how it behaves with different poles and top kits.

Here's my personal guide to Slik, when I use each size, plus a few answers to some commonly asked questions:



**4-6 Slik (Yellow 1.0mm)** – The lightest in the family and, as you'd expect, it's ideal for small fish. I use it through a full 2.6m top two kit for silverfish on winter commercials. It's particularly good for keeping soft-mouthed skimmers on the hook. On natural venues like canals and rivers you can also use it through just the long No1 tip section of a pole. It's nice and soft on the strike but still allows you to swing chunky roach and perch to hand if necessary. Ideal with light 0.06mm to 0.10mm hooklengths and fine-wire size 24 to 18 hooks.

**6-8 Slik (Orange 1.2mm)** – By far my favourite all-round silverfish grade! I use 6-8 on canals, lakes and rivers in equal measure. It's great when you're catching lots of roach as it comes out nicely but you've still got a bit in reserve for swinging in fish. I also love it for quality bream and skimmer fishing, particularly in deeper water. I also use it in the depths of winter for F1s when every single fish you hook is precious. I tend to match it to 0.08mm to 0.10mm hooklengths and size 20 to 16 fine wire hooks.



**8-10 Slik (Green 1.4mm)** – I use 8-10 Slik for a good 80% of my winter commercial fishing. It's ideal for F1s but will also cope with bonus carp. It's also a great choice for spring and summer shallow fishing in conjunction with a Short Kit. It's also nice and forgiving when you are fishing longer lengths of pole. I also like 8-10 for catching small to medium perch on natural waters as it's got a little bit of extra 'grunt' to guide fish away from weed beds and snags. Ideally matched with 0.10mm to 0.12mm bottoms and fine to medium gauge size 20 to 16 hooks.

**10-12 Slik (Red 1.6mm)** – This is my favourite elastic for F1s in spring and summer. I use it in both standard top 2s and Short Kits. It's also good on winter carp when you need to scale down lines and hooks and when big fish are more lethargic. If I'm not sure what I'll hook on a summer commercial it's also a nice choice for a mixed bag. I also use 10-12 Slik when fishing bigger baits like worms for bonus fish on natural venues. I use it with 0.10mm to 0.14mm bottoms and medium gauge size 18 to 14 hooks.





**12-14 Slik (Orange 1.8mm)** – I used orange 12-14 for a lot of my F1 bagging rigs last year; shallow, short and down the edges. It's a good general elastic when both carp and F1s are likely, but it's still not too fierce for bream. I particularly like 12-14 when fishing the long pole shallow for decent carp as a fish can kite off without too much disturbance. It's also a good choice when I'm targeting bonus fish like tench, eels and perch on rivers with big baits. I use it with 0.12mm to 0.16mm bottoms and medium gauge size 18, 16 and 14 hooks.

**14-16 Slik (Yellow 2.0mm)** – My go-to elastic when medium to large carp are the primary target and when a big weight's on the cards. It's a nice choice for the short-pole and I also use 14-16 down the margins with small to medium baits like corn and soft pellet. I mostly use it with an 0.16mm bottom and a medium to heavy size 16 and 14 hook.



**16-18 Slik (Green 2.2mm)** – I absolutely love 16-18 Slik! It's brilliant when bagging up down the edges and on the short pole with big baits such as paste, worms and double corn. I'll even use it on my heavier shallow rigs and mugging rigs for medium to large carp. It's surprisingly soft on the strike, but with bags of power when needed. I match it to an absolute minimum 0.16mm hooklength, but more often 0.18mm or 0.20mm and a strong size 14 or 12 hook.

**18-20 Slik (Red 2.4mm)** – A lot of people seem to be scared of 18-20 Slik, but I regularly have a bagging rig set up with the stuff in the height of summer. I use it down the margins or with big baits like paste fishing. If I'm after zoo creatures it's hard to beat. You must use strong line and a thick gauge hook for a balanced setup. I tend to use a size 12 hook to 0.20mm line the most.





**20-22 Slik (Orange 2.6mm)** – This is scarier stuff that doesn't come out too often! When I'm faced with a snagpit or a hit-and-hold scenario then it's hard to beat. I would never use it in conjunction with a standard pole, as that's asking for trouble. Orange 20-22 Slik is more suited to extra-strong margin poles. It's primarily for very big carp or snaggy swims, but you must match it to very strong line and hooks; 0.20mm and size 12 forged hooks are a minimum.



MATRIX SLIK ELASTIC	ALTERNATIVE ELASTICS			
	HYDRO	HOLLO	BUNGEE	DUAL CORE
4-6 Yellow	Yellow	-	-	3-5
6-8 Orange	Pink	7	Aqua	4-7
8-10 Green	Blue	9	Green	6-9
10-12 Red	White	11	-	8-11
12-14 Orange	Grey	13	Yellow	11-13
14-16 Yellow	Black	15	Pink	14-17
16-18 Green	Purple	17	-	-
18-20 Red	Red	19	Red	18-20
20-22 Orange	Brown	-	-	-

SLIK	COLOUR	DIAMETER	TARGET SPECIES	IDEAL HOOKS	IDEAL HOOKLENGTHS
4-6	Yellow	1.0mm	Light silverfish and skimmers	24 to 18	0.06mm to 0.10mm
6-8	Orange	1.2mm	General silverfish, skimmers, bream, winter F1s	20 to 16	0.07mm to 0.10mm
8-10	Green	1.4mm	Bagging silverfish, bream, F1s, small carp	20 to 16	0.08mm to 0.12mm
10-12	Red	1.6mm	Spring and summer F1s, small carp	18 to 16	0.10mm to 0.14mm
12-14	Orange	1.8mm	Small to medium carp, bagging F1s	18 to 14	0.12mm to 0.16mm
14-16	Yellow	2.0mm	General carp, medium to large fish	16 to 12	0.14mm to 0.18mm
16-18	Green	2.2mm	Medium to large carp, bagging up	16 to 12	0.16mm to 0.20mm
18-20	Red	2.4mm	Large carp, bagging up	14 to 10	0.18mm to 0.22mm
20-22	Orange	2.6mm	Very large carp, fishing near snags	12 to 8	0.20mm to 0.24mm