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# **101 Fly Fishing Tips for Beginners**

## **Introduction**

Fly fishing is a very popular fishing sport that can be both relaxing and challenging at the same time.

The following tips and tricks are ideal of beginners. When you're just starting out learning to fly fish you'll want all the help and advice that you can get from the experts.

### **Tip #1: Practice your Casting**

The experts say that the one thing that you need to do to develop a good casting technique is to practice as often as you can. This will lead to a proficiency in casting that make all the difference between being a successful fly fisher or a frustrated one.

Try practicing against a wall on the outside of your house. Just imagine that there is a clock hanging on the wall that is at the same level as your shoulder. Place markers, such as black electric tape, at the 11:00 and 1:00 clock positions. Practice casting against these markers for a few minutes each day to improve your accuracy and style.

### **Tip #2: Rods**

There are several things that you need to think about when choosing the right type of rod for you. Every reel and rod has a certain function that you need to be aware of.

One of the first things that you need to consider is comfort. Is the rod that you're using comfortable for you to hold? If you're shorter than about 5'5" you won't want to use a rod that is seven feet. Choose a rod length that is easy for you to hold and cast for a few hours at a time.

Most of the rods on the market today are designed to allow you to feel when a fish bites. The shaft of the rod is called a "blank" and when the rod is first manufactured the blank is made from fiberglass, graphite, or other materials. Each of these blanks has an action that is either: light, medium, medium/heavy, or heavy. The upper portion will also have an action that is either: extra light, light, or regular.

Both ends of the blank are assembled and the final result is a fishing rod, complete with a handle and guide. No matter what type of rod that you're using, the "action" of the rod will refer to the "blank". The action of the rod will have a great deal to do with the type of fishing that you're doing.

### **Tip #3: Holding your Rod Effectively**

It's important that you learn to hold your rod effectively under any fishing conditions. You want to make sure that you maintain good control at all times without gripping too hard. You can adjust the power of your hold when you're in the middle of a cast. This will allow you to

minimize the vibrations of each movement. With just a bit of practice you'll be able to increase the tightness at the same as you learn to relax your grip.

#### **Tip #4: What do to with a Running Fish**

Be prepared if a fish runs toward you. Stand on your toes and at the same time raise your rod up over your head as high as you can. Take the line and put it back over onto your second and third fingers of the hand that is holding the rod. Quickly strip the line to pull up on any slack.

If the fish starts to run away from you make sure that you keep the rod up high and slowly let out the line, letting it slide from your fingers. Be ready to palm the reel of the rod when the slack is entirely gone.

#### **Tip #5: Best Bait Choices**

Following is a list of some best bait choices as recommended by the experts:

- Grubs: Grubs are small lures that are usually used to catch larger fish. Grubs are great for use in highland reservoirs where there is little cover for the fish. The grub is much like a bare jig head that has a soft plastic body to attach to the hook. You'll want to use them most often in clear water conditions.
- Jigs are best used in water that is clear to murky and in water temperatures that are below 60 degrees. The jig is considered to be a "presentation" lure and the ideal way to use them is by making them look as alive as you can. The jig is essentially lead-

- Plastic worms: If you want to catch that trophy fish you'll probably want to use a plastic worm. This is because the plastic worm is one of the most effective lures for catching any type of big fish. Plastic worms have a thin and long profile with a lifelike action that attracts them instantly to bass. You'll have to learn how to use a plastic worm by touch, feel, and practice. The more that you practice that better results you'll achieve. The one thing that you need to keep in mind is that the fish needs to see the worm before it will hit it. Therefore a plastic worm is best used in clear water.
- Lure color: Choose lures that are all black or all white. A mix of black and red also works quite well. There will be the odd time when fluorescent colors, such as bright yellow or green, will work well but you'll need to experiment with this.

#### **Tip #6: Keep your Dry Flies Floating Longer**

One way that you can keep your dry flies floating higher and longer on top of the water is by waterproofing them. Take a can of Scotch-guard, the same stuff that you use to protect your furniture, and spray those flies that you plan on taking fishing with you in the next few days. Let them dry overnight before using them.

The Scotch-guard will put a waterproof protective coating around your flies and prevent them from becoming drenched with water. This will allow them to float higher and longer on the water.

### **Tip #7: Types of Reels**

Reels – There are three main types of reels that you can choose from when it comes to fly fishing: (1) baitcasting reels, (2) spinning reels, and (3) spincast reels. The reel that you choose will depend your own personal preferences.

**Baitcasting reels:** Baitcasting reels have better accuracy and control of the lure than other reels. They are better equipped to handle lines that are ten or more pounds in weight. The one thing to be aware of when using a baitcasting reel is that they often have the tendency to snarl or fight back when the spool starts to spin faster than the line that is being played out. This is particularly true if you are casting into the wind.

To prevent these backlashes, baitcasting reels have a magnetic braking feature but you'll want to count more on the control of the spool tension, which is a knob that is usually located right beside the handles. You'll need to set the spool tension knob for each lure by holding the rod straight and disengaging the spool. Loosen the tension just until the lure begins to drop down and then tighten the spool just a bit.

When you're casting the reel you'll disengage the spool and then hold it tight with your thumb. When you want the lure to move forward you'll simply loosen up on the pressure. After some practice you'll learn to control the speed of the spool so that you have better accuracy.

**Spinning reels:** Spinning reels are reels that have a spool that is stationary. The line is spun onto the spool as a device called a "bail" rotates around it. Spinning reels can be used for any size of line but more experienced fly fishers will use it for lightweight lures with a weight less than ten pounds. Spinning reels tend to perform a little better than baitcasting reels when you're casting into the wind.

One disadvantage of using a spinning reel is that there is the inevitable twisting of the line which will create tangles and knots. When your line becomes twisted the best thing that you can do is replace the line with a new one. One way that you can prevent some of these tangles from occurring is by putting the spool into a glass of water for about 24 hours before you head out to go fishing, giving it a chance to soak.

To cast the spinning reel, hold the handle of the rod with one hand, making sure that the spinning reel is on the bottom side with your middle finger placed in front of the "foot" of the reel. Slowly open up the bail and pull the line behind the first knuckle of your index finger. Release the line by pulling your index finger into a straight position. You can control how far you cast the line by letting the line move along your index finger as close to the spool as possible as the line unwinds. When you want to stop the line you simply push your finger against the lip of the spool.

**Spincast reels:** Spincast reels are also known as "push button" reels. They are closed-face and are very easy to use. They are almost impossible to tangle and can be cast in smooth, long arcs without

twisting. The main portion of the spool is encased in a covering and it remains in one place while a pick-up pin spins around the spool. When buying a spincast reel make sure that you don't buy the most inexpensive one since you want to pay for good quality. Many beginner fly fishers do well with a spincast reel.

To cast the spincast reel all you need to do is depress the push button and hold it down. You'll release the button when you want your lure to move in a forward position. Most spincast reels are able to be used with any weight lure or line size.

