



## TU Teen Handbook

Written and Compiled by 2015 and 2016 TU  
Teens and YLC Members

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# CHECK OUT



# TU'S TEEN

# PROGRAM

# TODAY



TU Teens catch all the benefits of a regular TU membership plus a chance to participate in fly fishing camps, contests, gatherings of TU teen members, and plenty of opportunities to volunteer and have fun.

Visit [www.tu.org/teens](http://www.tu.org/teens) or call 1-800-834-2419 for more info!



# Welcome to TU Teens

Hello and welcome to the first edition of the TU Teens Handbook! We are very excited about your interest in conservation and fly fishing and hope this handbook will help develop knowledge, provide information, and answer questions.

The mission of the TU Teens program is to promote TU's coldwater conservation mission with teenagers across the country. TU works to conserve, protect and restore North America's coldwater fisheries and their watersheds, and the TU Teen program helps create and inspire young environmental stewards who will carry out this important work now and in the future. TU Teens are passionate about getting outside on streams and rivers in their communities and also about meeting up with other teens who share their interest in fly fishing, fly tying, and protecting the integrity of our nation's watersheds.

The TU Teen program came into existence in 2010 when TU chapter members stressed the importance of having a standalone membership for youth between the ages of 13 and 18. Once TU Teens was established, staff members organized the first annual TU Teen Summit on the banks of Pennsylvania's Spring Creek in July 2012. Since then, the Summit has grown each year, as has the membership in the Youth Leadership Council (YLC) within the TU Teens Program.

The goal of the TU Teens Program is to give young anglers a

voice within TU at local, regional, and national levels. Teen leaders have presented to TU chapters and councils, annual TU meetings, and the national Board of Trustees. By organizing and unifying the teenage demographic, we are ensuring diversity and inclusion at the chapter level while simultaneously making a large investment in the future viability of TU.

The TU Teens Program is organized into two distinct cohorts: 1) the general teen membership, and 2) the Youth Leadership Council (YLC). A large majority of the general membership attended one of TU's summer fly fishing camps or academies, while the YLC members are graduates of the TU Teen Summit. All teens within the general membership are highly encouraged to attend the Teen Summit, although the selection process is competitive. In the future, the TU Teens Program will try to move toward a more regional model and hold multiple Teen Summits. This model will allow for more teen leaders to attend and increase the size and influence of the YLC.

We are happy to welcome you to the TU Teens and glad to have you on board. Best fishes!

--The TU Headwaters Youth Staff

# TU & You: 3 steps to staying involved!

## Step One: Stay involved in your chapter.

The first step in getting involved in Trout Unlimited is joining your local chapter. Staying involved with your local chapter keeps you up to date with conservation events, fishing trips, community events, etc. Once you begin attending your local chapter meetings, spread the word and invite friends and family to come. Many chapters have informative speakers on fly fishing and conservation every meeting, making chapter meetings interesting and informative for all who attend.

To find your chapter:

<http://www.tu.org/connect/chapter-search>

## Step Two: Attend or mentor at Camp

The next step as a TU Teen in your community is to attend your state (or nearby state's) annual trout camp. Most states have overnight camps, where you can learn to fly fish, tie flies, gain the basics of conservation, make great friends your age, and much more. Attending Trout Camp allows you to begin your adventure in conservation, and also meet your state's TU leaders. If you are interested in becoming involved in your state's TU programs, we highly recommend attending your state's Trout Camp.

## Step Three: Apply for the Teen Summit

After your state's Trout Camp, the next step to being further involved in Trout Unlimited is attending the TU Teen Summit. The TU

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Teen Summit is held in a different location in the US every year, and teens grade 8-12 attend from all over the country. The Summit is mainly focused on conservation and the work of TU's Youth Leadership Council, and throughout the Summit the summiteers discuss and form different plans to help involve more teens in the TU community. Throughout the summit you can meet other teens from across the country with similar interests in conservation, listen to speakers on different conservation topics, and fish exciting new water with others.

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But the work doesn't end when the Summit is over. The summiteers stay involved after returning to their communities and complete the plans made during the summit to involve other teens that have completed their state's Trout Camp. After the summit, the summiteers make videos about the summits, write letters to other teens around the country, promote TU Teens on social media, and much more. These teens continue to stay involved throughout the year, and many attend the next year's Summit, or continue to stay involved through the TU Costa 5 Rivers college program.

### **In conclusion...**

So if you are a teen looking to get involved in TU, there are the various ways and levels of how you can get involved. Whether you decide to begin attending your local chapter meetings or you come across the country to attend the annual summit, anything you do to be involved matters to the TU Teens community and is greatly appreciated.

