



FLY CASTING INTRODUCTION - lesson plan

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(Needs drawings and diagrams)

BEST TIME: Any time, but usually in conjunction with the lesson on selection of fly tackle.

BEST LOCATION: Outside is best, on a lawn or pond. A gymnasium or recreation room will suffice, if it provides enough ceiling height (16 feet min.) and area for both forward and back casts (150 feet min.).

TIME REQUIRED: 60 to 90 minutes

OBJECTIVES:

Participating young people and adults will:

1. learn the basics of fly tackle selection
2. practice the basic casting strokes
3. learn the parts of the casting stroke
4. have fun while learning

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES:

Participating young people will develop:

1. gross motor skills
2. observation and problem solving skills
3. hand-eye coordination
4. increased self concept and self esteem
5. consumer skills related to evaluating fishing equipment purchase; and will
6. explore recreational and vocational skills

EVALUATION ACTIVITIES/SUGGESTIONS

The Instructor may

! note how successfully youngsters follow instructions during the step by step casting process. Check each youngster after each step.

- proper grip
- proper pick up
- proper rod positioning and back cast
- proper stop and line release

! note evidence of teamwork as youngsters and junior leader help each other

! have youngsters demonstrate how to select and buy fly casting equipment

ROLES FOR TEEN AND JUNIOR LEADERS:

With appropriate experience and prior instruction, junior leaders can

- ! assist in preparation of equipment
- ! demonstrate casting and casting techniques
- ! help correct casting problems
- ! provide individual assistance
- ! operate video equipment if available
- ! relate personal stories and experiences to fly casting situations

POTENTIAL PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT:

See "Roles for Teen and Junior Leaders" above. In addition, parents may

- ! arrange for or provide teaching location
- ! arrange for or provide equipment
- ! arrange for or provide transportation
- ! arrange for or provide refreshments
- ! discuss personal experiences in fly casting

EQUIPMENT:

Suggested equipment needs include

! one fly rod combo matched to a 5 or 6 weight line for each participant (Weight forward line recommended)

! six feet of tapered leader for each fly line

! a one inch piece of tow yarn or a fly with no hook point for each

! targets (hoops, cardboard, etc)

If video equipment (camcorder and monitor) is available it can offer invaluable opportunities for immediate critique of casting form and style.

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS:

Control of the group is important due to the potential for injury from fly lines whipping back and forth. Instruct participants to always clear the area behind them before casting, and not to walk behind anyone who is casting.

DO NOT PRACTICE CASTING WITH FLIES HAVING HOOK POINTS.

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PRESENTATION NOTES: It is always best to use a skilled fly casting instructor. A good instructor can do a great demonstration and model proper form and technique. Assistant instructors can help run a training for several new casters. The only limiting factors are space, number of instructors and number of fly outfits.

It is good to use this lesson in conjunction with a general fly tackle introduction. This will give participants a better idea of the whole picture.

Use a "step by step fly casting" teaching process.

Keep an eye on participants. Once they start getting tired, they will get sloppy and improvement may be lost.

Sometimes teaming youngsters up with one outfit between two casters can allow them to rest, as well as help each other out.

FLY CASTING

Fly casting for most folks is mainly a means to an end... the end being catching a fish and having a good time! All too often we make fly casting instruction a frustrating tedious exercise that ends up tiring everyone involved. While a tiny percentage of fly casters get involved in competitive casting events (see references section for information on organizations to contact about competitive fly casting events), the reason most folks want to learn to fly cast is so they can catch fish with a fly.

Keep It Simple!

Some good general steps to follow:

! Practice on water or grass so that the line has something to give it resistance (as opposed to a polished gym floor). This can help "load" the rod on the line pick up.

! Show rod positions using the clock face as a reference.

! Make sure rods are not too heavy or grips too large for smaller youngsters.

! Keep casting distance under 30 feet. Work on casting form before trying for distance.

! Don't shoot line right away. Use casting arm only, grasping line with index finger to keep it secure.

! Use targets at close range. Make a game of it! Remember Accuracy and control are more important than distance. Distance will come with practice.

! **Most important** Get kids casting, on the water and into fish ASAP!

STEP BY STEP FLY CASTING

Fly casting is unique in that it is the **weight of the line (not the lure)** that carries your offering to the fish. It is not necessary to cast a long line when you are first learning. Twenty-five or thirty feet is plenty for the beginning angler. Most fish are caught at this distance or less anyway! Mastering the basics of technique is everything in fly casting .

BEFORE THE CAST

Position feet and hands as follows:

! Rod Hand: grip rod with thumb on top of handle, but not too tightly. grip should be relaxed, not rigid.

! Line Hand: used to control line and eliminate slack below first rod guide

1. grasp line with thumb and index finger
2. keep hand at mid-torso in comfortable fashion
3. use hand to retrieve line and feed it into the cast.