#### **Tip #8: Tying Effective Knots**

Very few knots will ever be at 100% of the rated strength for a line. However, if you moisten your knots before you pull them tight they will be much more effective. Other things that you can do to tie a better knot include:

- Tighten them very slowly.
- Keep an eye out for any weak frays.
- Test every knot by making sure to pull it hard.

These techniques will reduce the chance of a knot failure occurring at that moment when you least want it.

#### **Tip #9: Protecting your Fly Line**

There are many things that can damage your fly line that includes: casting the line without a leader, stepping on the line, or pinching the



line between the frame of the reel and the spool. Take steps to avoid these hazards. There are also many liquid items that can damage your fly line. Make sure that you keep the line away from insect repellent, sun block, fuel, and some line cleaners.

### **Tip #10: Cleaning your Fly Line**

Keeping your fly line is essential to the performance of your fly fishing. Dirt will get on your line from algae that are found in the waters where you fish. Over time the dirt will get on your line and this can cause your line to become stripped down. You'll know when your fly line is too dirty because it won't float as well nor will it slide smoothly through the rod guides.

Cleaning your fly line is easy: use a cleaning pad that you can buy at most angling stores. Or you can also wash the fly line with a few drops of a mild soap (avoid detergents). Just rub the line gently with a damp cloth.

### **Tip #11: Storing your Fly Line**

Your reel is the safest place for you to have your line. The only thing that you need to make sure of is that your line isn't exposed to chemicals, high heats, direct sunlight, or solvents. There will be times when your line has been stored for a while and it will coil. If this occurs you need to stretch it slowly; it will soon start to give and you can use it safely once again.

### **Tip #12: Types of Fly Lines**

Most of the lines that you'll use for fly fishing will be made of nylon monofilament. However, other lines are becoming just as popular such as lines that are (1) braided, (2) co-filament, or (3) fused. No matter what type of line you buy make sure that it's a "premium" line. Premium lines are more durable and even than cheaper lines. You'll want to match the fishing line that you buy to the following criteria and conditions:

- **Strength:** Strength is measured in the pounds of force that is needed to break the line. You'll find that most lines will break at higher weights than they are sold at.
- **Resistance to Abrasion:** When you're fishing in areas where there are a lot of brush or rocks you'll want to use a line that won't break easily when it is constantly rubbed.
- **Line Diameter:** The diameter of the line will affect the way the line is cast as well as how deep your lure will run. Diameter also has an affect on the visibility and stretching of the line. The thinner a line is the harder it will be for the bass to see it. Thinner lines will also give some bait, such as grubs, a more realistic flowing action. The one good thing about lines with a thicker diameter is that they are better able to withstand abrasion.
- **Stretch Lines:** Stretch lines won't break as easily when they are being pulled by a fish. They are beneficial in letting you detect strikes as well as help you in setting hooks.
- **Line Stiffness:** The stiffness of the line is related to its stretch. The stiffer the line is the harder it will be to cast. The advantage to having a stiff line is that is more sensitive than flexible lines.

- **Line visibility:** In clear water it's important that your line is as invisible to the fish as possible. However, you'll want to have a line that is highly visible when your fishing lures are on a subtle strike, such as worms, grubs, and jigs. This is so that you can easily detect any movement on the line that may indicate a fish is biting.

### **Tip #13: Pinching your Hooks**

Take some time to pinch the barbs on the ends of your hooks. This will prevent fewer scratches. And keep in mind that a hook that is barbless is easier to remove than one that is barbed.

### **Tip #14: Lures – by the Experts**

Following is a list of lures that are often recommended by the expert fly fishers that you one day want to match in skill:

- **Spinnerbaits:** Spinnerbaits are one of the most versatile of all fly fishing baits. This is because they can be used almost any time of the year in any type of weather or water condition. You'll also be able to use spinnerbaits in any type of cover.
- **Crankbaits:** Many professional fly fishers use crankbaits because they behave much as "bird dogs" when it comes to hunting for fish. This type of lure is great in deeper waters since it can dive deep. You'll want to use a rod that is between 6.5 and 7 feet if you want to use crankbait.
- **Tube jigs:** Tube jigs are great when you're fishing in clear water where the fish are inactive. These jigs have been designed to be

- **Vibrating lures:** Vibrating lures are made of metal or plastic. They produce a tight vibration when they are pulled back in. This type of bait will sink fast and are best used in deeper waters.
- **Jigging spoons:** Jigging lures are called “structure lures” and are used most often by experienced fly fishers. These lures work very well in deep water when you are fishing for suspended bass. The jigging spoon is ideal when you’re dealing with fish that are inactive due to water temperatures that are too hot or too cold.

#### **Tip #15: Using Dry Flies in the Afternoon**

If you’re fly fishing in the afternoon you’ll want to use dry flies. The main reason for this is that the sun will be warming the water and the air. And this means that you’ll see hatches of little black flies. This is a great time to do some dry fly fishing since you can present a fly that is similar to an adult insect.

#### **Tip #16: Keeping Track of Patterns**

**Keeping track of patterns:** One thing that you can do if you find that your favorite fishing area is giving you trouble is to keep a log each time that you fish. Make note of the problems that you’re having as well as:

- weather conditions
- water temperature
- current
- the size of the fish that you do catch
- the time of day that you fish

After a period of time you may notice a pattern occurring, such as the lack of bites on days when the water temperature is too hot or too cold. This will be your indicating factor of what changes you have to make to break your unlucky streak, such as changing the time of day that you fish or changing the side of the lake that you fish from.

### **Tip #17: Basic Tools for Tying Flies**

There are some basic tools that you'll need for tying flies. This includes:

- A bobbin to hold the thread while you're tying.
- A vice to hold the hook while you're tying.
- Hackle pliers to keep a firm hold on delicate and small feathers.
- Needle point scissors for cutting and trimming materials.
- A bodkin and half-hitch tool for help tying the half-hitch knot.
- A vise material clip for holding all the materials firmly in one place.
- Head cement that is used for both gluing and to add a finish.

### **Tip #18: Tying your Fly to the Tippet**

You may find that there are times when you have difficulty tying the fly to the tippet. This can happen whether you're in the water or up on the bank. A good trick to help you is to hold the fly up against a background that is single colored, such as the sky. The background will be able to help you see the fly easier and tie it to the tippet.

### **Tip #19: Using a Sub-Surface Fly**

There is a trick to using a sub-surface fly so that it catches more fish: deodorize the fly before you use it by rubbing it with mud or underwater plants. This will mask the chemical and human smells that are attached to it and that may distract the fish from striking.

### **Tip #20: Rods and Guides**

Another aspect of your rod that you should get to know is the guide, or the eyes. The guide is what transmits the signals of the line to the rod so that it's easy for you to feel the fish on the other end. There are several different types of guides available today.

Some guides have rings that are made of ceramic placed inside the outer metal frame. Still other guides have inner rings that are made from silicone carbide, aluminum oxide, chrome plating, or gold aluminum oxide. The rings of the rod are what aid in the reduction of friction that can cause your line to fray.

