



Tips for Teaching Fly Fishing to a Veteran with a Disability



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Goal Setting

- Observe and assess individual veteran capabilities.
- Talk with the veteran and set realistic, achievable goals.
- Setting goals and expectations too high leads to disappointment.

Instruction

- Instruct diligently to achieve these goals.
- When difficulties are encountered, avoid the tendency to say “Let me do this for you.”
- Help the individual try and figure it out. You’ll be amazed at the sort of solutions they will come up with! Be a good listener....

Teach Onstream Self Sufficiency

- Teach the skills necessary to allow the individual to participate in the sport on their own. “Give a man a fish, feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, feed him for a life-time! “
- Avoid focusing only on catching a fish! This should NEVER be the measure of success.

Teach Onstream Self Sufficiency

- Teach the skills necessary to achieve “onstream self-sufficiency.”
 - Casting
 - Line control i.e. mending
 - Hooking, landing, and releasing fish
 - Knot tying for on-stream survival for tying tippet and tying on fly.

Instruction

- Adopt a curriculum and ask all instructors to teach to it.
- The consistency of message is very important!
- Lack of adherence to a curriculum leads to participant confusion and creates bad habits!

Tips for Success

- Don't sacrifice the teaching process to get folks on the water.
- Avoid focusing on a fish "body count." Remember that luck has a LOT to do with it.
- Take pictures of the activity, people fishing, examples of enjoyment and camaraderie. Minimize the "grip and grin", "big fish" pix. Too much focus on the fish often ruins the experience.

Tips for Success

- Be willing to accept less than 100% success and provide praise for this achievement, whatever it ends up being.
- Personal achievement for the individual is the reward.
- The “tug” IS NOT THE DRUG! The therapeutic relaxation response from fly fishing i.e. lowering heart rate, blood pressure, and stress comes from the entire exercise and the experience.



Thank you!