# Fly Fishing Tips and Techniques

*Make your time on the water enjoyable and successful*

## a) The Angler's Code of Ethics & Responsibilities

### Respecting the Land

The sport of fly fishing is particularly valued and especially unique for the places and destinations it leads the angler. But while you enjoy these beautiful places and rivers, it is also your responsibility to respect the land that you get to enjoy.

Many coldwater streams have delicate ecosystems we do not want to interrupt. So when fishing, be careful of where you step, and never leave any trash. Litter on the stream can have a much larger impact on the land than expected, and this large issue could be solved in many simple ways. Across the US, there are thousands of anglers, and with so many fishermen and women comes a certain amount of trash. But if 50% of fly fishers protected his or her waters by never littering and cleaning up after other anglers, the result would, no doubt be a much cleaner and healthier environment that will last for many years to come. As a TU Teen, be part of that 50% that takes the responsibility of protecting and conserving the land, and always leave the river cleaner than you found it.

Respecting the land can be brought to an even higher level by participating in conservation events. River cleanups, willow plantings, and restorations all help preserve the resources that allow us to enjoy successful fishing. Conservation events can usually be found through your local TU chapter, and the chapter leaders are

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always excited to have more participants.

Lastly, respect private property and other posted land. Many public access points on rivers across the US are fishable due to the cooperation of nearby landowners. Never intrude on private land, and always follow your state laws when fishing behind or near private properties. Many landowners will allow fishing on their property as long as they are politely asked.

## Respecting the Fish

**Trout** are a common quarry of fly fisherman and, as a coldwater species, must be handled with care. Bass, pike, carp, and etc. are also commonly targeted with a fly rod, and although they are a warm water species, all fish caught should always be carefully handled. **Catch and release** is a method employed by many fly fishers, and is continually growing in popularity. Catch and release helps preserve trout fisheries, particularly wild trout, and is part of a Leave No Trace Ethic that is valued by the complete angler.

**1. Carry a net** when fly fishing, allowing you to quickly capture your fish, and to leave it in the water while preparing for a quick picture and release. Never leave a trout or any other species lying in grass or dirt while taking a photo.

**2. Always wet your hands** when handling a fish, protecting the natural coating of slime on the trout.

**3. Take fish friendly videos & pictures** by only briefly bringing the fish out of the water, or holding the trout just on the water's surface. Wildlife professionals say that anything more than 7 seconds out of the water could harm or even kill the fish.

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## Respecting Other Anglers on and off the Water

Many times fly fishing will bring you to locations of complete solitude on the river, and days like those are never forgotten. But many times fishing public locations will bring you in contact with other fishermen and women.

When you meet other anglers, respect the water they are fishing. A good rule of thumb is to only fish at a close distance to another fisherman, if you would be comfortable with them doing the same. Be friendly and share your favorite or working fly, or where you caught your fish, and never brag about size or number of fish caught. Represent yourself as a TU Teen in a humble and friendly way, and it will many times lead to amazing friendships and great camaraderie on the water.

Off the water, there is an incredible fly fishing community on social media and on the internet. Feel free to share how your fishing day went, or post pictures of your fish, and don't forget to tag #tuteens!

We have personally learned that in order to become a better fisherman, a mindset that you can learn from anyone is invaluable. Pay attention to anything another angler on the water may teach you, and you will acquire a knowledge base of helpful information useful in a wide range of situations.

There is certainly  
something in angling  
that tends to produce  
a serenity of the  
mind.

-Washington Irving

## b) Gear Up: Basic Equipment to get started

*While there are a plethora of fly fishing gear and tools out there, you really only need a few basic things to catch fish and have a great time.*

Here is a list, compiled by TU Teens, of the basic equipment needed to fly fish:

**Rod:** Your fly rod should match the type of fishing you are going to do the most. The most common starter fly rod is 9 foot 5 weight. This rod is perfect for trout as well as many other species.

**Reel:** Your reel holds your line. Most reels will work as long as they balance nicely with your rod.

**Line:** Start out with a weight forward floating line that matches the weight of your rod.

**Flies/Box:** Can't catch fish without flies! A basic assortment of dry flies, nymphs, and streamers will get you on some fish. It is also helpful to have a box to keep them all in.

**Nippers:** Nippers are for cutting your line. Fly fishing specific nippers are great, but fingernail clippers will also get the job done.

**Forceps:** Forceps are one of the most versatile fly fishing tools. You can use them for everything from pinching down a barb to unhooking a fish.

**Dry Fly Floatant:** This is a powder or gel that keeps your dry flies floating high.

**Leaders:** A couple of 9 foot, 4x leaders will be great.

**Tippet Spools:** You can use tippet to replace the tip section of your leader. 4x, 5x, and 6x are the most common sizes for trout fishing.

