

## The 'Fishing Rod Guru' and Fishing Tackle Care



I was recently speaking to my good friend and local angler Aidan Donnelly about fishing rods and fishing tackle care in general. Aidan is the 'fishing rod guru' who knows all there is to know about fishing rods and during our conversation he gave some good advice and tips on how to look after your fishing tackle, especially the fishing rod.

For many anglers, the fishing season never ends but for some the 'traditional' end of the game angling season still sees them take their fishing tackle and store it away until next season. Although most fishing gear will last for years if you treat it right, incorrect care and storage can shorten the life span or ruin the aesthetics of a fine rod or reel. Therefore before you just pack your tackle away the end of the season is the perfect opportunity to take a few hours and give your tackle some TLC. You definitely won't regret it when the new season comes around.

The fishing rod can be both precious and expensive. Every rod holds a million 'magic' memories from the first cast to the hooking and landing of a special fish. At the end of the season the angler should give the rod a good clean and check it over. Wash your rod with lukewarm soapy water or a recommended rod cleaning solution and dry it with a clean soft cloth. If you have any candle wax around the ferrules clean it away. If your rod has a cork handle also give it a good clean with soapy water and check it over for any damage. You may be able to repair some minor cork damage yourself using cork (a good cork from a wine bottle can do) as filler and rubbing the handle with a very very light sand paper or steel wool. Clean around the reel seat to make sure the threads are clear of dirt and grit. If you have left the plastic cover on your cork handle I would recommend that you remove it. Water can get under the plastic cover and rot the cork handle. Also the plastic cover on the handle can cause blisters on your hand from casting. Take good care of the rod's guides (eyes) by using an old toothbrush and / or cotton earbuds, dirty guides (eyes) will have a negative impact on casting performance. Check the guides (eyes) thoroughly for any damage, such as looseness or sharp edges. Sharp edges can destroy a good fly line before you realise it. After you wash your rod make sure that you rinse it thoroughly and allow it to air dry. If you store a damp rod away in its sleeve and rod tube you will destroy the cork handle. You may wish to leave the rod tube end caps off entirely to allow the rod to "breathe" during the long months of storage.

However if you discover that your treasured fishing rod is in need of some repair work, perhaps a guide (eye) is damaged or missing or the cork handle is showing signs of serious wear and tear or worst of all one of the sections is damaged or broken and it is not covered by the manufacturer's warranty do not despair. Aidan Donnelly is a master craftsman who provides a top quality service in repairing, restoring and enhancing fishing rods in his spare time. Indeed Aidan's work is comparable to the manufacturer's finish. He previously carried out this work on behalf of Coburns Tackle Shop, Scarva Street, Banbridge. Aidan is now providing this service directly to local anglers. If you need a rod repair, restoration or enhancement work contact Aidan directly on 077 0892 0779 and he will be happy to assist you and give you a price for the work.

## **The Reel**

Use a toothbrush and / or a cotton earbud for getting all the dirt and grit off the reel. Again make sure you rinse all the parts thoroughly and allow them to dry. When one side is completely dry, turn the parts over, so any water hiding in nooks and crannies can run out. Do this a few times. When the reel is dry apply some oil lubrication if recommended by the manufacturer and knock off the drag system. Knocking off the drag system will reduce wear and tear on the discs or other components. Just remember to reset the drag system before going fishing next season.

## **The Fly Line**

Always follow the manufacturer's instructions for cleaning your fly line. A recommended fly line cleaner is often the preferred option. When you are cleaning the fly line check it over for any damage especially cracks or nicks. Nicks can occur if a hook catches in the line or from it lying over sharp stones on the bank or in the bottom of the boat. Fishing with a line tray can help prevent some of this type of damage. Some minor cracks and nicks can be repaired using a good waterproof angling glue. However these repairs are only temporary and short term and require constant monitoring. Also check the backing and the fly line connections to the backing and to braided loops if they are fitted. If these show any signs of damage you may need to replace them. If you remove your fly line from the reel it should be clearly labeled and hung in loose coils over a hook or a nail. This will keep it from developing too much memory over the winter months.

## **The Waders**

Rinse the waders completely, wiping off any dirt, and hang them to dry. Then turn them inside out and allow them to hang for awhile longer to air them out. Check them for wear and tear or leaks. If there are abrasions or nicks that look like they may become leaks, you might want to do a repair job with a product such as Aquasure or a patch kit. The best way to store breathable waders is to hang them, but not by the suspenders or the boot feet. Instead, drape them over a hanger, allowing air to circulate all around them. This way, you don't stress the suspenders or where the wader and boot material come together.

## **Fishing Flies and the Fly Box**

Check your flies for any damage such as a torn rib or loose hackle and worst of all a blunt hook. If the damage is minor it may be possible to save the hook for tying another fly or even to do a full repair job at the vice. However if the damage is bad it may be better to safely dispose of the fly. Make sure that the flies are dry before you store them away in the fly box. I have found that putting a silica gel sachet in the fly box prevents the hooks from rusting. Indeed I also keep a few of these sachets in my boat box all the time. These sachets remove humidity in sealed packages preventing corrosion, condensation, damp, mould etc. You can get silica gel sachets inside the packaging of some purchases such as electrical equipment. However if you don't have any of these sachets in the house to reuse then you can purchase them online.