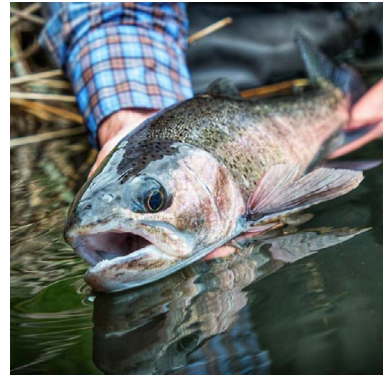




10 FLY FISHING TIPS

THAT SURPRISE ANGLERS OF ALL LEVELS

Water Time  Outfitters





What makes your fly fishing trip successful?

Searching websites for fly fishing guides can be stressful. Whether you're traveling from out of state to a "must-fish" destination like Oregon or you're a local planning a day away, your trip is coming at a cost. There's time and money involved, and you want to know you have a quality guide.

You deserve to look forward to a great fly fishing experience, and there are at least three big things that make a trip a success.

Spending Quality Time on the Water You came to escape the everyday world and take in some legendary scenery, and you need your time to be used efficiently.

Holding that Fish in Your Hands Scenery isn't everything. You came for the catch, and you need someone who knows what they're doing to give you the best opportunity possible.

Growing as an Angler Like any great sport, fly fishing is a lifelong quest to keep improving, and a trip doesn't seem complete without a great "Ah-ha!" moment.



“Ah-ha!” Moments Are Some of the Best Times on the Water

I've been guiding anglers on fly fishing quests in Oregon for 27 years, and I surround myself with a team of guides who also share a lifelong love of the sport and a heart for seeing anglers grow in their technique.

Some of the best moments we share with our guests on the water revolve around the phrase “I never knew that before!” In those moments, we know our guests are having a great experience because they're growing and feeling challenged.

On our multi-day trips, these often lead to some of the best moments at camp. Situated around our table at dinner or around the campfire, anglers love to compare notes on what they've discovered.



Things that Have Surprised Our Anglers

We could write for days about what you can learn while taking on the challenges of Oregon rivers, but this is a good start. Below, we'll share some "Ah-ha!" moments on the following topics.

Steelhead Tips There it is - the Unicorn, the "Fish of 1,000 Casts," and the reason so many people travel to Oregon. We're one of the few places in the world where they can be found, and you'll simply never forget the fight this fish will give you.

Trout Tips Hard-fighting trout abound in Oregon rivers. In particular, the Red-Side Trout is unique to limited-access waters of the Deschutes and offers a one-of-a-kind challenge. We'll drop a few tips to give you a better chance at hooking them.

Core Angler Skills Tips We've got a few other tips in here that seem to turn the heads of anglers of all skill-levels.

Let's look at some ideas that will help you avoid common mistakes and look forward to a great experience next time you're out on the water.





Steelhead Tips

We're going to lead off with the top three things you should remind yourself in the early morning light of a day spent swinging the fly for steelhead. With these tips in mind, you'll greatly improve your chances of success.

01 KEEP MOVING FOR EACH CAST. Steelhead are hard to find, but they will let you know if they want the fly. You have to cover the water to search them out. Cast, swing, and keep stepping down consistently through the run.

02 MANAGE YOUR SWING. Don't just throw your fly out there and hope. Control your swing speed by mending or adjusting the angle of your line to the current.

To do that, aim to have your fly move at a consistent speed across the current. Sometimes that means slowing it down. Sometimes that means speeding it up. How the fly swings will convince the fish to eat it, so manage your swing for best success.

03 **DON'T YANK IT AWAY!** In those precious seconds of intensity when the fish eats your fly, don't yank it away from them. **This is one of the biggest challenges for beginning steelheaders!** This critical moment is exciting, and it's hard to control your reactions. The wrong move will result in disaster, but the right one will have you fighting the fish of your dreams.

The key is to let the fish hook itself. Wait until you feel the heaviness of the fish solidly on the line. (As opposed to being on, then off, and back on, etc.)

Then, bend the rod towards the bank. **Be aware, this isn't a big hook set.** It's more of a tightening of the line, bending the rod into the weight of the fish.



Here are some specialty tips about Steelhead that have made a big difference for our guests.

04 THE “SINK TIP TEST” FOR WINTER STEELHEAD. I’ve had students in my steelhead class tell me they fished all season with no fish. When we looked at their set-up, they were using a slow-sinking poly leader. Not all sink tips are the same, and you’ll want to be sure you know what you’re using.

For winter fishing, the goal is to get the fly at a level that’s at least half the depth of the water. How do you know where the fly is? Try the “Sink Tip Test.”

To do this, stand in thigh-deep water that’s moving at walking speed. (This is a good speed for finding places where steelhead like to hold in the river.)

- Bring the back end of your sink tip to the rod tip.
- Place the rod tip upstream from you. If your using a 10’ sink tip and an appropriate leader (about 3’ of 12lb) the fly should swim right in front of you.
- Hold the rod tip at the surface of the water for a bit and watch the fly. It will rise, sink, settle, or hover.
- How it responds will tell you if you are in the game. If it’s right near the surface, try a heavier sink tip. If it’s slammed to the bottom, lighten up.