The length of the rod handle is important as well as what the rod is made of, such as foam or cork. You'll want to choose a rod handle that is still easy for you to hold if your hands become wet.

You won't want to use a light action rod to catch fish since you'll need a strong blank to be able to pull the fish out of its cover. A medium or medium/heavy rod will give you the strength that you need to pull out the fish while at the same time giving you the flexibility to use topwater baits. You might want to use a trigger handle if you're using a long-handled rod so that you have the manageability that you need.

Before you head out fishing make sure that you check the guides on your rod. You want to make certain that none of the guides are bent. Bent guides prevent the line from moving through them correctly. Clean out the inside of the circle of the guides before you start fishing to ensure that your line doesn't fray and break when you're reeling in the fish.

One last thing that you should focus on when you're buying a new rod is how the guides are attached to the rod. The wrapping must be sufficient so that the guides don't become loose and need to be replaced.

### **Tip #21: More Tips from the Experts**

The more tips and tricks that you have the better luck you'll bring to your fly fishing. As a beginner you'll want to try a variety of techniques until you find what works best for you and the water that you're fishing in.

- **Thick weeds:** When you're fishing in thick weeds the best lure that you can use is a spinnerbait or a crankbait that is shallow running. Make sure that you cast parallel to the edge of the weed flow if you can. Remember look in the inside edges of weedbeds.
- **Timber pileups:** When you're fishing in deep timber your main focus will be to not get your line tangled up. Use a plastic worm or a jigging spoon for the best results.
- **Fishing from fallen trees:** If you want to fish from a fallen tree make sure that you pull back your bait so that it runs in parallel to

- Working the area: Make sure that you work the area that you're fishing as thoroughly as possible. Try a few different lures if the first one doesn't bring you success. You might want to think about returning again at a different time of day.
- Keep a close eye on your lines: Make sure that you keep a constant eye on your lines particularly when you're retrieving them. Remember that when the weather is cold the bass can strike and completely miss the lures.
- Avoid excess noise: The more noise that you make the less the bass will bite.
- Night fishing: Night fishing is a great option in the summer months when the water temperature during the day is just too hot for bass to swim high in the water.
- Creeks and coves: During the fall months make sure that you check out creeks and coves since this is where baitfish tend to hover...and this means the bass won't be far behind.
- Using surface plugs: When you're using surface plugs try to pay as much attention as you can to the angle of your rod. You should be holding the rod low when you have the lure close to you and higher when the lure is further away.

### **Tips #22: Leaders**

When it comes to leaders you have two choices: you can buy them or you can tie your own. If you're going to tie your own you'll want to get an instruction book that shows you how to do this. If you're going to



buy them you'll want to look for a leader that is suitable to the area where you are going to be fishing. For example, if you're going to fishing for bream (salt water fly fishing) you'll want to use a light leader that weighs about 2lbs.

### **Tip #23: Knotless Tapered Leads**

For freshwater fishing it's best to use a knotless tapered lead instead of a knotted tapered lead. This is because you will experience less tangles when you're casting and the leader won't get caught on debris that can be found in the water or on any free standing structures.

### **Tip #24: Learn to Read the Water**

Fish will behave differently depending on certain water conditions that change depending on what season it is. This includes the temperature of the water, what the weather is like, and the volume of the water. If you want to become a successful fly fisher you'll have to learn how to read the waters where you're fishing.

Some of the things that you'll discover as you learn to read the water are (1) during non-feeding periods, fish can still be encouraged to strike if they are in a deep pocket of water, and (2) when fish are feeding they are usually found in the shoreline of runs of pools and in moderate water pockets.

Water chemistry plays a big part in the health of fish, the location where they are found, and how successful you are at catching the big one. One of the most important aspects of water chemistry is pH. In scientific

terms pH can be defined as: the negative log molar concentration of hydronium ions in the water. In simple language pH is the measure of the acidity or basicity in the water.

pH is typically measured on a scale of 1 to 14. A pH of 7 is considered to be neutral. pH totals of less than 7 are acidic while a measure of over 7 is considered basic.

Most fish are able to tolerate a wide range of pH in the waters where they live. This is because they have the ability to regulate their internal levels of pH. This is accomplished by the fish constantly adjusting the ratio of bases and acids within their systems. They make these adjustments by expelling any excess acids in the urine and also by controlling their breathing.

The faster a fish breathes the faster carbon dioxide leaves the blood, thus raising the level of pH in the blood. However, most fish are eventually tired out by this constant regulating of their system. If the fish lives for too long in an environment that is too acidic or too basic it will become unable to manage its own system chemistry. When this happens the fish will stop feeding and eventually die.

### **Tip #25: Keep an Eye Out for Structures**

When you're looking around for a place to cast your line it's important that you look around for structures both on and in the water. This can be a large boulder or stone, a log that is submerged, or the tail end of a pool. These are great places to find fish since they don't want to work very

hard when it comes to looking for a meal. Fish will congregate near structures, where they will set up feeding stations.

**Tip #26: Fishing in the Early Season – Night Fishing**

Once the ice melts off of rivers and inland lakes you can bet that it's time for fly fishing. Look for dark colored bays where the temperature of the water will rise faster than other areas of the lake. You'll find plenty of bass and panfish in these waters. Early season fishing is a great way that you can start your fly fishing as early in the year as possible.

Night fishing for fish is usually practiced in those areas of the United States where the weather is too hot and uncomfortable to fish during the day. This includes areas such as reservoirs in the southeast and west. When the weather is hot, many fish tend to go to deeper depths during the day and they can only be caught by night fishing. During the night, when it's colder, fish will move up to the shallower waters where they will feed on crawfish.

Night fishing can be a lot of fun but you need take special precautions, such as being aware of the area that you're fishing in and remembering to wear your life jacket.

You'll know when it's time to start night fishing when the larger fish stop biting during the hot day. Night fishing is usually practiced when there are water temperatures that are in the middle 60's and hotter.

When it comes to night fishing there are four phases of the moon that you'll want to be aware of. The best times to fish at night will occur once a month: three days before a full or new moon and three days after a full or new moon. This includes the day of the full or new moon.

**Tip #27: Standard Casting**

Standard casting is very simple: the fly line and the rod are both lifted in a smooth motion. You'll use an up and backwards direction which you stop when the rod is just at the vertical point. When the line starts to straighten out or fall downwards the cast will begin increasing in speed at the same time that your wrist snaps the entire rod back from the 11:00 and 1:00 clock positions. The line will then fly forward to where you want it to land.

When you're ready to cast, make it a long cast that moves straight out from where you are standing. Strive for about a ten foot cast. When the bait hits the bottom wait for a minute or two before you start to drag it slowly up along the slope. When you're ready to cast again throw your line out a bit to the right. Then cast to the left the next time, so that you're fanning the area in front of you.

You also have the option of wading knee deep out into the water to cast your line so that it runs parallel to the bank. This allows you to fish the entire area of the bank so that you have the most success.

