

# Fly Fishing

## Merit Badge Workbook

Merit badges are earned by doing: reading the pamphlet, practicing the skills, and showing your counselor what you have learned.
This workbook gives you a place to organize your notes and track your progress along the way.
**Merit badge counselors may not require the use of this or any similar workbook.**
You still must satisfy your counselor that you can demonstrate each skill and have learned the information.
Use the space under each requirement to note what you have done and what you want to talk about, not to write out full answers.
When a requirement says discuss, show, tell, explain, or demonstrate, that is what you must do.
No one may add to or subtract from the official requirements found on scouting.org (Guide to Advancement 7.0.4.8).

Scouting America last updated this badge's requirements page on December 31, 2025.
*Requirements change from time to time. Double-check scouting.org before you start.*

Scout's name: _____ Unit: _____ Date started: _____

Counselor's name: _____ Phone no.: _____ Email: _____

*Links marked "Scouting America resources" are the ones Scouting America shares on its official badge page.*
*This workbook is unofficial and not endorsed by Scouting America.*

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**1.** Do the following:

**(a)** Explain to your counselor the most likely hazards you may encounter while participating in fly-fishing activities and what you should do to anticipate, help prevent, mitigate, and respond to these hazards. Name and explain five safety practices you should always follow while fly-fishing.

**Scouting America resources:** Why Is Fishing Dangerous? Don't Overlook These Risks! (website) · Wader Safety 101 (video)

**Fly-fishing hazards**

| Hazard | How I anticipate and help prevent it | How I mitigate and respond |
|---|---|---|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

**Five safety practices**

| Safety practice | Why I always follow it |
|---|---|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

**(b)** Discuss the prevention of and treatment for the following health concerns that could occur while fly-fishing: cuts and scratches, puncture wounds, insect bites, hypothermia, dehydration, heat exhaustion, heatstroke, and sunburn.

**Scouting America resources:** Splinters (video) · How To Treat Cuts and Bruises (video)
How To Treat an Insect Bite or Sting | First Aid Training (video) · Hypothermia (video) · What Is Dehydration? (video)
Heat Exhaustion vs Heat Stroke (video) · Sunburn (video)

**Health concerns while fly-fishing**

| Health concern | Prevention | Treatment |
|---|---|---|
| cuts and scratches | | |
| puncture wounds | | |
| insect bites | | |
| hypothermia | | |
| dehydration | | |
| heat exhaustion | | |
| heatstroke | | |
| sunburn | | |

**(c)** Explain how to remove a hook that has lodged in someone's arm.

**Scouting America resources:** Removing a Fishhook (video) · How To Remove a Hook (video)

**How to remove a hook lodged in someone's arm**

Requirement 1 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

**2.** Demonstrate how to match a fly rod, line, and leader to achieve a balanced system. Discuss several types of fly lines, and explain how and when each would be used. Review with your counselor how to care for this equipment.

**Scouting America resources:** How To Set Up a Fly Rod and Reel (video) · How To Set Up Your Fly Line, Leader, Tippet, & Flies (video)
Understanding Fly Line Tapers (video) · Cleaning and Maintaining Your Fly Fishing Gear (video)

Date demonstrated _____ Rod, line and leader I matched _____

**Types of fly lines**

| Type of fly line | How it's used | When I'd use it |
|---|---|---|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

**How to care for this equipment**

Requirement 2 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

**3.** Demonstrate how to tie proper knots to prepare a fly rod for fishing:

**(a)** Tie backing to the arbor of a fly reel spool using an arbor knot.
**Scouting America resources:** Arbor Knot (website/video)
Date tied _____ Checked by _____

**(b)** Tie backing to the fly line using a nail (tube) knot.
**Scouting America resources:** Nail Knot (website/video)
Date tied _____ Checked by _____

**(c)** Attach a leader to the fly line using a nail (tube) knot or a loop-to-loop connection.
**Scouting America resources:** Loop to Loop Knot (website/video)
Date tied _____ Method I used _____

**(d)** Add a tippet to a leader using a surgeon's knot or a loop-to-loop connection.
**Scouting America resources:** Surgeon's Knot (website/video)
Date tied _____ Method I used _____

**(e)** Tie a fly onto the terminal end of the leader using an improved clinch knot.
**Scouting America resources:** Improved Clinch Knot (website/video)
Date tied _____ Checked by _____

Requirement 3 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

**4.** Explain how and when each of the following types of flies is used: dry flies, wet flies, nymphs, streamers, bass bugs, poppers, and saltwater flies. Tell what each one imitates. Tie at least two types of the flies mentioned in this requirement.
**Scouting America resources:** Fly Fishing Flies Explained (Streamers, Nymphs, Dry Flies & More) (video)
Bass Popper Fly—Bass Series:McFly Angler fly Tying Tutorial (video) · Saltwater Flys (video)

**Types of flies**

| Type of fly | How and when it's used | What it imitates |
|---|---|---|
| dry flies | | |
| wet flies | | |
| nymphs | | |
| streamers | | |
| bass bugs | | |
| poppers | | |
| saltwater flies | | |

**Flies I tied**

| Type of fly | Date tied | Materials I used |
|---|---|---|
| | | |
| | | |

Requirement 4 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

**5.** Demonstrate the ability to cast a fly 30 feet consistently and accurately using both overhead and roll cast techniques.

