

FLY CASTING AND PERFECT PRACTICE

Being able to cast well is fundamental to successful and enjoyable fly fishing. Every successful fly cast must conform to the basic mechanical principles that govern casting. A good understanding of these principles will help you to cast better and with less effort. It is worth pointing out that more effort does not translate into better or longer casts. Technique and timing are the keys. I have listed five areas that you should consider during your personal practice.



PRACTICE POINTS OF FLY-CASTING

1. ***Loading the rod.*** The rod will not bend or load until you have line tension against it. Start with your rod tip down (close to the water or grass) and with all slack out of the line. Create positive tension on the line at the beginning of the stroke and throughout the stroke, any decrease in speed, change of direction or movement (or non-movement) of the line hand is a potential for introducing slack into the cast.
2. ***Slow start, accelerate, power snap and abrupt stop.*** Start the fly cast slowly (loading the rod), accelerate, and then near the end of the stroke, apply a "power-snap" and an abrupt stop. The faster the hand and forearm move, the more bend or load the rod develops. Caution, over acceleration can develop a tailing loop. This usually shows up on the final presentation cast when the caster is trying to get a little more distance. Also, remember to pause between the change of directions, e.g. from the *backcast* to the *forward* cast and the *forward* cast to the *backcast*.
3. ***The line, and consequently the fly, will go where the rod tip directs it.*** If your rod tip does not move in a straight path, your line will not move in a straight path. In other words, if your rod tip moves in a bowed path so will your line and consequently the fly. Additionally, and very much related, the final motion of the rod tip, when the rod unloads after your power snap and stop, determines the fly's direction and path. The path of the rod's tip during and after the stop are single most important factors in shaping your casting loop.
4. ***Longer casts require wider and longer casting arch.*** Regarding the casting arch angle, it is around 90 degrees. Many suggest a 10 o'clock to 2 o'clock motion for a horizontal line motion. That is a great starting point. That angle increases for longer casts. The stroke length increases as well. Think of throwing a baseball overhand. A short arm movement results in a short toss of the baseball, to throw the ball further, you must accelerate your hand and arm through a longer distance.
5. ***Wrist movement.*** Wrist movement is a primary factor in loop formation. Most fly casters could tuck the butt of their rod into their shirt sleeve (to reduce wrist movement) and still develop tight loops. Wrist movement, especially on casts of more than 20 feet, is very little. Consider your forearm as an extension of your rod, and for casts longer than 20' wrist movement occurs only near the end of the casting stroke.

Common Fly Fishing Knots

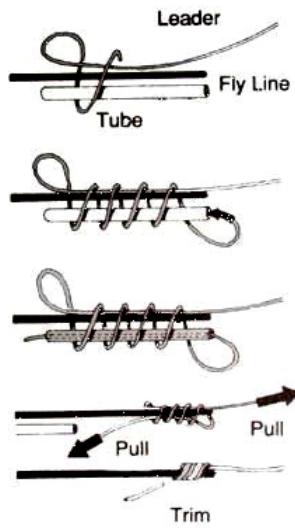
These knots are presented in order, from the center of the fly-reel spool to the hook.

Arbor Knot



Used to attach the backing to the spool of the reel

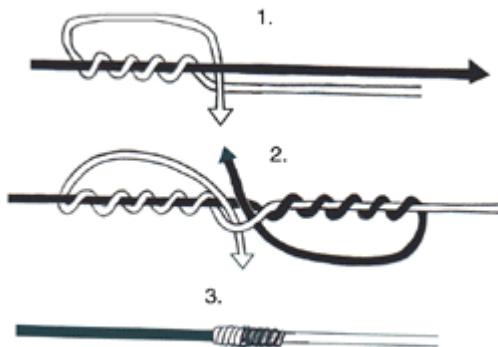
Tube/Nail Knot



Used to attach butt section or backing to the fly line.

Blood Knot (Butt Section to Tapered Leader)

The blood knot is a knot used for attaching two pieces of monofilament together, primarily for the connection between the butt section and the tapered leader when a loop to loop connection is not desired.. This is an extremely strong knot when formed properly and should be tied with monofilament close in diameter. Best use is for monofilament 10 lbs. and up.