Wear clothes that are going to let you blend into the bank, such as camouflage. And walk softly and carefully as you walk along the bank

to avoid spooking the bass or other fish in the area. Keep all your movement slow and steady at all times.

Fishing for fish from the bank can really challenge you as a fly fisher. Once you get those first few bites you'll be convinced that bank fishing is just as good as fishing in the stream or lake.

### **Tip #28: Fishing in Stormy Weather**

Fly fishing in stormy weather can come with its own particular challenges. A storm occurs when winds come up suddenly, without warning, and without any indication of how long the storm will last. One big concern during a storm is thunderstorms.

If you're out fishing and a storm occurs there are some precautions that you'll want to take. You'll want to head for higher ground immediately if you're near the water and there are thunderstorms in the area. If there is no sign of thunder or lightning you may choose to ride out the storm and continue fishing. In this case you'll have to adjust your fishing technique to reflect the change in weather.

When you're fishing along the shore and a storm comes up you can take advantage of the wind. You'll often be able to catch fish at very shallow levels in windy weather conditions however these will probably be small bass. You'll find bigger fish in at deeper depths during storms but these sized fish will be harder to catch and you should focus your efforts on the smaller ones.

### **Tip #29: Etiquette and Rules you Need to Know**

There are certain styles of etiquette and rules that you should follow when you're fishing for any type of fish.

- “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you”: Whenever you're fishing, whether on the shoreline or in a boat, make sure that you treat others with the same respect that you would want to be treated.
- Keep your distance: When you're fishing around other anglers make sure that you keep a good distance away from them so that they have enough room. Take note of the direction that others are casting and give them ample berth both in a boat and on the shoreline.
- Keeping secrets: If someone shares their favorite fishing spot with you and asks that you not give this location to others you should honor the request.
- Get permission: If you want to fish on private property, such as a farm pond, make sure that you get permission first. When you leave the area after fishing it should look the same as when you arrived.
- Other fishers: Keep in mind that not all fishers are bass fishers and that everyone deserves your respect no matter what type of fish they are fishing for.
- Fishing license: Depending where you live, there will be different rules and regulations for licensing. In most states or provinces you'll need a freshwater license if you want to catch freshwater fish. Your fishing license should be specific to the type of fish that you're going to be catching. Always make sure that you

**Tip #30: Roll Casting**

Roll casting is when your fly line is pulled back along the water during a back cast rather than being raised from the water. During the forward cast your line will also be pulled back along the water rather than lifted. You'll want to use a roll cast when you want a bit of leverage back casting in areas where you don't have much room or if there is a strong wind that is pulling back on the line.

**Tip #31: Reach Casting**

During a reach cast the fly, leader, and line are presented to your target area at a wide angle from the left or right side of the caster. This allows you a great deal of reach. Reach casting is very useful when you want to send a fly across a river or stream that has more than one speed of current. The reach cast lets you prevent your fly from being dragged down stream at a rate that is faster than the water where it is supposed to land.

**Tip #32: Slack Line Casting**

Slack line casting is when the fly line is able to fall onto the water in what are called "s" curves. This type of a cast will let your fly float on the water without any dragging motion. You'll want to use this cast when you're casting over a current or into a down stream.

**Tip #33: Shooting Line Casting**

You'll want to use this type of cast when you want to create a cast that extends out more line. To accomplish the shooting line cast, for either the forward or the backward cast, you need to use more power than you did when you cast the line as far as you did the first time.

**Tip #34: Rely on your Vision when Casting**

There will be times when you need to rely on your vision in order to determine the target that you are casting towards. This is particularly true in tail waters and spring creeks where you'll need to stalk the fish before you cast for it. Use your eyes to identify your casting targets in certain ways such as:

- Noting the shadow of a fish.
- Noting the riseform of a large fish.
- Noting the flash of a fish that is nymphing.

When you can identify the fish and its lie you'll be able to accurately position your target and get ready for the perfect cast.

**Tip #35: Using a Hauling Technique**

The hauling technique is when you increase the speed of your line by using the strength of your rod arm and your free hand arm. To achieve a good haul you need to pull down on the fly line at the position just below the stripper guide on your rod. The pull will increase the speed of the line as it moves outward. As you become more experienced you can try



a double haul which is when you pull both the backward and the forward stroke with strength.

**Tip #36: The Technique of “Mending the Line”**

The technique of mending the line is when you reposition your fly line and leader on top of the moving water. To accomplish this technique all you need to do is use a variety of movements such as roll-casting and lifting the rod. When you’re fishing in streams you’ll want to know how to mend your line so that you keep it straight and untangled.

**Tip #37: Match the Length of your Tippet to the Hole**

One of the most important things that you can do when it comes to successful fly fishing is match the length of your tippet to the depth where the fish are and to the depth of the hole. Every once in a while allow the weight to touch the bottom, making sure that it doesn’t drag. For instance, if you have a tippet that is six feet long it will put your fly about two to four feet off of the bottom.

**Tip #38: Using a Slow-Action Rod**

A slow-action rod is sometimes called a full flex rod. This is one of the easiest types of rod to cast, however it can often be a bit too wobbly for beginners to use. This type of rod isn’t very effective if you’re fly fishing for larger fish because you won’t be able to use the rod’s butt stiffness to hold up against a strong fish. The slow-action rod is one of the least expensive rods that you can buy.

**Tip #39: Fishing Etiquette – The Right of Way**

When it comes to fishing etiquette, the right of way is something that you'll need to learn. The rule of thumb is that the angler who is already in the water is given the right of way. The rule also applies if you're walking along the bank or floating. If you need to move locations try to move up-river whenever possible. You never want to intrude on another fly fisher without asking first. If you do get permission to enter the same waters make sure that you do so up-river and allow the other angler lots of space.

**Tip #40: Fishing Etiquette – Taking out your Line**

Common courtesy dictates that you take your line out of the water for any angler who has a fish on the line. This is so that they have plenty of space in order to land their fish. This rule is very important if you're fishing down-river from the other angler. Make sure that you never step into the space of an angler who is releasing or landing a fish on the bank.

**Tip #41: Fishing Etiquette - Silence**

Whenever you're fly fishing you'll need to be as quiet as you can...and this means leaving your dog and the radio at home. There are two reasons why you want to be as quiet as possible: (1) you don't want to spook the fish, and (2) you don't want to disturb other fly fishers. Many people enjoy fly fishing for the peace and solitude that it affords them.

**Tip #42: Fishing Etiquette – Lend a Helping Hand**

Always be willing to help out other anglers. This can be as simple as helping them retrieve something that has floated down-river or lending

them something that they need, such as extra line. You're all there for a fun day of fly fishing so helping each other out just lends to the experience.

### **Tip #43: Wading with Safety**

When you're wading make sure that you follow a few basic rules: (1) never fish by yourself on remote lakes, rivers, or streams, (2) wear a good pair of wading boots, (3) use a good wading staff that is flexible yet strong, and (4) know the area where you're wading. Wading is a great way to get access into those places that you couldn't otherwise reach.

