

Simple Spiral

Revisited...

Sometimes things are so simple that they are easily misunderstood. Such happened with the original "Simple Spiral" technique. Here's the proper way to do it!

by Tom Kirkman



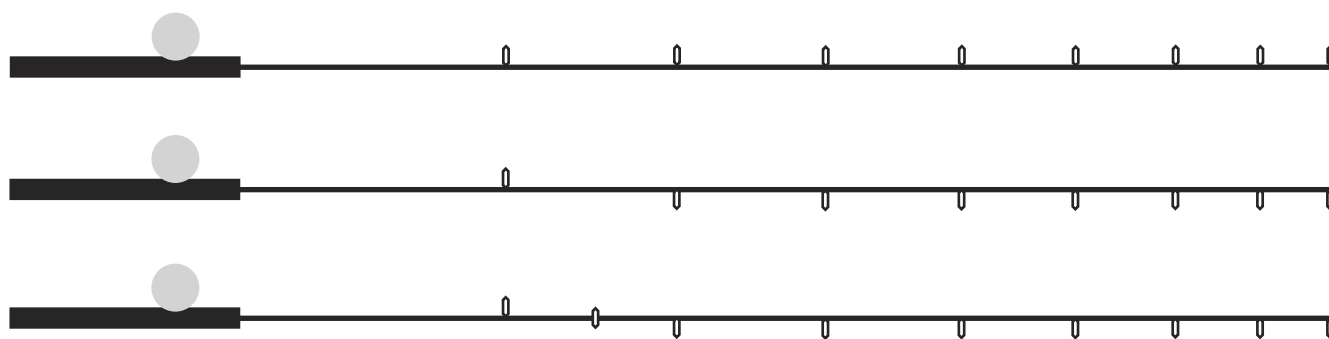
What has come to be known as the Simple Spiral was the direct result of my need to develop a spiral wrap system that could be explained to someone over the phone in less than one minute...

Not long after coming up with a solution, I tested two rods outfitted with the Simple Spiral, found them completely effective and then shot a note out to Ralph O'Quinn who had done a great deal of work on spiral wrap systems. He wrote back and said, "You know, this is really all you have to do. Isn't it?"

The method took hold after another rod builder submitted an article on the system to this magazine for publication. But as in so many things, the specifics tend to get lost over time and various incorrect incarnations start cropping up, further complicating what was, and is, the most simple spiral wrap system ever devised. More than a few rod builders looked at the photos and illustrations but perhaps didn't take the few minutes to actually read the article. In short order, the Simple Spiral was turned, by some, into just another name for the common single 90-degree transition spiral wrap. One thing led to another and this mis-representation spread and took hold in far too many rod builder's minds and shops.

With that in mind, let's do a rewind and again present the system here in these pages for builders that may not have had access to the original article.

Illustration #1



Top - Standard guides-on-top casting rod.

Middle - All guides forward of butt guide are spun to bottom to achieve the Simple Spiral.

Bottom - A Rub Prevention Guide located on the 90-degree axis between butt and 2nd guide. Note - Guide spacing is NOT altered to accommodate a Rub Prevention Guide.

Illustration #2



Spiral Wrap with single 90-degree transition guide. This is NOT a Simple Spiral.

The Simple Spiral Wrap - “How To”

Set up your rod as if it were a standard guides-on-top casting rod. Set your butt guide per your normal routine and do a static stress distribution test to ensure adequate stress distribution under load. Without changing the location of any of the guides, just spin all of them including the tiptop, to the bottom of the rod. Leave the butt guide on top.

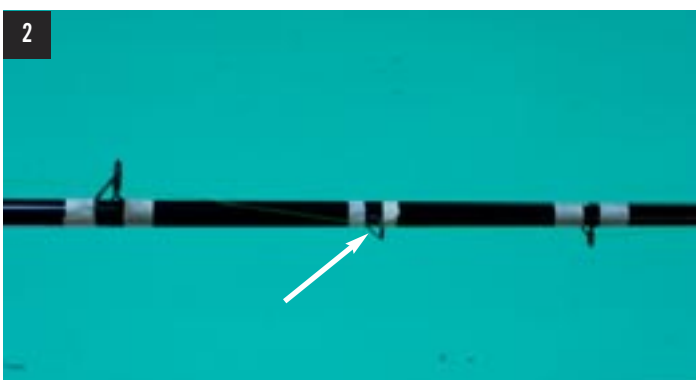
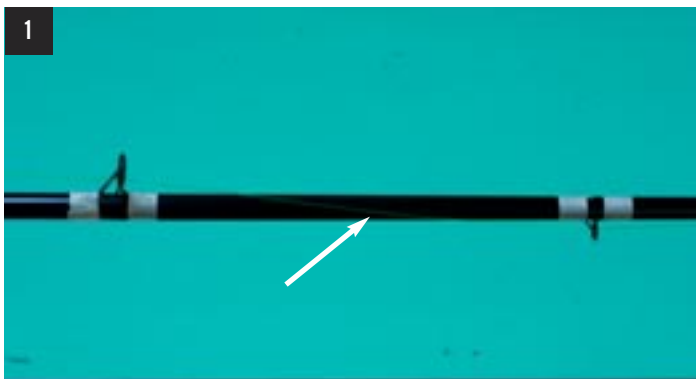
All guides beyond the butt guide should be the SAME size.

