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How to Cast a Fishing Line and How to Land a Fish and How to Cook it

(A trilogy of fishing information!)

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This e-book is an extract from Jon Daly's best selling e-book,

"A Not Too Serious Look at Fishing with Fly"

"A Not Too Serious Look at Fishing with Fly" as well as other aspects, takes you through all the attributes you should have, what equipment you need and the attitude you ought to adopt, in order to be a successful fly fisherman, or woman. Jon Daly has over 50 years fishing experience and writes in a tongue in cheek language that is mostly amusing and often hilarious, but in a language that can be understood by all. Experienced fisherman will relate to this book, inexperienced fisherman will want to learn from it and those not interested and have no intention of fishing, will have a good laugh.

If you enjoy "How to Cast a Fishing Line", you will certainly want to read

"A Not Too Serious Look at Fishing with Fly"

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How to Cast a Fishing Line

Prologue

The words fisherman and fishermen refer to both men and women

I assume you have a good quality rod, a reel that balances the rod and a fly line on the reel that matches the AFTM rating of your rod. You should also have a leader fastened to the line of a length matching the length of your rod. You can lengthen, or shorten the leader to your own satisfaction. A fly of your choice should be tied to the leader.

All the aspects mentioned in the prologue are discussed in "A not Too Serious Look at Fishing with Fly"

Casting the Fly Line

When you are fishing with fly, unless you can cast the fly line, you are unlikely to catch any fish. You can have all the flies in the world and all the expensive equipment, fish finding tools, spectacles that see under the water, homing devices, radar scanner, compasses and Sat.Nav, but unless you can cast the fly some distance away from you without causing a tropical storm on the surface, you will lessen your opportunities to be successful.

There are some people who can cast great distances. This can be useful when fishing deep as you are retrieving the fly towards you, therefore giving yourself more opportunity to take a fish. Dry fly fishing however, usually requires the fly to be left on the water for a short time, so there is less need to cast out of sight.

A good cast is a smooth motion forward and back with minimum effort and in the final moment of the last forward cast, the fly line is set free for the leader to gently drift down and nestle quietly on to the water.

The purpose of casting is to present a fly to an area of water where fish are likely to be feeding. Most fishermen cast to rising fish which have already taken real live bait and have subsequently disappeared beneath the water. No-one knows why I and other fishermen persist in this and experience has taught me that casting to rises does not necessarily increase your chances of catching a fish.

Casting, believe it or not, is based on the laws of physics. I read that fact many years after I was taught to cast. Therefore in my youth, I actually knew how to cast without knowing how I did it. Now I know, my casting hasn't actually improved, but I am able to blind people with science.

A fly line is cast using the lever principle. I'm not sure of the correct technical explanation of a lever but I will try and explain to you how the principle allows you to cast relatively weightless objects, such as artificial flies.

Basically, you and your rod are a fulcrum and the line amount to two balancing arms, i.e., the back cast is one arm and the forward cast, the other. In order to cast forward, the line must travel to its full extent backwards. If you attempt to cast forward before the line has travelled all the way back, you will crack the line like a whip and your fly will disintegrate into a thousand pieces.

When you begin your day's fishing, you strip sufficient line from the reel to enable you to cast to your optimum length. Experienced fishermen know just about how much to strip off within a few inches. You will need about 9 to 12 feet of line in front of your rod, the rest simply trailing by your feet, which you will stand on from time to time no matter how experienced you are. You will not reel in this line until you are finished with it, for example, at the end of the day, or if you move to another part of a lake or river, or change reels.

You now have the rod in one hand and the line in the other and you begin to cast, flicking the line forward with your rod at first, then flicking it backwards, trying to keep the rod as vertical as possible. The rod tip bends backwards and forwards under the weight of the line and, when the line reaches its full extent backwards, you flick it forward again. You will let the spare line out through the hand not holding the rod, so the length of line on your forward cast gradually increases. When you are comfortable with the backward and forward actions you let the line go in a final forward motion, aiming above the water level so that the line will gently fall on to the water. Each fisherman has his/her own action, but unless the wind is having some effect, or a passing tree intervenes, I would normally flick the line forward and backwards about three times.

If I'm fishing dry fly I occasionally cast more to dry the fly out. Once you know how to cast; only practice will make you perfect.

Once you have cast, you hold the line loosely in the fingers of the hand that holds the rod so that if a fish takes the fly, you are immediately in control merely by closing your grip on the line. You gradually retrieve the line with the other hand, the speed of which will depend on what type of fishing you are doing; however, you will still have the line through the fingers of the hand holding the rod.

Those new to fly fishing will watch their rod when they are casting so they know when the line is at its full extent backwards. You also tend to do this when you buy a new rod until you get the feel of it. Once you have developed your own action, you only look behind you when you catch a tree, grass, thistles, the odd cow, etc and are wondering why the line won't come forward!

You will eventually discover what your optimum length of line is for casting and it really doesn't matter what that may be because there will always be a fish rising a yard further on, which for some reason, you think will take your fly, instead the real one's it is already feeding on. The wind will affect your casting although you may be one of those lucky people who can cast into the wind. I'm not one of them. Surrounding vegetation also affects the way you cast and can make you bad tempered.