### **Tip #44: Tackle Boxes**

Tackle boxes: A tackle box is a necessity so that you can keep all your "stuff" with you in one organized place. Some of the things to keep in mind when you use a tackle box and want to avoid overfilling include:

- Keep your worms and soft plastic bait in a small container away from your other lures. This will keep the soft plastic lures from creating a chemical reaction with the materials that other baits are made of.
- Buy two or more small tackle boxes to hold certain categories of lures. For instance, buy one tackle box to hold your worms and another to hold your spinnerbaits.
- Buy seasonal tackle boxes that you only use at certain times of year. In the spring you can have a tackle box that contains jigs, plastic worms, and minnow lures. And in the fall you can have a

**Tip #45: Keep your Fishing Vest Organized**

If you use a fishing vest to carry around your tackle and lure you'll want to keep it as organized as you can so that you're not fumbling around looking for something when you need it. If you're not going to be using something leave it home so that you only take along the essentials.

**Tip #46: Carry a Wading Staff**

When you're fishing in water that is rough or unfamiliar you might want to carry a wading staff to keep you stable and give you better footing.

**Tip #47: Wear Good Shoes**

A good pair of wading shoes will let your grip the bottom that you're walking on. Choose shoes that have soles with rubber cleats since these are ideal of bottoms that are made of mud, fine gravel, sand, or soft silt.

**Tip #48: Take Along the Sun Block**

Although it may seem like a small tip to mention, taking along the sun block is one thing that you don't want to forget. After standing in a sunny stream for eight hours you'll be glad that you remembered to bring along some protection.

**Tip #49: Use Polarized Glasses**

Wearing polarized glasses is one of the best things that you can do. You'll be able to see beneath the water so you can keep an eye on your

fish. Don't forget a hat to reduce the amount of glare that you experience.

**Tip #50: Discouraging Insects**

If you want to discourage insects you'll want to avoid wearing clothes that are red, yellow, black, white, or navy blue. These colors can attract black flies, deerflies, gnats, and mosquitoes.

**Tip #51: Dress for the Weather**

Wear the right type of clothing for the weather. You don't want to be caught in a rainstorm without protective gear. Remember that it's always easier to take off a layer of clothing than it is to be without anything to put on.

**Tip #52: Sticking with the Basics**

Try to stick to the basics whenever possible. This means carrying one or two small boxes of flies with you and fishing them to death. Many experts use only a floating line for most of the fish that they catch and they make a point of keeping their tackle to a minimum. Many novice fly fishers fall into the trap of using too many "new patterns". Stick with a pattern and fish it for around three to four dozen drifts. This will bring you the best results.

**Tip #53: What is Essential Gear?**

When it comes to fly fishing there is gear that is essential and gear that is less necessary. Focus on carrying essential gear that focuses on the day of fishing ahead. Listed below is essential gear:

- A good rod that you can rely on.
- A reel.
- A variety of bait that you will be using that day.
- A variety of flies and lures that you will be using that day.
- A first aid kit.
- A rain jacket.
- A hat and sun block.
- Extra clothing that you can wear and take off if you get too hot.

Listed below is non-essential gear:

- A huge tackle box that is filled to the brim with all your lures, baits, and flies.
- Things that you won't be using on that fishing day, such as the wrong line or reel.

#### **Tip #54: The Size of your Flies**

The size of your flies will matter, especially in the spring and fall when there are high waters, at which time you'll want larger flies than you would be using in the summer months. Summer months bring lower water levels and you can get away with using smaller sized flies. During those months when you're not fly fishing take the time to tie up different sizes of flies and build up your selection. This will save you time when you are fishing from having to stop and tie a larger or smaller fly.

**Tip #55: Fly Fishing for Salmon – Mood Matters**

Salmon can be an odd fish to catch since their mood often matters. If they are in a “taking” mood they will accept any lure and bait. However, if they are not in a taking mood they will ignore anything that you dangle in front of them

**Tip #56: Fly Fishing for Salmon – When Will they Strike?**

When salmon are in the river they won’t be feeding. However, this doesn’t mean that they won’t be striking. For a salmon, striking is a natural behaviour. While the salmon are located in a lake they will be quite predatory and full of aggression. They will continue this behaviour when they enter the river. This is good for you because you get those strikes whether they are feeding or not.

**Tip #57: Fly Fishing for Salmon – Keep your Hooks Sharp**

The salmon has a very thick jaw so you’ll want to keep your hooks as sharp as possible so that they can penetrate deep.

**Tip #58: Fly Fishing for Salmon – Fishing with a Partner**

Try fly fishing for salmon with a partner so that you can spot more fish. Take turns fly fishing. One partner will fish while the other one stands on the opposite bank and keeps an eye on the behavior of the salmon and exactly where they are. Make sure that you bring along your polarized glasses.

**Tip #59: Fly Fishing for Salmon – Find a Good Hole**

Make the effort to find a hole that has plenty of salmon in it. These types of holes can be fished all day.

**Tip #60: Fly Fishing for Salmon – Choose Low-Light Days – Cool Water**

Salmon like days that have a low-light or cloud cover. On days that are sunny and bright you'll most likely find salmon congregating away from the brightness in deep holes. It's those cloudy days that will make the salmon more accessible to you.

Water temperature, and knowing what it is, can play a big role in the success or failure of salmon fishing. You'll want to invest in a good thermometer so that you can keep track of water temperatures throughout the day. Make sure that you place the thermometer in the same place each time to a depth of anywhere from six inches to three feet below the surface.

Keep a notebook with a record of water temperatures, being sure to update whenever you can. After a few years of recording water temperature in your favorite fishing spot you'll have a good idea of which patterns are occurring.

Salmon do much better in cooler water. When water temperatures start to rise, salmon go deeper. This is because there is more oxygen in cooler water and salmon need this oxygen to survive. Salmon will be more active in cooler water than warm water so they will be a little more



difficult to catch as they fight harder to escape. You'll want to find a happy medium in water temperature so that the fish aren't too active but nor are they too hot.

Understanding the water temperature of the water that your fishing can play a big part in knowing what type of rod, reel, and line to use as well as what type of lures and baits you should be using.

**Tip #61: Fly Fishing for Salmon – Where to Fish – When to Fish**

Salmon like to gather in dark and deep pools where the water is dark and black. You'll also find them on the cusp of bends at the point where the water starts to get deep. This fish likes water to be fast on the top and slow lower down. The salmon's behavior during the day will cause it to swim up or down depending on the brightness of the day and the temperature of the water.

There are no right and wrong rules about when to go fishing for salmon. If you only have time to fish on weekends you'll have to take the weather as it is. This means learning to adapt to all types of weather conditions. For instance, when the weather is particularly windy you'll have to know which line and reel is best so that you can cast far. You'll also have to learn how to cast into the wind so that your line casts out far enough. One of the most important things that you need to worry about when it's windy is your safety. What you normally see on a calm day, such as logs and brush, can be hidden by the waves that the wind creates.

