

## -How to Care for Your Fly Lines – submitted by Steve Hofmann

### Fly Lines Do Get Dirty:

Everybody's fly lines get dirty like everything else in the outdoors. The ground the line is lying on will have dirt and mud that will be picked up by the wet fly line. Fishing out of a drift boat creates many problems as the fly line will pick up muck from the bottom of the boat, as well as invariably being stood on. A fly line can even get dirty from water as well. Dirt, algae and pollen dust that are dissolved in water will adhere to the outer surface of a fly line. Therefore, fly lines should be gently cleaned after being used for any length of time. "Any length of time" could be after every trip or every other trip or at the end of the season, depending on the usage and conditions. The end of the fishing season is a golden opportunity to perform fly line cleaning, especially in the White Mountains during the winter months.

### Cleaning

There basically two methods to clean fly lines: (1) the simple bucket wash and (2) one step cleaning treatment-paste method. For the **first method**, simply put your line in a bucket or sink with a solution of warm water with mild dish soap. Let line soak (1-2 hours) and then strip to an adjacent clean bucket/sink of water and then strip/wipe the fly line down with a soft cloth. These steps are particularly recommended after saltwater or when fishing from the edge of a lake or a river. After wiping the line clean, apply a light coating of a fly line dressing. This will help to re-lubricate the line and gives the fly line a slick and clean finish. There are many fly line dressings on the market, but it is not known if one is particularly better than the other. ([Rio lines has a good U-tube video on this method](#)). It is a good idea to clean the reel spool at this time also before you wind your line back onto the spool.



The **second method** is to purchase cleaning /treatment agent and a sponge type pad. Pull all the line off the reel and rewind the line back on using the pad soaked up with the cleaning/treatment agent. See the photos below. Scientific Anglers likes this method.



Do not put too much pressure on the line when rewinding, as the heat generated in the cloth can distort a fly line. Too much line pressure or tension can also cause reel set or line memory. There are products on the market with pads and cleaning/treatment agents all in one package. Some line treatments can be used immediately some have to dry overnight, need to check the manufacturer's instructions.

Regardless of the method used, clean and treat your fly line and you will be rewarded by a line with better performance and considerably longer life.

**Note:** **All** fly line manufacturers suggest **not** using **any** of the automotive products for cleaning fly lines. These products have chemicals in that will certainly de-plasticize the fly line, leaving it dry and cracked over time. Use a cleaning agent manufactured and sold by a fly line company. There are other fly line treatments out there (Example: “Zip Cast, Fish Pimp, etc.”), but I would trust fly line companies’ treatments first. Other agents to **avoid** getting on fly lines are insect repellent and sunscreen. Insect repellent (Deet) is murder on fly lines. Fly lines don't last forever. Eventually you'll notice radial cracks in the finish of your line, which signals that it's time to get a new one. Most fly lines last two to six years, depending on how hard you use them. During the winter cleaning period is a good time to inspect your fly lines.

**Fly Line Storage:**

Most fly line manufacturers say that it is not necessary to remove lines from your reels for off-season storage. They should be clean and dry, and should be stored where they will not be exposed to heat, light, or any chemicals. If you have lines that you plan to store for extended periods, the refrigerator is best.

**Conclusion:**

Most experienced fly anglers agree that the fly line is just about the most important part of your fly fishing equipment because it plays such an important role in the effective presentation of artificial flies. Your fly line deserves “Tender Loving Care”. If you give it TLC, it will respond by giving you much fishing pleasure.

**(Compiled from internet articles by Rio, Scientific Anglers, Orvis, & Airflo Fly Lines)**