When you begin fishing with fly, watch other fishermen and observe the action of their rod and line; this can be very helpful in developing your own technique. Try not to develop bad habits early on, although it has to be said that most fishermen, including myself, allow their rods to go too far back on the back cast. This is the unconscious and mistaken belief that you can "sling" the line further forward rather than allowing the rod to do the work. If, after a day's fishing, your arm aches, you have not been casting correctly.

Landing the Fish

When you have the fly right and you are casting well and a nice trout takes the fly, you will find the old heart starts pumping and the adrenalin starts running. If it doesn't then you are probably not meant to fish. You strike immediately, which is the action of quickly tightening the line by gripping it in the hand holding the rod and raising your rod to a vertical position. You must keep your rod upright to make the fish work against the power of the rod and you must control the line with the hand holding the rod, but retrieving it when appropriate with the other.

Game fish weighing over one pound simply do not just allow you to wind them in. You cannot use the reel, as there is insufficient time to transfer control from your hands to wind in the excess line. Fish “fight” to get free and you have to “play” them, by allowing them to swim around, sometimes at astonishing speeds, until they get tired. Depending on the size and fitness of the fish, this may include letting the fish have more line, if they go on a run, or less line if they come close. Let the rod drop and the line go slack at your peril! Do not try to pull them around, let them pull the line from you, but make them work to drag the line through your fingers.

Rainbow trout often jump out of the water when hooked and often break the leader as they go back in. Brown trout tend to go deep but both kinds will go into weed if they can and tangle the line. This is not the fish using their brains, because they almost don't have any, it's just a defence mechanism. Sea trout and salmon do the same only more so.

Eventually, the fish will tire enabling you to net it. At this point you can be very vulnerable as you have a rod and line in one hand and a landing net in the other, without the ability to retrieve any line, or let it go. Before you grab hold of your net therefore, make sure the fish has really tired and the length of line between the rod and the fish is sufficient for you to position the net under it. Experience alone will teach you when the time is right to net the fish. If the fish is large, I have no qualms about asking another fisherman to help me and, if you are just starting out, it's a good idea to do this anyway. No one has ever refused me and I will refuse no one.

An experienced fisherman will tell you what to do, so it is part of the learning process. To take part in landing a large fish is almost as good as catching it yourself. I will consider that last remark and may change it at a later date.

On a very quiet day, the word “bastard” can be often heard echoing around lakes, reservoirs and river banks. This utterance is made by fishermen having lost a large fish.

Cooking the Fish

Eating fish you have caught yourself is fundamental to life and if others are there to share in the experience, all the better. You don't have to boast, as the evidence is there for all to see. If it's a smallish fish then you tell everyone they taste better than large fish; if it's a large fish you obviously don't mention taste. A nonchalant expression as if you never failed to catch fish, is even more impressive.

Anyone who says they don't like the taste of trout or salmon, has never had it, or has had it steamed.

Game fish must never ever be fried. Frying is for common sea fish such as cod and haddock, despite them being infinitely more expensive. Frying salmon or trout is like to adding water to malt whisky. You just don't do it and frying trout in batter is nothing less than vulgar.

You can steam or boil trout and salmon, although they are the least appetising methods as far as I am concerned. Fish can be baked, grilled, put into pies, casseroled, even microwaved, but by far the best method of cooking trout and salmon is to wrap it in tin foil and cook it in its own juices, either in a hot oven for 15 – 20 minutes at 180 degrees, or gas mark 5, or better still, on the barbecue for about 10 minutes. There is no need to add anything, although a little garlic butter smeared on the flesh side of the fish does no harm whatsoever.

Incidentally, when microwaving fish of any description, place a piece of kitchen towel over it; otherwise the fish can end up on the ceiling of the micro wave. You might think “there goes a man with experience” and you would be right.

Epilogue

I am serious about fishing, but as you have probably gathered from this book, I don't take fishing too seriously. I don't consider myself an expert; I just have a lot of experience. I don't know very much about the modern technical fishing gizmos and quite frankly I'm not interested. I am not a designer fisherman. After all these years, I still tie the leader to the line using a loop and a knot. My leader is never tapered, just a few yards of nylon cut from a reel. I have never used a braided loop leader that transfers energy from the line to the leader at maximum efficiency, because I don't know what that means. I still have days when I can't get anything right, fortunately they are few, but there are also days when I am successful, having worked out the fly, cast well and caught fish. That is what it's all about and why you can tolerate the bad days.

I can't express the thrill of a fish taking your fly, especially off the surface. It has to be witnessed personally. Time passes by so quickly when you are fishing, you wonder where the day has gone. The bomb could be dropped, but you would only notice if it affected the fishing. You can have all the troubles of the world on your shoulders, but as soon as you start fishing they all drift away, although they do come back to haunt you later. You can go fishing with a fellow fisherman; go your different ways at the start of the day and never see each other again until home time. This does not happen to me very often as my friends usually have a good choice of sandwiches and I have the whisky.

If you have enjoyed "How to Cast a Fishing Line", you will enjoy

"A Not Too Serious Look at Fishing with Fly"

This amusing and humorous e-book looks at every aspect of fly fishing, what equipment you need and how to use it. Those of you, who are not experienced fishermen/women and have no intention of becoming one, will appreciate the tongue in cheek style of Jon Daly's explanations and descriptions of this popular pastime.

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