As weather conditions change, you'll have to learn to change with them or you may never catch those salmon that you've been dying to take home.

**Tip #62: Fly Fishing for Salmon – Finding the Snags**

Since salmon like to congregate in deep holes you can expect there to be snags that are going to grab on to your flies. Before you find yourself loosing too many flies take some time to access the hole before you start fishing. Find a high spot, if you can, and use your polarized glasses to look down into the hole to see if you can spot any snags. Another trick is to use a fly that you don't mind loosing and sent it into the hole to see what happens.

**Tip #63: Fly Fishing for Salmon – Check the Tail End of Pools**

Make sure that you check the tail end of pools as well as the neck area. Salmon like to congregate in this area so you'll usually find more than an abundance of fish.

**Tip #64: Fly Fishing for Salmon – Learn to Fish Slowly**

One of the big mistakes that beginner fly fishers make is too fish for salmon too quickly. Although effective for trout fishing, salmon need to be fished with more patience.

**Tip #65: Fly Fishing for Trout - Using a Shorter Rod**

When you're fishing for trout you should be using a rod that is quite short, such as an 8ft brook rod or a 10ft loch job. You want to make sure that your rod fits the venue that you're fishing. The one thing that you

need to keep in mind is that a short rod is hard to use if you want to gain any distance.

**Tip #66: Fly Fishing for Trout – Using a Floating Line**

There are many trout fly lines that you can choose from when you're fishing for this type of fish. Beginner fly fishers should start out with a floating line since it will be much easier for them to manipulate.

**Tip #67: Fly Fishing for Trout – Dry Fly or Wet Fly?**

Knowing what fly to use is quite simple when it comes to fishing for trout: use a dry fly if the trout are feeding on the surface and use a wet fly if they are feeding below the surface.

**Tip #68: Fly Fishing for Trout - When to Change your Fly**

If you find that the trout aren't biting continue to use the same fly for about 15 minutes before you switch to another one. Keep up this pattern until you find a fly that works.

**Tip #69: Fly Fishing for Trout – Trout Habits**

Trout are easy to predict. Rainbow trout always swim in shoals while the brown trout are more territorial and avoid this pattern. The one big thing to keep in mind when you're fly fishing for trout is that you usually need to go to them rather than expecting them to come to you.

A quick note on trout habits in lakes: Lakes in higher areas are often much more rocky than lower lying lakes. These types of lakes won't have a great deal of weed or brush cover. You'll find rocky lakes a bit

tough to fish since the water is too clear and there aren't a great deal of places for trout to find the cover that they enjoy. If there are any trout in the lake they will most likely be on the large size since they enjoy deeper waters and clear conditions.

Many experienced fly fishers enjoy fishing from the bank of a lake even if they own a boat. One of the first things that you need to do is find the perfect bank. Look for banks that have about a thirty degree slope that runs away from the shoreline. The water in the area should be anywhere from five to fifteen feet deep. If the slope is more than forty-five degrees you'll have trouble balancing and staying in a stationary position.

Trout are attracted to very gradual slopes and will often stack up in this type of habitat. If there is a bit of vegetation or brush that has been submerged the trout will love the area even more.

When you're fishing from the bank you'll want to use spinning tackle. Place the weight about eight to twelve inches away from the hook. The best types of lures to use are spinnerbaits and crankbaits. Avoid using a jig because you'll find that it gets up much too often. To save yourself the hassle of carrying a tackle box, think about wearing a vest where you can keep all your tackle in convenient pockets.

### **Tip #70: Fly Fishing for Trout – Releasing your Trout**

There will be some trophies that you want to photograph but most times you'll want to make sure that you don't handle the trout. Trout are covered in a protective layer of slime and when you touch it you disturb

the fine balance of things. Trout can develop a fungus on the areas where you touch, which can kill it. To release the trout all you need to do is release the hook from the mouth and allow it to swim away without touching it. For help in removing the hook you can use forceps or small pliers.

**Tip #71: Fly Fishing for Trout – Revive before Releasing**

Before you release the trout you need to make sure that it is completely revived beforehand. If the fish has been exhausted it may turn over upside down or roll onto its side. Larger trout will take more time to revive while small fish usually require no reviving at all.

If you need to revive a fish make sure that you hold it so that it is upright. Try to find a flow of water that is quite gentle, just enough so that you can get its gills working and so that it can gain oxygen back from the water. As the fish starts to revive its gills will start to work more and more until it can stay upright in the water. The goal is to allow the trout to swim away without your help.

**Tip #72: Fly Fishing for Trout – The Importance of Reading the Stream**

When you are able to read the river or stream you increase your chances of catching that trout. Most streams will have a current that creates a pattern that is known as the riffle-run-pool pattern. This pattern will continue to repeat itself over and over again. You'll find big brown trout in deep pools while the smaller browns and rainbow trout can be found

in runs. The riffles will contain small trout during day hours and bigger trout during the morning and evening feeding times.

Many fly fishers overlook streams in favor of lakes or rivers. This, however, can be a big mistake. Streams provide great options for fly fishing, especially those streams that have cool water. Trout seem to enjoy streams since they can live in deep holes that are found just underneath the rapids. They also enjoy hovering beneath undercut banks since the water current here is calmer but still has a flow to it.

**Tip #73: Fly Fishing for Trout - Identifying the Riffle**

Riffles will have a current that is fast, along with very shallow water. The bottom will be a mixture of rubble, gravel, or boulders. You'll want to fish riffles during the morning or the evening during feeding periods.

**Tip #74: Fly Fishing for Trout – Identifying the Runs**

Runs are much deeper than riffles but they have a more moderate current. You'll most often find runs between the riffles and the pools. The bottom of runs is composed of rubble or small gravel. Runs are great places to find trout at almost any time.

**Tip #75: Fly Fishing for Trout – Identifying Pools**

Pools will be darker than other areas of the river or stream. They have a much smoother current. The water will be slow moving and deep over a bottom that is composed of sand, small gravel, or silt. You'll find medium to large trout in pools during the midday.

Fishing for fish in natural lakes can be all the way from good to excellent. The success that you have will often depend on what part of the country the lake is located. For instance, the southern states have natural lakes that are quite shallow.

Many smaller sized natural lakes have a circular shape. You'll want to focus your fishing strategy close to the shore where there are weeds and rocks. Larger lakes, in particular those lakes in the north, will often have great places for trout to school. This can include islands, weed flows, natural reefs, and deep holes. One thing to keep in mind when it comes to northern natural lakes is that they are often infertile. This means that although the water is very clear it doesn't contain large amounts of algae or plankton, and thus lack a great deal of oxygen.

**Tip #76: Fly Fishing for Trout – The Smart Fish**

There are new studies out that show that trout can easily learn to navigate a maze...and that they can remember the pattern for about nine months. This means that in streams that are heavily fished, trout quickly learn that movement on certain paths of pools is an indication that there is danger. The trout will scare more easily since they know the pattern of approaching fly fishers. What does this mean for you? Avoid approaching the same pools from the same direction. Instead find different angles of approaches every time that you fish in that area.

