

Clive Mitchelhill

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For those of you, who I have not yet had the good fortune to meet, my name is Clive Mitchelhill and I am a fully qualified, full time game angling Instructor living in Cumbria (UK), specialising in fly casting and fly fishing techniques. I mention both, because in my opinion they really are two separate entities. That said I am also a firm believer that without realising your full casting potential you cannot reap the benefits that this can bring to your fishing, and ultimately improve your success as an angler.

Apart from being a very keen angler for well over 40 years now, I am also an active member of the Association of Advanced Professional Game angling Instructors and hold all of their qualifications in both Single and Double handed disciplines. I also hold all of the International Federation of Fly Fishers qualifications.

As a dedicated angler for many years, I have utilised a variety of baits and lures to produce the desired results, this has not only given me a better understanding of my quarry, but has also given me a real insight into their preferred environments, and therefore where you are likely to find them in ever changing conditions, especially when it involves river fishing. However, I must admit, that over the years nothing has given me greater pleasure, nor has been more rewarding, than my fly fishing, during which time I have discovered a few more things along the way (*which I might add is an ongoing process*).

If I may, I would like to share some of these discoveries with you, and in the first instance, I would like to take a look at a group of casts known as the Spey casts, so called, (*as many of you will already know*) because they originated on the banks of the River Spey in Scotland, where large sections of the river are tree lined, creating many natural obstacles behind the angler, making the overhead cast very difficult to execute at times. However, this is not the only reason why (*in certain situations*) we need to be able to produce, (*as well as understand*) a good Spey cast, especially in difficult situations on running water, and over a series of articles which I have labelled Six Of The Best I would like to explain this further.

Before reading these articles, here is a little Food for Thought!

Checking for obstacles behind and considering the elements are things that are often overlooked prior to casting your fly on the water. The main element in question is wind, but not only the fact that it may be a windy day, but also the direction in which the wind is blowing. This will be a major factor in the choice of cast you will require for a safe and efficient presentation of your fly. When considering wind direction, also take into account the direction it is blowing in relation to the flow of the river (*if on a river*) i.e. is it an upstream wind or is it a downstream wind? Already we have given ourselves three things to take into consideration when approaching the river, and that's before we even get started:

- (1) Obstacles behind.
- (2) Wind direction (*if any*).
- (3) The direction of flow (*in relation to the wind*).

All of these factors will have a bearing on the way in which we decide to tackle the job in hand, but first and foremost, making the right decision will allow us to enjoy our day's fishing in a safe and relaxing manner. Another compelling reason for us to learn these Spey casting techniques, (*of which there are several*) is that they can also potentially improve our success rate, as they will allow us to deliver a fly safely and effectively into areas that are often inaccessible to anglers with a limited range of casts in their armoury. It is only now that your own fly fishing techniques will begin to evolve and your confidence will grow. This is when fly casting begins its transition into fly fishing.

Over the course of these six articles (*shown in the links below*) I will be elaborating on this brief introduction and hopefully providing a better understanding of the advantages of Spey Casting. I am also very aware that there are already many good Spey casters out there and it is far from my intension to teach Granny how to suck eggs, but hopefully within the following articles there may be something for everyone, (*however small*). There is often a big difference between being able to cast well and understanding the mechanics of what you are trying to achieve, ultimately improving your technique.

In article 1 below I would like to take a look at the Roll Cast, as this cast is the corner stone to a successful Spey casting technique, and one that is often neglected by many anglers.

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