

HOW TO MAKE A FLY ROD WORK FOR YOU!!

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Part 3:

#3 ESSENTIAL (ACCELERATION) OF FLY CASTING

Acceleration or power is one of the hardest Essentials to teach. From the start of the casting stroke, whether on the forward or back cast, you must **pull**, not push, the fly line with the fly rod applying acceleration/power smoothly.

You want constant acceleration, slow to faster, during the casting stroke. At the end of the casting stroke you must stop the fly rod, with a Crisp Stop. You need just the right amount of acceleration/power to allow the fly line to remain aerialized and turn over, no more no less.

Another term:

- Casting Plane: The path followed by the rod, measured from vertical to horizontal during a casting stroke.

A good drill to learn acceleration is with a paint brush and a bowl of water. Holding the paint brush by the handle like a fly rod, using whatever grip is comfortable for you, dip the paint bristles into the water. Note: There are various grips: (keyhole, forefinger on top, v-grip etc), I generally use the keyhole grip (thumb on top of handle as if putting a key in a lock). Pick a target out in front of you, more fun if you use a friend as a target. Have them stand 10 feet in front of you

Using the analogy of a clock face, noon being straight above your head, bring your rod hand to about ear level. The paint brush should be pointed straight up, (vertical plane) wrist straight. Note: For a right handed caster, looking at their rod hand, 1:30 will be behind them. Now cant/bend your wrist back so the paint brush is pointing to approximately 1:30, on a clock. Keeping your wrist and paint brush in that canted position, make a forward cast with the paint brush, keeping the paint brush traveling in a straight line path (tracking 180 degrees) from 1:30 to 10:00 to a crisp stop. To make that crisp stop, bring your wrist back to the straight position, or slightly past, spontaneously with the stop. Note: for left hand casters the clock face would be just the opposite (10:00 to 1:30).

When I teach I have the students use me as the target, adults and kids alike seem to get a big kick out of it!! and I find that this drill usually gets the concept of acceleration across. **See Fig. 1.**

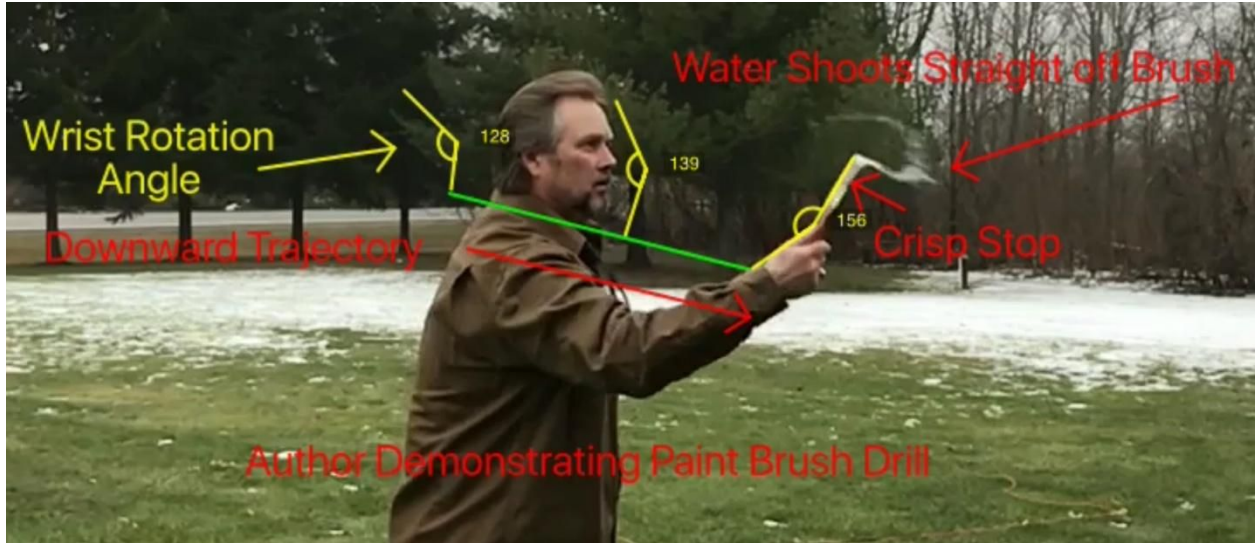


Fig. 1, Notice the narrow loop of water coming of the end of the paint brush. This is the same "Acceleration" and "Crisp Stop" needed, when fly casting to make a narrow (SLP) loop.

By now I'm sure you have noticed I have stated "Crisp Stop" numerous times and you will see it again, because it is that important with casting. The harder or crisper you stop the fly rod, at the end of the casting stroke, the narrower (tighter) the loop formation will be. Try this simple exercise. Keeping the fly rod approximately at a (45 degree casting plane) to the ground, reach back with the fly rod, with about 10 feet of fly line outside/beyond the rod tip, line taut (no slack). Have your non rod hand outstretched perpendicular, at a right angle, to your body. Now pull your rod hand with fly rod in a straight path into the palm of your non rod hand, stopping the rod hand, which will cause a crisp stop. " Like hitting a brick wall See Fig. 2.