**Tip #77: Fly Fishing for Trout – Cool Water Fish**

Trout like the cooler waters. When the water temperature starts to rise in the summer months, the trout will move to deeper and cooler waters. No

only will the water be cooler deeper down, there will be more oxygen in the water. When trout are in water that is too warm and is lacking in oxygen they start to become stressed.

By late summer trout will move to fast moving riffles even if the water is barely deep enough to cover them. You'll have to approach them carefully. Let your fly drift to the smallest area of the riffle. Make sure that you cover the entire riffle before you move on to the next spot.

One important thing to remember is that the senses of feeling and hearing in a fish are almost one and the same. Trout feel and hear the vibration of movement and sound in the water. Each sound will have a different type of pitch that sends vibrations through the water. Trout are able to become familiar with particular sounds and pitches so that they are able to detect even the slightest movement in the water. The feeling and hearing senses in a trout act almost as a built in radar.

Just as with feeling and hearing, the way a trout smells and tastes is connected together as one sense. Most fish have taste buds on the inside and outside of their mouths. This means that they are able to taste something before they have it in their mouth. This is why the bait that you use needs to be pleasing to the trout or it won't get into its mouth. And if it does get into the fish's mouth it will be quickly spit out if it is unpleasant.



### **Tip #78: Fly Fishing for Trout - Identifying Rises**

Before you select your fly you need to identify the feeding patterns of the trout:

- **Sip Rise:** A sip rise will have surface rings that are sometimes very hard to see and other times very easy to see. A sip rise is caused by a trout that is sucking spent spinner or sipping on tiny duns.
- **Splashy Rise:** A splashy rise will indicate that the trout are rising up to active mayfly duns, quick rising pupa, caddis adults, or stonefly adults. Many times you'll see the trout jump out of the water.
- **Dorsal Fin and Tail Rise:** This rise is an indication that the trout are feeding just below the surface and that they will probably ignore any surface flies.
- **Head Rise:** A head rise is identified by trout sticking their heads up out of the water. This means that they are feeding on mayfly, stonefly adults, caddis adults, or cripples and that they will feed right on the surface.
- **Splashy Surge:** A splashy surge indicates that the trout will most likely chase any whitebait or smelt into shallow waters.

A quick note on rivers: Rivers are probably the best type of habitat for trout. This is because they have a great deal of oxygen in the water that is evenly distributed from the top to the bottom. The water temperature in rivers is a bit more moderate than lake temperatures. Temperatures

are cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter than rocky or low lying lakes.

When you're fishing for trout in rivers you'll want to stay close to the current but out of the direct flow. Look for breaks in the current such as stumps or logs; these are often the areas where you'll find trout hovering in schools.

River bars are also good places to fish for trout. Don't overlook river bends as other good options since trout seem to enjoy these peaceful areas.

#### **Tip #79: Fly Fishing for Trout – Undercut Banks**

Undercut banks are a great location to find trout since this location provides them with excellent cover from predators. The trout can hover against the edge of the stream right where the friction causes the water to slow down, making the swimming easy.

A Woolly Bugger is ideal in this situation. You'll want to cast upstream so that your fly and your leader can land close to the bank and almost parallel to it. You can cast across stream to fish if the stream is wide enough. This way your cast will land the fly close to the undercut bank. When this happens you need to jig your cast downstream so that as much of your fly line and the leader is lying in a parallel position to the bank as possible.

When the fly starts to drift downstream and gets pulled in by the current you'll want to flick the tip of your rod and push the fly line further downstream. This action should attract the attention of the most elusive trout.

**Tip #80: Using a List**

Using a list can be one of the best things that you can do as you start out learning the ins and outs of fly fishing. There are many things that you can put on your list including (1) keeping track of your most successful fishing holes; (2) reminders to do things like sharpen your flies after a snag, (3) what lures work best for you, and (4) the best times to fish the river. Lists can keep you organized and on track.

**Tip #81: Take a Fishing Trip**

Take a fishing trip with a local guide. You'll learn a lot about how your guide watches the river or lake and what you have to do to achieve that same expertise. Take a trip close to home or travel abroad to experience international fly fishing.

**Tip #82: Fishing in Dam-Controlled Waters**

It's imperative that when you're fishing in waters that are controlled by a dam that you find out ahead of time when there will be a water release. The release will be signalled by a horn or whistle so make sure that you listen for the notification.

**Tip #83: Fishing Upstream**

A basic concept of fly fishing is that a hooked fish isn't really caught until you have it up on the bank. If you want to land more fish the one thing that you can do is try to hook more fish upstream instead of downstream. This way, your fly will have a better chance of getting into the jaw of the fish. Try to keep downstream of any fish that you've managed to hook; when the fish is downstream he is using less energy since the current of the water will be doing much of the work for the fish.

**Tip #84: Join a Fly Fishing Club**

One of the best things that you can do as a beginner fly fisher is to join a fly fishing club. You'll get to know other anglers in the area where you live and may even be able to find a fishing buddy or two. The other benefit is that you can learn more about some of the great angling locations in your home territory.

**Tip #85: Using a Landing Net**

If you want to use a landing net you need to make sure to hold the net on the stream bed and lift it up as the fish swims over top of it. Most fish will be lost after they make their final rush if they are faced with a landing net that is being held vertically out in front of them. After all, you can't expect the fish to want to swim right into it! And if you hold the net from behind and try to sweep up the fish all will be lost. All it takes is one touch of the fish's tail and it will be gone.

Fish are known for their acute sense of vision. They are able to see in all types of water conditions and can see equally well during the day and night. The reason for this great sight is that fish have eyes that are able to adjust naturally to different conditions of light. No matter what the color of the water is they are able to rely on their vision to guide them. At those times when the vision of the fish is restricted, its other senses will kick in. This means that no matter where you hold that landing net the fish will be able to see it or sense it.

**Tip #86: Storing your Rod**

The one and only thing that you need to do to keep your rod in great shape is to store it correctly. The first thing that you need to do is store the rod in the sock and a hard tube. This way nothing can damage it when you're not using it. After you're done using your rod make sure that you clean it. All of the salt should be rubbed off and the rod left until it is completely dry before you put it away.

When you're washing your rod, use warm water that has been laced with a mild soap. Use a soft cloth. Make sure that you wash all parts of the rod including the rod guides, feet, cork grip, and the reel. When you're finished take the time to rinse the rod with warm water. This procedure will keep your rod looking and performing great for a long time.

**Tip #87: Keeping your Reels Covered**

When you're not using your reels you should keep them covered. If you keep your reel uncovered you'll end up with grit and dirt inside of it. As well, the outer coating of your reel can be damaged and this can lead to

corrosion. If you end up with scratches on the reel you can cover the areas with clear fingernail polish to slow down the corrosion.

**Tip #88: Avoid Windy Days**

Beginner fly fishers may want to avoid learning on windy days. Days that have any degree of wind will require certain skills for casting. As you're starting out learning out how to fly fish you'll want to choose calm days so that you can practice your casting and other techniques.