**Scouting America resources:** Overhead Cast and Roll Cast (video)

**30-foot casting practice**

| Cast | Date | How consistent and accurate it was |
|---|---|---|
| Overhead cast | | |
| Roll cast | | |

Requirement 5 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

**6.** Go to a suitable fishing location and observe what fish may be eating both above and beneath the water's surface. Explain the importance of matching the hatch.

**Scouting America resources:** Match the Hatch Fly Fishing (video)

Date _____ Fishing location _____

**What fish may be eating**

| Where I looked | What I observed |
|---|---|
| Above the water's surface | |
| Beneath the water's surface | |

**Why matching the hatch is important**

Requirement 6 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

**7.** Do the following:

**(a)** Explain the importance of practicing Leave No Trace Seven Principles and the Outdoor Code. Discuss the positive effects of the Leave No Trace Seven Principles and the Outdoor Code on fly-fishing resources.

**Scouting America resources:** What Is Leave No trace? (video) · 7 Principles—Leave No Trace (website) · LNT Basics (video)

**Why Leave No Trace and the Outdoor Code are important**

**Their positive effects on fly-fishing resources**

**(b)** Discuss the meaning and importance of catch and release. Describe how to properly release a fish safely to the water.

**Scouting America resources:** Proper Catch and Release Fishing Practices (video)
How To Safely Handle Fish for Catch & Release Fishing (video) · Ethical Catch and Release (video)

**What catch and release means and why it matters**

**How to release a fish safely to the water**

Requirement 7 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

**8.** Obtain and review a copy of the regulations affecting game fishing where you live or where you plan to fish. Explain why they were adopted and what is accomplished by following them.

**Scouting America resources:** Fishing Licenses, Rules, Regulations (web)

Where I got the regulations _____ Date reviewed _____

**Game fishing regulations I reviewed**

| Regulation | Why it was adopted | What following it accomplishes |
|---|---|---|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Requirement 8 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

**9.** Explain what good outdoor sportsmanlike behavior is and how it relates to anglers. Tell how the Leave No Trace Seven Principles and the Outdoor Code relate to a fishing sports enthusiast, including the aspects of littering, trespassing, courteous behavior, and obeying fishing regulations.

**Scouting America resources:** Understanding Basic Fishing Rules and Etiquette (video)
Fly Fishing Guidelines with Leave No Trace (video)

**Good outdoor sportsmanlike behavior and how it relates to anglers**

**Leave No Trace and the Outdoor Code for anglers**

| Aspect | How they relate to a fishing sports enthusiast |
|---|---|
| littering | |
| trespassing | |
| courteous behavior | |
| obeying fishing regulations | |

Requirement 9 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

**10.** Catch one fish on a fly and identify it.

**Scouting America resources:** Fish Identification Apps (app) · How To Identify Common Freshwater Fish (video)

Date _____ Where _____ Kind of fish _____

Fly I used _____ How I identified it _____

Requirement 10 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

**11.** If regulations and health concerns permit, clean and cook a fish you have caught. If you are unable to catch a fish for eating, acquire a fish, clean the fish you acquired, and cook the fish you acquired. Note: It is not required that you eat the fish.

**Scouting America resources:** How To Clean, Descale, and Gut a Fresh Fish (video) · How To Clean and Care for Your Catch (video) How To Fillet a Fish (video) · How To Clean a Fish Before Cooking (video) · How To Cook a Fish (video) 5 Easy Ways To Cook Fish (video)

Date _____ Kind of fish _____ Caught or acquired _____

- ☐ Cleaned the fish
- ☐ Cooked the fish

**How I cleaned and cooked it**

Requirement 11 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

## Counselor sign-off

Your counselor signs your blue card or approves the badge in Scoutbook, and your unit records it. This line is for your own records.

Counselor's signature _____ Date completed _____

## Official Scouting America resources

**Scouting America resources:** Fly Fishing merit badge page (requirements and resources) · Fly Fishing merit badge pamphlet (free PDF) All merit badges

Made by Cole at ScoutSmarts.com, an Eagle Scout who loves helping Scouts.
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