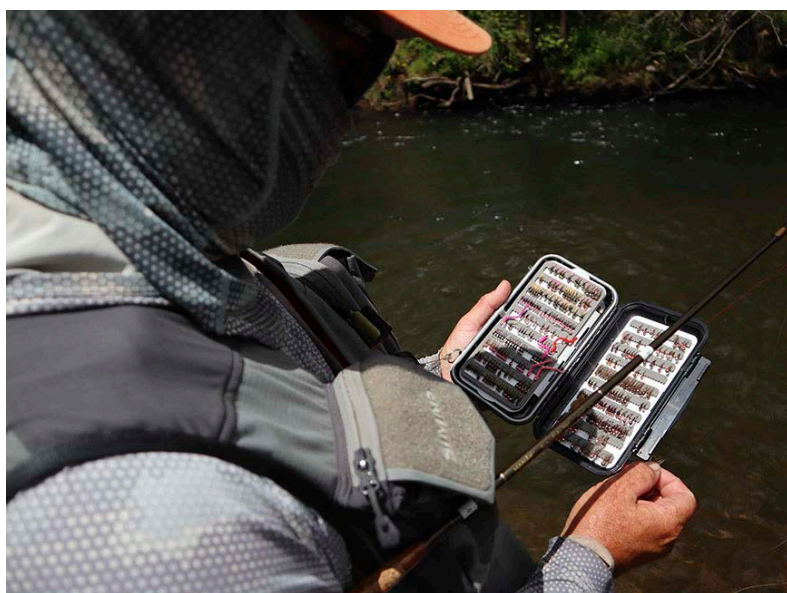




## The Rise of Euro Nymphing By Lubin Pfeiffer

The rise of Euro Nymphing in the fly fishing world has come about from competition angling. Competition angling is not everyone's cup of tea, but if you love catching fish then it is a technique you should consider mastering. The difference between normal nymphing and euro style, is the ability to fish heavy or faster flowing rivers with better contact with your flies. Thin fly lines and tippets enable the angler to present flies at depth and feel even the slightest grab from a fish. I've watched trout inhale and reject flies in an instant, so contact is a massive part of successful fly fishing. While nymph under dry is a very effective and proven technique, nothing quite compares to the numbers of fish you can catch while presenting the same nymphs using a euro rig. Don't get me wrong, to be an efficient competition angler you need to be proficient over each and every technique that's used fly fishing rivers, but when it comes to fishing flowing waters, euro nymphing is something you should definitely get your head around as the numbers of fish you can catch is sometimes mind blowing.



### The Basic Setup

When choosing a rod, try to use the lightest you can. This will give you the best contact and feel while moving the nymphs through the water. I've used everything from 4wt 9ft rods to 3wt 10'6ft rods. If I had to pick one that is a good allrounder, it would be a 10ft 2-3wt. It is a nice length to fish with, very soft for landing fish of all sizes and has great contact for feeling even the slightest change in the drift. The line I use is a specific 0wt euro nymph line, there are a few of these on the market. At just 0.55mm in diameter the contact is much better than much thicker lines on the market. Spool the line on the lightest reel you can



as this will feel so much better to fish with, I've been using a Lamson Liquid, but any reasonable alloy reel is fine. The leader is a huge part of the setup and getting it right is key. Starting from the fly line, I like a rod length long section of 0.20mm brightly coloured monofilament. I've used bright orange, yellow and pink in the past. The important part is what you can see best and this is different for everyone. The leader is attached with a simple blood knot to either the welded loop, or a small loop created using the braid from the inner core of the fly line. The most important factor is that the connection passes through the guides effortlessly to enable smooth control of the drifts. To the end of my long section of colour is a 30cm section of 0.20mm clear mono before the 50cm section of 0.20mm single colour or bi-colour indicator. On the end of my indicator is a two-millimetre micro ring to which I can attach my tippet.

