

## Fly Fishing Is A Pain In The Neck

Long, long ago in a land far, far away I fished with a vest. But this was no ordinary vest. This vest had a bajillion pockets and I put something in every single one. I put all of my fly boxes, all of my tippets, all of my floats and every single handy, must have tool that I owned. The yoke probably weighed 6-7 pounds, but I was ready for anything that presented itself. When I showed my father my new vest all packed up and ready to go, he said “nice vest” and smiled saying “you’ll learn” and walked away. Puzzled I had no clue what he meant. It didn’t occur to me sometime later when I finally connected the pain in the back of my neck and my shoulders with the weight I was carrying around all day.

The first question is, how many fly boxes do you really need to carry with you to the stream? I suppose the simplest answer would be, it depends on what you think you will need. But let’s give this a little more thought. Are you carrying hoppers with you in December? How about Light Cahill dry flies? I think you get the point. Carry the flies that you think you will need according to the season. Think about how many flies you actually use in a day or half day of fishing. Are you using less than twenty? I would bet \$100.00 you are. So why carry five or six fly boxes around all day with a few hundred flies that you won’t use. What about all those flies in your boxes that you have never used or used once? Why carry them if you don’t or won’t use them? If you are thinking that they don’t weigh that much, they don’t singularly, but they take up space for flies that you actually use, so now you have to get another box just to make room for flies you may actually use. Odds are that you probably use about a dozen different types of flies 90% of the time you fish. For those of you that predominately fish the trout parks, or tail-waters like Taney, I’m sure you can get away with a half dozen different types of flies.

Do you really need to carry every single fly that you have tied or purchased in the past ten years, even if it is the correct time of the season for that bug to hatch? The answer is no. Plan ahead and take one fly box and pack it with four or five of each size and color of the bugs hatching, and that should be all you need for the day or at least a half day. The odds are pretty good that the truck is probably parked less than ¼ mile away if you need to resupply out of your gear bag or you can resupply when you take a break for lunch. If you fish primarily with nymphs or scuds it becomes a lot easier. Pick up one of those ½ inch thin fly boxes that has six to twelve compartments. You can store a couple hundred flies in one box.

How many spools of tippet do you really need? Depends on how you are fishing, but I would think three would cover it if you know what you will be fishing with for the day. You don’t

need 7X or 6X for streamers and you don't need 2X or 1X for nymphing or dry flies, so why carry it?

When you fish, do you wear shirts that have pockets? Do your waders have zippered pockets, or a chest pouch or both? Does your rain jacket have pockets? Does your wading jacket have pockets? How about that huge pocket from the top of your waders down to your wading belt? Do you ever use any of the above pockets for storing gear? If not why not? Try fishing with less bulk and see if it isn't more comfortable and enjoyable with more freedom. See if you can make fly fishing less of a pain in the neck.

Sam Potter