Sometimes switching from an unweighted fly to a lightly weighted fly is the secret. This helps your fly ride just a bit deeper and keep it in the success zone. Try the sink tip test to be sure you’re in the game.





05 THE “COMEBACK FLY” It happens all the time. You get the grab, the start of that magical steelhead connection, and then - it’s gone! This can easily happen with the swung fly strategy when you’re using sink tips or floating lines. However, you can get steelhead to come back for a missed fly!

If things go right, how you respond in this moment can turn a fishing story of “The Good Grab” to “The Day You Landed the Fish!”

- **Check Your Hook** Sometimes your hook will wrap up on itself, giving the fish nothing to hook up on.
- **Second Cast** Same Spot. With aggressive, wild fish, I like to make a second cast to the exact same spot, sometimes swinging the fly just slightly faster.
- **Back Up and Change Flies** If the second cast in the same spot doesn’t work, stop and take a short break by backing upstream about 20-25’. Then change flies. Typically, the rule of thumb here is to put on something smaller and darker.
- **Try Again** Start the process over and fish through the zone where your fish was. Be careful to be very concise about how far you step down between each cast. If you don’t get any hits, you might repeat the process or continue on through the run. Sometimes swing speed will make a difference and often a faster swing will get the job done.

When you encounter the grab that doesn’t stick, don’t just keep going. Try these tricks and get more hookups!



Trout Tips

06 THE SECRET TO TROUT FOOD SELECTION. Trout select their food based on these instinctive factors: size, shape and color. The secret is to observe which of these factors the trout are keying onto.

- **Size** is the first and most important selector when trying to match available natural insects to trout. When trout key in on a particular food item, it's generally a specific size.

For example, a Blue Winged Olive hatch typically has insects hatching that are all very close in size. If the insects that are hatching are size 18, and you're using a size 12, you're unlikely to find success, even if it's the perfect shape and color.

- **Shape** is how fish select between insects like a mayfly (sail shape profile) and a caddisfly (tent shape profile). Trout will key on a specific shape.
- **Color** is the least important factor. If you have the first two factors, you might still catch some fish. For example, the Purple Parachute Adams fly works even though there's no such thing as purple mayflies. If the size and shape are correct, you'll still find some success.

In addition, some anglers find they work best in low light conditions when colors aren't as vivid and the differences are harder to distinguish.

However, color shouldn't be ignored. Sometimes it's surprising what a fish will respond to, and you'll want to take careful note.

Using size, shape, and color to determine how trout select their food will help you be a more effective angler.





07 HOW THE OLD TIMERS CAUGHT THE
“BIG ONES.” The old timers always told me,
“The difference between a good nymph fisherman and a really
good nymph fisherman is one more split shot.”

Getting the fly deeper is one tool that helps fly anglers find the bigger, wiser fish that love to hang in the deepest and best lies. These big guys didn't get that way chasing little bugs over long distances. They let the food come to them.

Get your fly deeper with either weighted flies, more split shot, or better line management. You're likely to find the biggest trout in your waters.



Core Angler Skills Tips

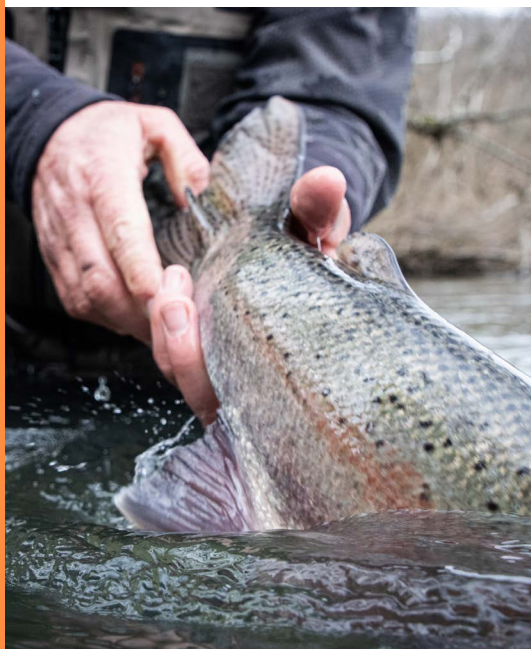
08 THE RIGHT WAY TO RELEASE FISH.

We're always surprised how many anglers have yet to get proper instruction in releasing fish. Few skills cut right to the heart of the sport like this one, and even experienced anglers miss some of the critical techniques for releasing trout and steelhead.

Here are a few pointers that are extremely important to ensure proper release and the best chance for the fish's survival.