My tippet can be 0.16mm or 0.10mm Trout Hunter Fluorocarbon depending on the size of the fish in the river. The tippet length is always depended on the water depth. As is whether or not I will use one or two nymphs at a time. For small, overgrown rivers, one nymph is all that you will need to catch plenty of fish. As a starting point try having the fly about 60cm from your micro ring. But again, this needs to chop and change depending on the water depth. For big open rivers, two nymphs are the go. Have your point fly and dropper about 50cm apart and chop and change the section between your dropper and micro ring depending on the water depth. The beauty of a micro ring is that your leader remains intact no matter how many times you change your tippet. Contact is key with Euro nymphing and you will be

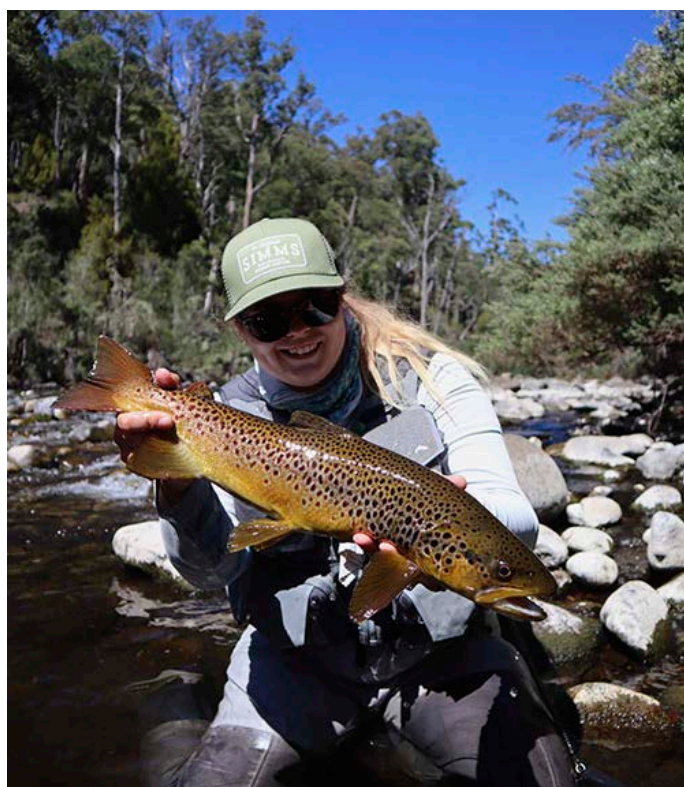
amazed at how many more fish you catch when you get the tippet length and water depth equation right. Even small changes will sometimes make all the difference!

Fly selection is all about weight and size rather than having 50 different patterns in your fly box. Try and keep your selection down to about five of your favourite flies and have these in many different sizes, weights or the addition of a hot spot. For example, I use a pheasant tail nymph a lot but I tie them in sizes 14 through to 20, I have them on tungsten beads from sizes 2mm through to 4mm. Some are just plain and others have a hot orange collar or butt on them. This is just one pattern

but I probably have 60-70 of them in different variations. As a starting point I would recommend having a pheasant tail pattern, a hares ear pattern, a caddis pattern, a claret nymph and a tag nymph pattern in the weights and variations mentioned.

### **Selecting the water and how to fish it**

Euro nymphing is usually done working upstream and choosing the right water is key. You'll want a section of river with a bit of pace in it. Fast water is Euro nymph water and the slacker water is the spot to work a dry/dropper or single dry. Whether it's a deep fast chute, section of pocket water or bub-



bly currents that scream fish, Euro will absolutely be my first technique of choice for these water types. Always try to fish short as this will give you the best contact with your fly. With single or double light weight nymphs, usually 2mm - 3mm bead size, you can use a conventional style cast to present the fly where you want it. With heavier presentations, you'll need to water



cast your flies as it's pretty much impossible to get them where you want them any other way effectively. Once the fly lands, you then need to strip the line to get in contact with the fly as quickly as possible but not pull the fly, let the water move the nymph. Follow the fly with your rod tip as it drifts down the river and strip the line to keep in touch. Stripping the line and keeping the rod parallel to the water will give you far better contact rather than lifting the rod to stay in touch. Once the fly is passed you, it's time to recast and repeat the process. Cover every likely spot with a few casts as you move up the river. A good way to do this is to grid the water. Take a mental note of where your first cast landed, and then make each cast that length but slightly further across the river, working to the other side. Once you reach the other side, wade back across the river and up to where your first cast landed and repeat the process.

A few secret tips that I can reveal are sometimes swinging the nymphs can produce extra numbers of fish while you work the upstream conventional method. I do this every four or five drifts. Animation is another big one, particularly for NZ rivers as those angry rainbows will nail a fly that's got a bit of movement. The best way to do this is lifting the rod up and down with small movements during the drift. That will get those flies moving enticingly as they move down the river with the current. Combining a swing and a bit of animation is also a great way of picking up a few more from a piece of water.



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