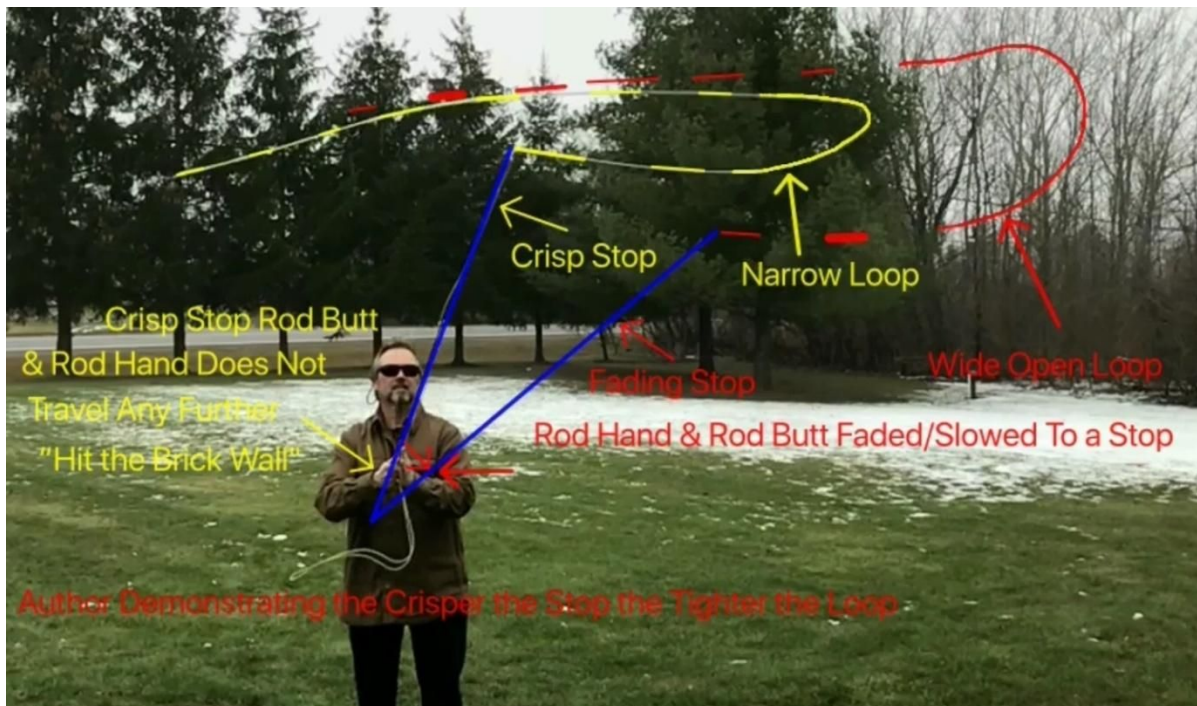


Fig. 2. The same amount of line and acceleration was used when demonstrating, for both the Faded and Crisp Stop. With both casts the rod hand and non rod hand met at the same spot. With the Crisp Stop, the Author did not allow the non rod hand to move. With the Faded Stop he did, allowing the rod hand to push the non rod hand backwards upon meeting, causing the rod to slow to a stop. Notice how much tighter the Crisp Stop loop is.

I most often use the thumb on top (keyhole grip), loosely holding onto the rod. When I make the crisp stop I pull back with my bottom two fingers and push forward with my thumb on the rod handle, with a slight tightening of my wrist, two fingers and thumb.

Now move your target back to 20 feet. You will have to use more acceleration to send the water off the paint brush to hit your/target, simulating a longer fly cast. Don't forget the Crisp Stop!!

After the cast analyze the water spray. If you used the right amount of acceleration and a Crisp Stop, the water will shoot off the paint brush, to your target, in a straight direction, **with possibly just a few drops landing on your hand**. If water drops onto your shoulder you did not accelerate smoothly, most likely you started the cast too fast. If the water comes off the brush but does not go far, you need more power/acceleration. If the water goes off at the end of the stop but fans out in a downward path, you need a crisper stop.

You can also use the paint brush drill for the back cast, which is usually a little more awkward for beginners. It's the same process only in reverse but this time you start with your wrist slightly canted forward at 10:00, make the back cast, with straight 180 degree tracking, back to the 1:30 position, to a crisp stop.

Acceleration of a fly rod is the same motion or feeling you get from the paint brush drill. Remember Smooth Constant Acceleration to a CRISP STOP "Hitting a brick wall".

See you with the next Essential!!!

Enjoy and tight lines,

Bill

About the Author: Bill is the owner/operator of Mangans Cast a Fly, a (FFI) Certified Fly Casting Instructor and Michigan DNR Certified Fly Fishing Guide. Please check out his website: www.manganscastafly.com