

SMART

Angler's Notebook

by Carl Haensel

Flyfishing



Flyfishing is a great way to fish and it's lots of fun! Both an art and a fishing technique, it allows flyfishers to cast very small lures (flies) easily.

You can catch many species of fish while flyfishing. Trout and bass are popular targets. Flyfishing for panfish such as sunfish and crappies can be lots of fun and a great way to practice.

To start fly fishing, you need to learn how to cast. First, pick a large, open area with few trees nearby. Parks or large backyards work well. Remember not to practice casting near any overhead powerlines.

Overhead Casting

1. Face your target and set your feet comfortably apart. Begin by moving your rod quickly back until it nears 10 o'clock, and then stop firmly at 10 o'clock.

2. Pause until the line is nearly straight behind you to help "load" (bend) the rod. Then begin the forward cast. If the line falls limp to the ground, you've waited too long.

3. Stop the rod firmly at 2 o'clock, using the same motion as on the backcast.

4. Pause until the line is nearly straight in front of you. Then begin the back cast again.

5. Casting back and forth like this is called "false casting." To "finish" your cast, stop at 10 o'clock in the front and let your line and leader straighten and fall gently. Follow the falling line with your rod tip.

Leader

Prepare your fly rod

A 5- or 6-weight rod with matching reel, backing, line and leader works well for practice, though a lighter-weight flyfishing outfit may benefit younger casters. For safety, tie a small piece of yarn instead of a fly with a hook to the end of your line and leader. Next, pull about 20 feet of line off the reel. Extend this line on the ground directly in front of you. Hold the rod as indicated by the illustration.



Casting hint:

Blend your movements together and watch your line as you cast. Turning your head to watch while casting helps you see what's going on.

Once you feel comfortable, try casting on a lake, pond or river. You may wish to tie on a fly at this time. Small dry flies and poppers are good choices to start catching fish.