- **Limit handling as much as possible.** It's critical that you don't squeeze the fish. When our big hands compress down on its body, they can cause internal injuries.
- **Carefully cradling the fish** in your hands often will relax the fish and allow for a gentle release.
- **Place a hand behind the pectoral fins up front and a hand on the tail.** This is the best way to support it.
- **Be sure to keep fish in the water as much as possible** while unhooking fish. If at all possible, unhook them while they are fully submerged.
- **In rivers, be sure to face them upstream.** Water must flow through their mouth and over the gills for them to breathe. Again, cradling with two hands will help you position the fish properly so their head is facing in the right direction.
- **Let the fish kick away when ready.** Sometimes this takes a bit after a big battle. Keep them underwater the entire time, and let them swim away when you feel them start to work away from your grasp.



Whenever possible, pass these techniques along! A proper release makes sure that future anglers get the same opportunity

you had to catch and land that great fish.

09 GORE-TEX WADER REPAIR MADE EASY. If you've got waders, you've no doubt had leaks. Waders are a big investment for anglers, and it's crucial to keep them in service as long as possible. However, finding those leaks can be challenging.

This easy way to patch leaky waders makes the task a breeze.

- Get a spray bottle of ISOPROPYL alcohol.
- Turn your GORE-TEX waders inside out.
- Spray the areas you suspect are leaking.
- Watch for a discolored circle to form around the leaks. Any hole in GORE-TEX wader material will show up with a different colored ring around it when sprayed.
- Dab a sealant like Aquaseal on the circle right over the alcohol spray and let it dry.



10 WADE WITH CONFIDENCE. Wading is

a key, sometimes overlooked skill for anglers.

The more stable and confident you are, the more effective you can be. When anglers are tentative or struggling with wading, it often leads to less fishing time and sometimes - an unexpected swim.

Here are two key strategies you can use.

- **Traction** Boots with felt and spikes are often referred to as the “4-wheel drive of wading.” If felt is not allowed where you are, good sharp spikes will be best.
- **Wading Staffs** One other item that can help with wading confidence is a wading staff. These are excellent if your balance is not the best. A good staff can be a lifesaver and help you determine the depth of the water for that next step, especially in low light conditions.

A good retractor connected to your staff is also very helpful. Your retractor will keep the staff where you want it, free up your hands to fish, and keep you from tripping yourself with a long cord.



Bonus Tip!

Use the Bow and Arrow Cast to Reach the Biggest Fish.

We couldn't leave this out! So many anglers are unaware of this technique, and it can help you reach the biggest, smartest fish in the river.

You'll often find the well-fed, wise old trout under trees. In these spots, food drops from the overhanging branches of shady trees like a rotating sushi bar of bugs without the threat of predators above like osprey. **This leaves fish in a protected zone that's near impossible to cast into without this lesser-known technique.**



The bow and arrow technique uses a tapered leader about as long as the rod and a stealthy approach.

- **Sneak in behind the feeding bruiser so you won't be seen.** A slow and careful approach is required. Don't send shock waves into the water and telegraph your approach. A big fish will be gone in a flash. Coming in from the downstream side, fish won't see you as they are typically always facing into the current looking ahead. Watch for them to roll and move positions, (polarized glasses can help here) but be careful not to move unless the fish is facing away from you.
- **Hold the fly with your thumb and forefinger at the bend of the hook and bend the rod back.** Be sure you've got just a leader's length of line out. Sneak in closer at this ready position if needed. If branches are very low, tip the rod to the side. If you have room, leave the rod over the top for best accuracy.
- **Be sure the rod is up off the water enough** that when you release the fly it won't slap the water behind the fish and spook it.
- **When you're ready, deliver the fly by simply releasing it** from your thumb and forefingers.
- **Be sure to practice this a few times** before you are sneaking in on a big fish.
- **Remember, when you're under branches in tight quarters** and the big fish eats your fly, be sure to set the hook low and to the side.

Master this technique, and you can savor the moment when your fishing buddies ask, "How did you DO that?"

Let's Get Out on the Water!

Now that you're armed with new ideas and techniques to try, what are you waiting for?

All of our trips are easily accessible from Portland, and we're ready to have you as our guest for an exceptional fly fishing trip.

Nothing makes us happier than to see anglers grow in their skills and succeed in this wonderful sport. We love the fishing, but we do this for the people who share that love with us.

Here's how we do it.

- 01 Tell us Your Goals** This is your trip. Is today focused on the big catch, or do you want to learn new techniques? Our guides are committed to serving your goals for the day.
- 02 Get Out There and Fish** You came here to fish. Period. We get you out to the best place on the river as soon as possible so you can make the most of your water time.
- 03 Enjoy the Upscale Comforts of Your Trip** Forget the cold sandwiches of trips gone by. You'll enjoy a hot, BBQ lunch by the shore, and chocolate chip cookies served fresh from the oven are just one of the comforts found in your fully outfitted, riverside camp.

If you have any questions at all, my contact info is below.

You can avoid a disappointing trip where your time feels wasted and instead **look forward to a journey through breathtaking Oregon scenery where you'll make the most of your time, grow in your skills, and create memories that last a lifetime.**

And until we see you here in Oregon,

Tight Lines!

Rob Crandall, *Owner and Guide, Water Time Outfitters*

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Your time is too valuable to feel uncertain about your trip.
You deserve to look forward to an exceptional time on the water.