

Figure A

We feel that a rod catalog would not be complete without a section on casting. It is our observation that almost every fly fisherman can improve his casting, ourselves included. It is certainly not necessary to be an expert caster in order to be an effective angler. We are convinced, however, that a proficient caster will catch more fish, attain greater satisfaction from his equipment, and, most importantly, have more fun.

This clinic is an analysis of the basic casting stroke which is the essence of all fly casting. It also identifies and helps correct the most common casting faults encountered by experienced as well as beginning casters.

When trying to improve your technique, you will be confronted by two immediate problems. The first is to identify your mistake; the second is to determine how to correct it. Our goal in writing this section is to help you understand and solve these problems.

The primary objective in fly casting is to present the fly a desired distance by casting a weighted line. This is best done by properly applying the power to the rod to form a correct loop in the line. This loop forces the line to roll out and present the fly.

There are three correct loops illustrated by figure A.

When power is applied to the rod tip over a wider arc, the loops become wider; narrower loops are created by narrower arcs. Where you stop the rod tip on your forward and back casts determines the size of the loop. The size of a loop is generally the difference between the highest point of rod travel and where the tip stops.

It is important to be able to control and to change the loop size to cover all fishing conditions. Wide loops give you the low line speed needed for delicate fishing. The

medium loop covers most fishing conditions, providing a moderate line speed. Narrow loops have the least air resistance and the highest line speed. They are superb for long distance casting, penetrating wind, and presenting the fly accurately.

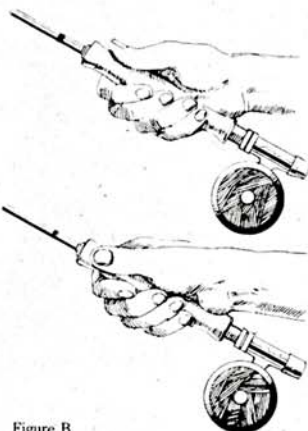


Figure B

BASIC CASTING STROKE

Let us analyze a casting stroke that will correctly position your rod to form these loops. The first step is to grip the rod properly. We recommend putting your thumb on top or slightly to the side, as in figure B. These grips are comfortable and offer excellent strength and control.

The traditional clock face is used to show the point where the rod stops. We have separated the face to show that the hand moves in a straight line while the tip goes through an arc.

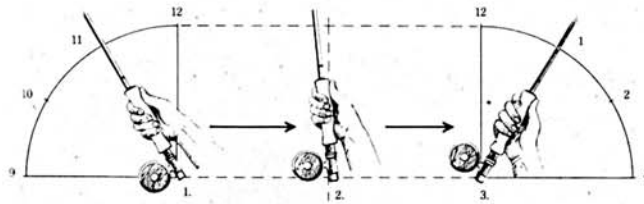


Figure C

BACK CAST (figure C)

1. Start with the rod at 11 o'clock, the forearm is vertical, the wrist is opened to a maximum of 45°, and the line is straightened.
2. Pull the hand in a straight line and begin to tilt the rod to position 3.
3. Stop the rod at 1 o'clock. Don't permit the wrist to open past 45°. Wait until the line has almost straightened behind you. (Drifting back slightly after the loop is formed may improve the timing and smoothness of the forward cast.)

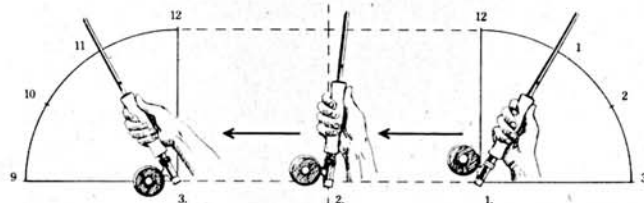


Figure D

FORWARD CAST (figure D)

1. The rod is at 1 o'clock, the forearm is vertical, the wrist is opened to a maximum of 45°, and the line has straightened.
2. Push the hand in a straight line and begin to tilt the rod to position 3.
3. Stop the rod at 11 o'clock to form your loop. The wrist is depressed with the rod butt almost touching the forearm. (As in the back cast, you may drift the rod forward.)