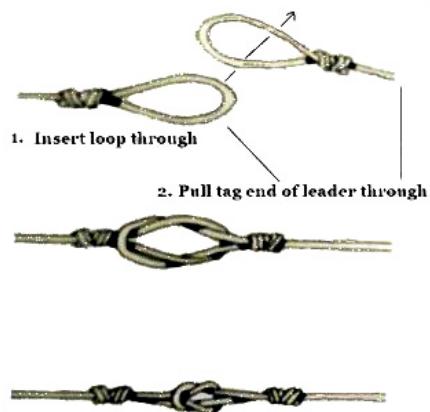


Surgeons Loop



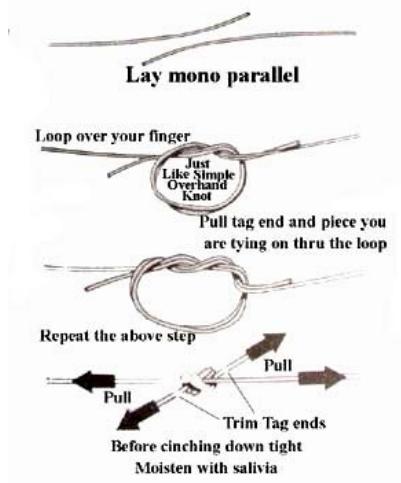
This is the easiest connection of the fly line and leader junction, the use of a leader loop. You can purchase a fly line "leader loop" at any fly shop. Tie this knot in the leader and use the loop to loop connection below.

Loop to loop Connection



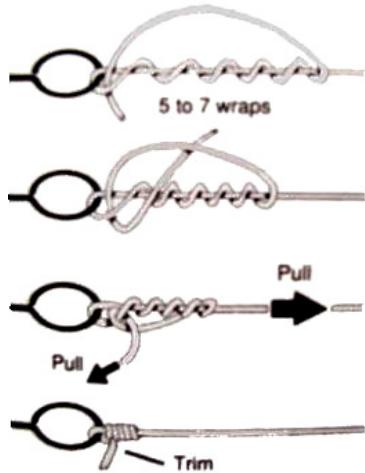
This is a great and common junction for connecting the leader and fly line together.

Surgeons Knot



This knot is used to attach tippet to the leader. It is widely used in freshwater trout fishing applications.

Clinch Knot and Improved Clinch Knot



The improved clinch knot is a common and widely used knot for tying on flies. However, the clinch knot stops at the first picture! Use the clinch knot with fluorocarbon leader material. With practice it will become one of the knots you will tie the most, especially if you lose many flies.

Terms:

Loading the Rod: The weight of the fly line and the motion of both the back and forward cast cause the rod to load or bend. The bend or load enables the rod to store the energy necessary to make the cast when the rod is accelerated to a stop.

Backcast: The backcast is the first part of the cast in which the fly fisher aerializes the fly line by casting it to the rear. The backcast sets up the forward cast.

Forward Cast: The forward cast is the second part of the cast. The forward cast directs the fly toward the objective setting in motion the variables that comprise the presentation.

Casting Arc: The angles and distance the rod passes through from the beginning of the backcast to the end of the forward cast and visa versa. The longer the cast, the greater the angles and longer the arc will be.

Rod Hand: The rod hand is the hand into which the fly fisher entrusts the rod during either the casting sequence or the retrieve. Some fly fishers prefer using one hand to hold the rod during the cast, exchanging it to the other hand when making the retrieve or playing a fish. While it may require conditioning, the preferred method is to use the same hand for rod handling during both functions.

Line Hand: The hand used to handle and manipulate the fly line during the casting sequence and the retrieve. The line hand works in conjunction with, and in proximity to, the rod hand.

Loop: A general term used to describe the "U" shape of the fly line as it unrolls during both the back and forward casts. Soft action rods produce open loops and gentle presentations; fast action rods produce tighter loops and greater distance.

Presentation: Presentation is how the line and fly land on the water. The presentation should be viewed from the fish's perspective, as well as the caster's. Present the fly in an irresistible way and do not startle the fish with the fly or the line.

Roll Cast: The roll casting technique is extremely valuable, not only in areas where a presentation cannot be made using a backcast (because of trees and brush), but also in straitening your line on the water to begin your backcast using the water's surface tension to load the rod.

Shooting the Line: A term used to describe the act of releasing the fly line during the cast enabling the line to be carried out away from the line hand by the power or momentum of the rod.

Tailing Loop: Tailing loops can result when the rod tip follows a concaved path, such as it will do if the caster "accelerates" the rod too quickly. The rod tip dips too much. Since the fly goes where the rod tip goes, the fly is sure to follow the same concave path forming the tailing loop. The evidence of a tailing loop is an unwanted overhand knot somewhere in the forward part of the tippet. Erroneously termed a "wind knot"