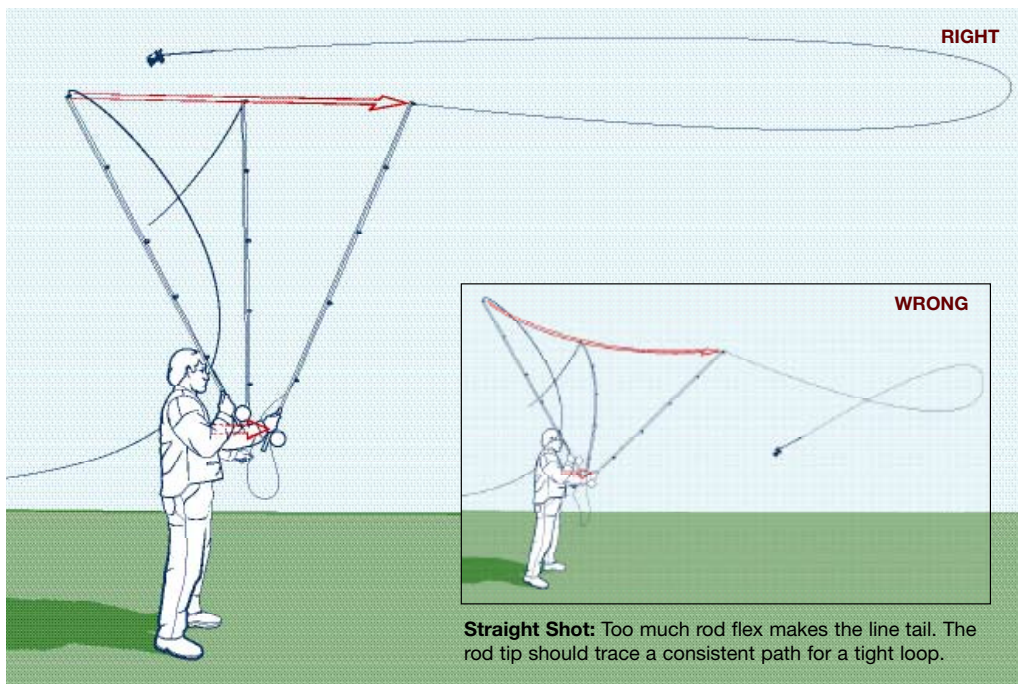


Lose the Tailing Loop

How to fix the slice of flyfishing

» A tailing loop occurs when the fly and leader dip below your line on the forward cast, usually causing a tangle. It is to a fly caster what a slice is to a golfer: an all-too-common problem caused by a simple mechanical flaw. But both can ruin your game. If you are accustomed to playing that second shot from an adjacent fairway, or you find yourself constantly untying “wind knots” on the riverbank, you know what I’m talking about. Here’s how to cure your tailing loop once and for all.



Straight Shot: Too much rod flex makes the line tail. The rod tip should trace a consistent path for a tight loop.

THE PROBLEM The vast majority of tailing loops are caused by overpowering or “punching” the rod on the forward stroke. It’s human nature. Trout are rising; you’re making your false casts and have a nice loop going. All you need is that extra 10 feet, just a little more “oomph” and...dang! Bunched up again.

When you overpower the rod, you flex it too much and actually shorten its length in midstroke. This changes the path of the tip and the line, causing the tailing loop.

THE FIX Imagine you have a tomato stuck on the end of a stick, and you want to fling that tomato into a bucket, say, 20 feet away. How do you do it? If you “whip” the stick, you’ll end up splattered with red mush. But if you gradually fling the tomato off the stick, you might get it there. Same deal and same feel

with the fly cast. The motion must be a gradual, controlled acceleration to an abrupt stop.

If you still have trouble developing this feel, practice in your backyard. First, tilt the rod sideways and cast from waist or chest level on a flat plane in front of you so you can watch the line. Start with short flicks

of line. You should see and feel good U-shaped loops as well as bad tailing loops. Eventually the good loops will become uniform, and you’ll be able to lift that cast overhead, still feeling how the line shapes. Once you get the feel for this, you’ll stop tailing and your loops will get tighter and your casts will go farther.