Note: Either hand can be used to reel the line in. Anglers using the same hand to both cast and reel simply shift the rod to the line hand and reel with the other hand.

! Stance: foot on line hand side should be slightly forward and pointed toward target, enabling a wider, more comfortable range of motion and an eye for the backcast.

BEGIN CAST

1. Pick up line. When picking up line begin with tip waist high or lower. This enables the end of the line to get moving. A cast cannot be made until the entire line is moving. This is **very important** to successful casting.

(diagram)

2. Use the forearm to move rod through the casting arc. **Note:** Think of the rod as an extension of your hand, with each movement exaggerated at the tip.

3. Make movement as though hitchhiking, keeping hand in the same plane.

Note: Pivot elbow using the forearm's strength. Using the wrist is bad form and will tire you out quickly.

(diagram)

OVERHEAD CAST

A good fly cast starts with a good back cast.

Back Cast -

1. Lift rod sharply from starting (pick up) position.
2. Snap rod to just past perpendicular position (12:30) and **stop quickly.**
3. Line should rise a little and straighten out. Imagine throwing the line high over shoulder.

(diagram)

Note: If back cast drops and hits the ground you are probably breaking your wrist. If wrist is bent the rod tip is forced down bringing the line with it. Remember: 80% of a good cast is the back cast. Do it right and the rest of the cast should be o.k.

(diagram)

Forward Cast-

1. Bring rod forward smoothly, aiming at the target.
2. Stop rod tip at about eye level with a **short quick stop.**
3. Rod can be lowered as line and fly uncurl.

(Diagram)

Note: The quick short stop is just like flicking an apple from the end of a stick. or flicking paint from a paint brush. The entire casting movement is often compared to hammering a nail or throwing a ball. In fact, many people refer to casting as "throwing a line". Your goal is to "throw" a nice tight loop that uncurls smoothly and evenly. A rounder, bigger loop can cause problems and wastes energy.

(diagram of fly line loop)

Remember:

KEEP IT SIMPLE!

Hitch hike on the back cast, flick the apple on the forward cast!

PRACTICE!!!

ROLL CAST

The roll cast is used primarily when there is no room for a back cast. High brush banks, fences, rocks and trees behind you on a lake, river or beach all provide an occasion to use the roll cast.

The stroke is the same as an overhead cast. The timing is different.

- BEGIN CAST:
- a. Begin in regular start position with 15' or so of line out
 - b. Raise rod slowly (not sharply as in overhead casting)

- BACK CAST:
- a. raise rod to just past perpendicular
 - b. allow line to move evenly across water with belly of line ending up slightly behind your rod over elbow
 - c. Pause briefly (with floating line only) before forward cast

FORWARD CAST:

- a. casting stroke should be strong and hard, with the line following the belly in a circle
- b. line should lay out straight and even

NOTE: in a perfectly executed roll cast, the fly should touch to water before the line. As most casters will tell you, this is not always the case!

MENDING A CAST

Mending is a basic skill that the fly fisher must master. A fly line lying across the surface of any moving water will contact currents moving at several speeds. Combined with this is the fact that water beneath the surface (where your fly will be if you are not fishing a dry fly) is going at a slower rate than the water on which your line is floating.

Put simply, your fly and your fly line will usually be sitting in water moving at different speeds. The result will usually be your fly moving faster than the current, often in an unnatural manner that rarely attracts fish. This is called line drag. In order to maintain line control and/or a natural drift and avoid drag an adjustment in the drift must be made. This is called "mending a cast."

Successful mending means you must lift the belly of your line (to the line leader knot) and flip either up or down stream (to compensate for current) without moving your fly (this is very important). This can only be accomplished on a creek or river . Lawn practice doesn' t work, unless the currents on your grass's surface are particularly strong!

It may be helpful to begin your practice using an easily identified bright dry fly or something that floats tied to your leader. Start in slow moving water and with only 20 or 30 feet of line. Make a cast, lower your rod tip and gain control (**of what?**). With an exaggerated wrist movement, try flipping the belly of your line upstream. Keep an eye on the fly.

The object here is to obtain the ultimate in dry fly fishing—the drag free presentation!. Practice is the only way you will learn.

When drifting a wet fly, keep your mind ' s eye on where your offering is drifting. Remember, it will invariably be moving slower than your line, requiring you to mend upstream to avoid dragging the fly downstream underwater.

Practice this line control whenever you can. It will be repaid in huge dividends on the stream.

REFERENCES

(Need to include info on American Casting Assoc, and competitive casting contacts)

Need to list books and videos on casting

Exhibit or Sharing Activities

**Phil, what about listing the ways your FFAP kids share their casting skills?
video casting clinic**

Community Service

See above

Extensions/Ways of learning more

Phil, can you list any spin-off activities, (rod-building, leader building, conducting a school, etc) that might further reinforce the learning here?

How about additional casts?

Links to other programs

Mention FFF, FFAP, TU, etc.