**Tip #89: Sometimes it's best to do nothing**

Fly fishing may seem like it's an active sport since you're always doing something, preparing something, and thinking about what you're going to be doing next. However, sometimes it's best to do nothing at all. Be patient, stand still, and just enjoy the experience. If you have to do anything, think about your top water patterns. The bottom line is that sometimes you have to wait to catch your fish.

**Tip #90: A Word about Nymphs**

When you're fishing during the early spring months, most of the fish that you catch will be nymphs. The hard part about fishing for nymphs is choosing the right pattern to use. Keep this tip in mind: fish with two flies since this doubles your chances of catching one.

**Tip #91: Getting that Bonus Strike**

One thing that every fly fisher looks forward to is that bonus strike. One way that you can get a bonus strike when you're at the end of drift with a

dry fly or nymph is to let your fly swing around. Then let the fly lie in the current for about 30 seconds to see if you get that bonus hit.

**Tip #92: Treating Fish Gently**

Most of the fish that you catch when you're fly fishing will have sensitive areas such as their mouths and gills. Handle them gently when you remove the fly so that you don't damage them. And remember that some fish have sharp teeth so avoid putting your fingers inside the mouth.

**Tip #93: Fishing Near White Rocks**

If you're looking for success try to find some white rocks to fish near. White rocks in a dark streambed can provide you with a lighter background. This will allow the fish to see a dark colored insect or lure as it drifts over the contrasting colors of white rock and dark water. This can often end in a good strike for you.

**Tip #94: Large Predator Fish and Low Light**

When you mix a large predator fish with low light levels you end up with a fish that exercises less caution and is more aggressive than when the light is high. Great days for fishing for large predators are at sunrise, at sunset, when there is stormy weather, and after the sun goes down.

**Tip #95: On your Way to Experience**

As a beginner fly fisher you'll want to focus on becoming more experienced. Following are some of the top tips for fly fishing from the experts:

- Using two lures on one line: If you're fishing in deep, clear water you may want to put two lures on one line. This is particularly good if you want to make a "vertical" presentation. You'll want to use a bell sinker as the weight for added impact. Make sure that you tie two hooks onto the fishing line a few feet apart from one another.
- Using a small spinner: There will be times when you want to attract fish by using sound and sight. At these times a small spinning blade is your best bet. Attach a small spinner to the end of a light weighted jig. This can be a very effective technique in colder waters.
- Two-handed pitch cast: When you're fishing in close quarters you might want to try a two-handed pitch cast. Holding the lure in your left hand, pull on your rod so that you bring the tip down just a bit. Give the rod a small tip flex and then swing up the tip at the same time that you let go of the lure. You should find that the lure moves in a low movement towards your target area
- Minnow-shaped plugs: Try fishing with a small minnow-shaped plug which will float above the bottom and will dart just like a fish when you twitch the line.

### **Tip #96: Fish and Sound**

When you're fly fishing you should keep in mind that you'll be noticed more by the fish from "sound" than you will by sight. When you're walking or wading make sure that you walk softly and gently. You'll



want to wear shoes that have soles that don't make loud noises against bottom gravel and rocks.

**Tip #97: Understand the Language**

The more you know the language, or lingo, of fly fishing the more fun it will be as you fly fish with your friends and family. Some of the language that you should know includes:

- Fly: The fly is light weight lure that is used to attract a variety of fish including trout and salmon. The most common fly is the mayfly.
- Leader: The leader is attached to the end of fly line since the fly line is too thick to hold flies. The leader can be identified as a tapered clear piece of monofilament.
- Plug: The plug is a lure that looks just like a bait fish. It will have one or more hooks that hang down from its body. You can use different plugs and jerk them around to look like a fish that has been injured.
- Spinners: A spinner is a small oval-shaped blade that is attached to the end of a lure. A spinning hook will be trailing off the end of it.
- Tippet: The tippet is a clear piece of monofilament. It is attached to the end of the leader so that the leader's end taper is preserved.
- Woolly Bugger: The Woolly Bugger is a fly that has a very simple design with a long tail feather on the end. This fly is very popular among experienced fly fishers.

**Tip #98: Sometimes the Fish are in Charge**

There will be times when fish will take anything that you give them no matter if it's similar to the insects and foods that they are feeding on or how the bait behaves. Then there will be other times when no matter what you give them, they won't strike at all. There is a famous quote that fits in well here:

*"It is possible to fool all of the fish some of the time, and some of the fish all of the time, it is however well nigh impossible to fool all of the fish all of the time".*

**Tip #99: Smoking your Fish**

If you're going to be smoking your fish it's important that you don't smoke it right after you've salted it. Let the fish sit overnight in a place that is cool and dry, allowing the surface to dry. This will seal in the flavours when the fish is smoked.

When you're ready to smoke the fish follow these directions:

- Line the base of the smoker with foil, placing wood shavings on top of the foil.
- Smoke the fish for about eight hours for maximum flavour.
- When the smoking is done wrap the foil with the ashes and any of the juices that have dripped. This will leave your smoker clean and ready for the next use.

**Tip #100: Fish...Don't Cast!**

Don't just spend your day casting. Beginners often make the mistake of spending the whole day casting at every riffle, undercut bank, and other likely looking fishing spot without ever achieving success. And the end result is usually that the fly is taken away at that moment that they are looking at their fly box for their next cast off. This is time to step back and think so that you can get a strike or two.

Take some time to think about what your fly is doing, what the fish are doing, what the weather is like, and what type of fish you think you might find!

Fly fishing can be either very good or very bad. Even when you have a great strategy in place there will simply be times when the fish won't be biting. These are the days when you have to work even harder on your technique so that you take home that prize.

There will be those days when you've planned to fish in shallow water but the weather is just too calm. You'll find that in this situation the best time of day to fish is either during the low light of the morning or the low light of the day when it is harder for the bass to notice you. Change your strategy if you need to.

Another reason why the fish just won't be biting is when the day is very bright and clear. These conditions bring about limitations when it comes to fly fishing such as (1) the fish being able to see you, and (2) the water becoming too hot, sending the fish to deeper depths. With these

conditions present you'll have to be very stealthy in your pursuit of any fish. If you're going to making long casts you won't have to worry too much about stealth since fish in deeper water will be less distracted by the bright light.

**Tip #101: Where to Find Oxygenated Water**

The following areas are known to have good supplies of oxygen and therefore are great for fly fishing:

- Creek mouths. There is a constant flow of water here that will have high levels of oxygen.
- Rivers. Again, there will be the constant flow of water present in most rivers.
- Areas of vegetation. Aquatic plants need a steady supply of oxygen to keep them alive and thriving.
- In deep water. Deeper water is usually colder than higher water. Therefore there will be a better supply of oxygen.
- Near power plants. There will be a continuous discharge of oxygenic water near power plants.
- Near tree and log areas. Oxygen is present in treed areas because porous wood will hold oxygen.