From position 1 thru position 3, in both the back and forward casts, the application of power must be progressive, continuous and as smooth as possible.

Casting Clinic (continued)

The back cast and forward cast should be in a straight line, as in figure E1. With a controlled wrist, the line should travel in the same direction and parallel to the movement of the casting hand. For example, a high back cast requires a lower forward cast, as in figure E2.

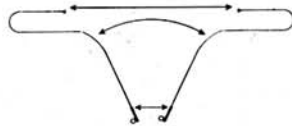


Figure E1

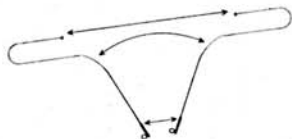


Figure E2

This concludes the basic casting stroke. All presentation casts such as curved, slack line, side arm, etc., are simply manifestations of this basic stroke.

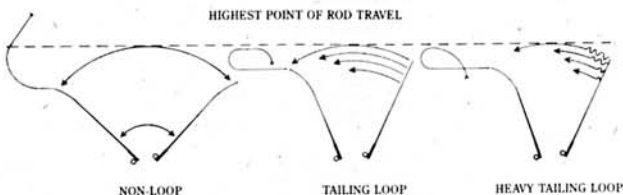


Figure F

Problem Loops

The two principal problems in casting are the arc, or non-loop, and the tailing or closed loops. Figure F

NON-LOOP—You are moving the rod through too wide an arc. You are dropping the rod too low on both the back and forward casts. Your hand is traveling in a circular motion. You are opening your wrist past 45°. **CORRECTION:** *Narrow the casting arc.* Stop the rod higher. Move your hand in a straight line. Maintain a controlled wrist, opening it less than 45°. Review figures C & D, stopping your rod as shown.

TAILING LOOPS—You are applying too much power too soon in the forward stroke—the most common error in casting. The casting stroke is jerky. The back and forward casts are not in the same plane. **CORRECTION:** *Apply the power progressively.* Apply the power smoothly; continuously. This application of power is the most difficult aspect of casting. Keep the back and forward casts in the same plane.

Five Points to Remember

1. **WATCH THE LINE**—Learn to watch your line and to recognize the types of loops you are casting. By evaluating the loops, you can determine any errors in your casts. Correct your errors by following our diagrams and techniques.
2. **APPLY THE POWER SMOOTHLY AND PROGRESSIVELY**—If too much power is applied too soon or too roughly, a tailing loop will be formed. This prevents the line from rolling out correctly. A tailing loop causes wind knots, catching the fly on the line and hitting the rod. These loops are frequently formed when trying for long distances.
3. **USE ONLY THE POWER NEEDED**—Too much power causes the rod and line to bounce excessively, resulting in a rough presentation and poor line control. Practice casting a specific distance with the *least* power you can.
4. **APPLY THE POWER IN A STRAIGHT LINE**—Moving your hand in a circular motion will open your loops, resulting in poor line control. Also, the rod should not wave from side to side during the cast.
5. **STOP THE ROD TO CONTROL YOUR ARC**—Stop the rod on the back and forward casts to form the size of loops you want. Avoid opening your wrist past 45° on the back casts.

During casting, all of the individual components work together to present the line. When one is done incorrectly, it may aggravate another. If too much power is used, it is easy to apply it too soon, tailing the loop. Too much power also makes it difficult to stop the rod to form the correct loop. When a rod is dropped down too far on the back cast, it is difficult to apply the power in a straight line, and too wide a loop will result. Try to integrate all of the components into a smooth, easy stroke.

We sincerely hope this brief clinic has helped you understand the fundamentals of a basic casting stroke. The only way you can learn them is to practice *before* you go fishing. You should spend your time on the stream enjoying your sport, not trying to learn to cast. A few hours of constructive practice learning the basic stroke will provide a lifetime of enjoyment. You may lose the perfect timing over the off-season, but you will always remember how to cast and how to correct your errors. ☺