



How To Buy A Fly Rod

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With so many choices out there today when it comes to buying a new or first fly rod many consumers are confused about how to go about getting the right rod for them. There are so many models and makers now with more being added daily that the task of choosing that first rod can be daunting for someone entering the sport. This article will help to simplify that process based on our personal experiences with buying our own rods and our experience selling hundreds of rods to customers over the years. This is not a preferential article attempting to sell a certain product or brand but a guideline we use for any customer in our store who is unsure about how to proceed with that all important purchase.

My first question to those entering the sport and thinking about buying a first rod is “how well do you know yourself?”. This answer to this question is key because it will allow you to place yourself in one of three rod categories when you consider purchasing.

I generally break down fly rods into these three categories: entry level, mid level, and top of the line. Entry level fly rods for our purposes are any fly rod between \$100 and \$300. Mid level rods cover the \$300-\$450 range and top of the line rods range in price anywhere from \$500 on up to the \$700's. For the purpose of our discussion with a new angler considering a first rod I generally dispense with the third category unless you are the type who knows you will pursue flyfishing as a life long passion and you are interested in only having the best available tools (or possibly you have tons of disposable income and would like to pass it on to my worldwide fishing travel fund...). But now back to my key question...

If you know yourself well enough to determine that you will be seriously pursuing fly fishing as a hobby and not just dabbling in it I highly suggest aiming for the mid level category in fly rods. This is usually where the best value is found: great components and performance, low weight, reasonable cost. If you are seriously pursuing a sport then it makes sense to invest in quality tools. What I often see and what I did myself when entering the sport 20 years ago was to buy the lowest priced rod I could find. Of course I was back in the store buying a better rod the next year and could have actually saved myself money by just investing in that better rod on the first go round. But I didn't have me to give me advice then...

On the other hand, “buying low” often makes perfect sense. You may know that you are “testing the waters” (pun intended) and don't have the time or the means to pursue fly fishing as anything other than a pleasant occasional hobby. Go low Joe. There is no use throwing money away on something you don't need and certainly won't appreciate unless of course you like throwing money away.

As you pursue fly fishing as a hobby or an addiction, you will over time, find a need for more rods and, in addition, as your skill grows, you will also want to upgrade rods to own the finest tools available—a sheer joy to use and the most effective fishing tools available. In the final analysis when you consider

the cost of outfitting for a sport, fly fishing costs less than many other pursuits—golf comes to mind. In any sport you will have an initial outlay to get equipped but in so many sports now days there are the “green fees”—those additional costs that have to be paid after you thought everything was bought and paid for.

Finally, since many ask, here are some of my recommendations on rods. First off, cast them if you can. If you cannot personally cast them, then the following list will get you started in the right direction. There are no bad choices in the following list. Each level is listed in order of MY preference.

Entry level rods: [Sage Launch](#), [Scott A2](#), Temple Fork Outfitters [Pro](#) or [TICR](#) series, [Orvis Clearwater](#)

Mid level fly rods: [Scott E2](#), [Sage VT2](#), [Orvis TLS Power Matrix](#)

High End: [Orvis Zero G](#), [Sage Z Axis](#), [Scott G2](#) (all 3 great rods in no order)