**Net:** Having a net makes it much easier to land and safely release fish. Rubber nets are great as they do not hurt the fishes protective slime.

**Waders:** While not necessary, if you are fishing somewhere cold it might be a good idea to have a pair to keep you warm and dry.

**Vest/Pack:** A fishing vest, pack, or just a regular backpack is great for holding all your tackle while on the water.

**Polarized Sunglasses:** Polarized sunglasses remove glare from the water and help you see the fish. They are also a must because they protect your eyes from sharp hooks.

When they go  
fishing, it is not really  
fish they are after. It  
is a philosophic  
meditation.

~ E.T. Brown

## c) Trout Identification

*There are a lot of trout species, we have only listed the most common you will see while fishing. This also depends on where you are fishing.*



**Rainbow Trout** are one of the most common types of trout in the U.S. Both native and stocked, rainbow trout can be caught all over the world. Rainbows have green bodies with lots of small black spots, with heavier spots on their backs. They also have a pink or red stripe that runs down their sides.



**Brown Trout** are originally from Europe but now inhabit streams and lakes all over the world. Browns grow exceptionally large and are a favorite species of anglers. They have a golden-brown body with large dark spots, they oftentimes have red or yellow spots.



**Brook Trout** are native to much of the east coast and live in many high mountain streams. While typically smaller than other types of trout, brook trout are some of the most beautiful. Known to be found in beautiful places, brookies have become an absolute favorite species for many. Brook trout have white edges on their pectoral fins and red spots with blue rings around them.



**Cutthroat Trout** are native to much of the American West, and inhabit legendary fishing locations such as Yellowstone National Park and other world-renown western trout streams. Cutthroat trout have an orange/red stripe under their jaw, large spots on their body, and an orange belly.

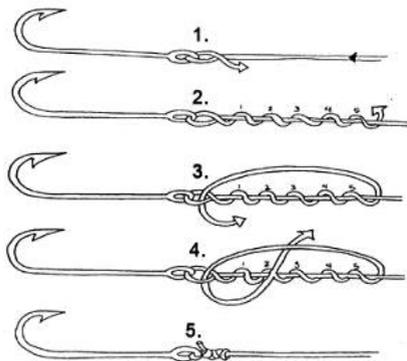
## g) Basic Knots

### Improved Clinch Knot

The improved clinch knot is one of the most widely used knots in fly fishing. Easy to tie, it has many uses and is very strong.

Here is how to tie the clinch knot:

1. Thread the tippet through the eye of the hook, and pull the tag back up with the main tippet
2. Wrap the tag around the main tippet 5-7 times
3. Pass tag through the small loop formed just above the eye, then through the big loop just created when the line went through the small loop
4. Moisten the knot. Hold the tag end firm, and pull the main tippet to seat the knot properly

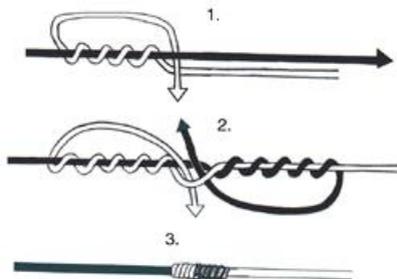


# Blood Knot

The blood knot is a widely used knot in fly fishing, and for good reason. Blood knots join two similar diameter lines in a strong small knot. The *TieFast* knot tool can be used here to form an easy-to-tie variation of the blood knot. This knot is very useful for attaching tippet to the end of a leader. Complicated to tie at first, once you find a good rhythm this will become an easy, go-to knot.

Here is how to tie the blood knot:

1. Overlap ends of lines to be joined. Twist one around the other making 5 turns. Bring tag end back between the two lines.
2. Repeat with the other end, wrapping in opposite direction the same number of turns.
3. Hold two tag ends firm (usually in mouth) and slowly pull lines in opposite directions. Turns will wrap and gather. Clip ends close to the knot.



Additional information and resources regarding knots can be found on-line. Check out a few of the TU Teens' favorites at the following links:

<http://www.netknots.com>

<http://www.animatedknots.com/>

<http://howtoflyfish.orvis.com/fly-fishing-knots/>

## **In Closing...**

**Thank you for your interest in TU Teens, and we hope to hear from you!**

Whether you are involved on a local chapter level or aspire to attend a Teen Summit and become a member of the Youth Leadership Council, from all the TU Teens, we want to welcome you to the group! TU Teens are all about working together, as youth conservationists, to preserve and protect our coldwater fisheries and get more youth involved in TU. You can stay in touch with TU Teens through our Instagram account @TUTEens or email [teens@tu.org](mailto:teens@tu.org) to contact TU staff.

**Tight Lines and Best Fishes!**

**--The TU Teen Youth Leadership Council Members**