If a Rub Prevention Guide is used, it should be a low frame design, or modified/bent to keep the ring very low and close to the rod blank.

Other Considerations

Because there are no transition guides on the Simple Spiral Wrap, you do not have to worry about “spiralling” to the left or right. It is certainly possible to rig the line to the left or right of the rod blank and expect equal results.

However, if you use a Rub Prevention Guide it may be worthwhile to locate it on the same side as the reel handle. Many fishermen who lie their rods on the boat deck find that the rods ride better if they are oriented handle side up. Therefore, to keep pressure off the Rub Prevention Guide it makes sense to locate it on the same side of the rod as the reel handle.



In a Nutshell

What I'm about to write is exactly what I would tell any builder that called me and asked how to set up a spiral wrap system. Here we go-

Set up your rod as if it were a standard guides-on-top casting rod. Set your butt guide per your normal routine and do a static stress distribution test to ensure adequate stress distribution under load. Without changing the location of any of the guides, just spin all of them including the tiptop, to the bottom of the rod. Leave the butt guide on top. You're done. That's all there is to it.

There is no reason to use a horde of different guide sizes with this method. Select your butt guide as per your normal routine. ALL the running guides (all guides forward of the butt guide) should be the same size.

Due to the amazing simplicity of this method, many builders will at once ask how you get the line to the bottom of the rod without any transition guides between the 0-axis butt guide and the first 180-axis guide. The answer is that you don't have to transition the line to the bottom of the rod - it will go there naturally if only you will let it. So let it.

Rub Prevention Guide (Bumper)

This is where many people get confused about the Simple Spiral and assume it is a spiral wrap system with a single transition guide at 90 degrees. Not so. On the Simple Spiral *there are no transition guides*. But knowing that some people will object to the line rubbing against the blank as it passes alongside the blank between the 0 and 180 degree guides, I recommended fitting a very low frame casting style guide between the 0 and 180 degree guides at whatever location would prevent line rub against the blank. Generally this will be at 90 degrees and about halfway between the first two guides. Adjust as necessary.

I did not coin the term "Bumper Guide" and feel that over the years the term itself has led to some of the confusion. For that reason I'm renaming it a "*Rub Prevention Guide*" as that is its only function - to prevent the line from rubbing the blank as it passes from the 0 to 180 degree guide.

Do NOT Alter Spacing

The next point where some became confused was in what to do with the guide spacing if you installed a 90 degree Rub guide. As the original system and original article specified - **DO NOT ALTER THE EXISTING SPACING OF ANY OF THE GUIDES**. The Rub Prevention Guide is an addition to the set-up, not a part of it. It does not function as a means of stress distribution nor as a means to transition the line to the bottom of the rod.

So let's say your normal guides on top spacing after a static distribution test has located the butt and 2nd guide about 9 inches apart from each other. The butt guide stays on top, but the 2nd guide, along with all the rest, are then spun to the bottom of the rod at 180 degrees. The butt and 2nd guide remain 9 inches apart. If you want to install a Rub Guide, you would locate it between the butt and 2nd guide, without altering the spacing between the butt and 2nd guide. See illustration #1.

Fine Tuning the Rub Prevention Guide

Generally this guide will be located on the 90 degree axis and about exactly halfway between the butt and 2nd guide. But in some cases and depending upon where the line rubs the blank between the butt and 2nd guide, and when the blank is under load, you may find that there is a better location slightly lower or higher, or further aft or fore. It isn't hard to find the best location for the Rub Guide. Wrap the guides, string up the rod, and load it from the same line running through the guides. Note the location where the line contacts the rod blank (2). Locate the Rub Guide at that spot (3&4).

Other Rub Prevention Solutions

Because the Rub Guide neither transitions the line nor performs any stress distribution function, it isn't needed to begin with, unless you simply can't stand to have the line contact the rod blank. There are other means of preventing the line from the rubbing the blank.

If you perform the static test as outlined above, you will notice that as you increase or decrease the load on the blank, the contact point where the line rubs the blank will move ever so slightly. In this case, a wrap of A thread covered with a few coats of Perma-Gloss or similar, will suffice to adequately cover the entire area of line to blank contact regardless of the load applied (5). Yes, the line will rub against the coated thread wrap, just as it would the rod blank. But no wear will then occur to the rod blank or rod blank coating/paint.

Whether to use a Rub Prevention Guide, a Rub Prevention Wrap or neither, is up to the builder. The rod will perform exactly the same regardless.

There are many spiral wrap systems. Most all work very well. The Simple Spiral works equally well and in most cases is quicker and easier to set up. If you know how to set up a regular guides-on-top bait casting rod then you know how to set up a Simple Spiral. 

