

Tight Line Nymphing for Winter Trout in Rivers

No Strike Indicator

Introduction:

Trout are active during peak water temperatures, late morning through early afternoon.

Usually, light fishing pressure will equate to more aggressive and less selective fish.

Trout can be found positioned in softer water close to banks. Cold water with a stable flow is clear so aggressive wading is not required. Fish from the bank first where possible.

Many aquatic insects are redistributed on the river bottom via behavioral drift. Caddis larvae and stonefly nymphs do this in the winter months. The drift can occur any time during the day and trout will feed aggressively.

Egg drift also occurs throughout the winter.

The following species spawn in our local rivers providing a high protein food source for many months.

- Pacific Salmon and Brown Trout September through December.
- Cutthroat Trout January through March.
- Rainbow Trout and Steelhead November through June.

Globug type egg patterns nymphed close to the river bottom are effective as are trout beads fished under an indicator.

Trout can be highly selective as to egg colour and size, which varies greatly as to the spawning species and time of year you are fishing. Try to match the size and colour to what is happening in the river.

Equipment:

Rods – Medium fast action fly rods ranging from 9 1/2 feet to 11 feet. A good example of a versatile rod would be an Echo Carbon XL Euronymph, 3 weight 10 feet long which is versatile in that it can also be used for dry fly fishing on rivers and also for lake fishing from a boat.

Reels can be either disc drag or click pawl but should balance well with the rod to avoid fatigue which can occur if you use a long rod and a heavy reel. A 5/6 reel which is not too light would likely work well with a 10-foot 3 weight rod. The reel should have a smooth reliable disc drag which is preferable when using long leaders and tight line techniques.

Lines – Euro-Nymphing specialised lines such as Rio FIPS Euronymph line #2 – 5 one size fits all with a thin straight diameter of 0.55 mm and suitable exclusively for Euro Nymphing only can be used. An alternative to consider is to add a Rio Euro Nymph Shorty to your existing weight forward fly line. The Shorty is 20 feet long and is looped at both ends and is an abbreviated version of the full length Euronymph line. The floating weight forward line on its own causes a problem with drag when it goes past the rod tip and will also fall back down the rod when the rod is in the high stick position if you do not have the Shorty. It is versatile in that it can be easily removed if you want to switch to fishing a dry fly.

Leaders can be purchased off the shelf such as

- Absolute Indicator Stillwater 12 feet 7.4 lb
- Rio Euro Nymph Tapered Leader

Sighter leader material such as Orvis Tactical Sighter – Tricolour should be added to the leader via a tippet

ring or blood knot.

A second tippet ring can then be added followed by about 3 to 5 feet of 5 to 6 lb of fluorocarbon tippet depending on water depth and conditions.

Alternatively, you can build your own leader from scratch as outlined by John Beavan's Meeting Notes detailing European Style Nymphing for Pink Salmon dated 21 June 2016

Flies - Nymphs such as the versatile Hares Ear Nymph, which can represent a variety of insects, can be tied on barbless jig hooks with slotted tungsten beads in a size #12. Attach to the tippet with a loop knot for better action in the water. A wide variety of caddis and stonefly imitations as well as egg patterns can be fished the same way.

Method – Cast line, leader, tippet and fly upstream by using a flipping and overhead motion. Any fly line on the water should be picked up immediately so that only the leader on the sighter is visible on and just above the surface of the water and the leader is in the air between the water and the rod tip

Start in the water closest to you and extend out in a grid pattern for subsequent casts

Keep a tight line at a 45-degree angle and lead the fly through the drift at the same speed as the water using bubbles and or foam as a reference.

Strike when you see your sighter move, or feel a tug. Could be bottom or maybe a fish!

For detailed information on this method, I strongly suggest reviewing *Orvis Guide to Fly Fishing –*

Euro Nymphing – How to with George Daniel – April 2020 available on YouTube

Also, the book *Nymph Fishing – New Angles, Tactic and Techniques* by George Daniel

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