
What is a leader?

by Carol Farkas

Long piece of monofilament
Tapers from thick to thin

Butt: Thick end joins to fly line
Mid-section tapers to tippet
Tippet: Thin end
Usually at least 24" long

More fly-fishermen dream about new fly rods and waders than about leaders.

- Critical, balanced component of your tackle.
 - Nearly invisible link between your fly line and the fly.
 - Weighs a fraction of an ounce. Wins your fight with a 10 lb. brown.
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The leader plays a major role in your catching a WHALE of a big fish:

W- Where the fly lands

H - How it behaves

A- Acceptance / Rejection

L- Land or lose fish

E – Uninterrupted energy

X's and O's: Not Your Usual Game of Tic-Tack-Toe:

- *1880's to 1950's – Made from silk worm glands*
 - *X system developed*
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Tippet Diameter Fly size

0x	.011	2, 1/0
1x	.010	4, 6, 8
2x	.009	6, 8, 10
3x	.008	10, 12, 14
4x	.007	12, 14, 16
5x	.006	14, 16, 18
6x	.005	16, 18, 20, 22
7x	.004	18, 20, 22, 24
8x	.003	22, 24, 26, 28
		Hint: Divide hook size by 4 to get x of tippet.

Tippet (Pound Test) Diameter Fly size

6.5	.011	8, 10, 12
8.6	.013	4, 6, 8
11.6	.015	1/0, 2, 4
15.1	.017	3/0, 2/0, 1/0
19.2	.019	5/0, 4/0, 3/0

Minimum breaking strength in pounds. Match to bass, salmon, steelhead, and striped bass. From 8.6 on, X system not used.

Why overlap fly sizes for each tippet diameter?

Choose your fly, but you may need to go with lighter or heavier tippet:

- Water conditions
 - Attitude of the fish
 - Size of the fish
 - Use of fluorocarbon
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Types of leaders

- **Knotted** – Tie your own. Perfection loop at top for loop-to-loop connection.
 - **Manufactured** – No knots. Purchase at fly shop.
 - **Braided** – Long tapered butt section made of braided nylon.
 - **Furled** – Multiple strands of small diameter fiber (monofilament used on spinning reels) are twisted together. Two or more lengths are then twisted together.
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Cool cap but wrong color for fishing



Manufactured

Furled

Hand Tied

Harvey Dry Fly Leader

Tippet

Fluorocarbon

Braided

Winter & Summer Making Adjustments

- Shorter leaders in winter
 - Longer, more delicate leaders in summer
 - Fluorocarbon
 - Adjustments:
 - Carry tippet materials with you on small spools.
 - Knots seat better in tippet increments of .002.
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Leader problems to avoid

- Trying to attach wrong diameters
 - Leader / tippet too heavy
 - Picking up a bad cast too fast
 - Wind knots
 - Old leaders
 - Insect repellent
 - Tangled leaders
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