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Choosing the right fly rod is an important decision when starting out. Many beginners do not know much about rod weights or lengths. You do not want to end up with something too heavy, too light, too long or short.

Opinions may vary a little on what is the preferred rod weight or length for a given species fishing or fishing situation.

What you have to ask yourself is what kind of fishing are you going to be doing? If you spin fish, think of the water you typically fish. Is it a small trout stream you could almost jump across, a medium sized creek or larger river.

There are a lot of opinions floating around but I hear a lot of people say that a 5 weight rod about 8' 6" to 9' 0" is the most typical trout rod used in Pennsylvania. While that is generally a pretty good all around rod size and weight, and fairly commonly used as well, don't assume it is the right rod for you.

When I first started out fly fishing in Northeastern Pennsylvania I drove to the nearest fly shop I could find just over the border in New York and stocked up on all kinds of fly gear including an 8'6" 5/6 weight Browning fly rod, which I was told was a typical setup.

It turns out, this is a great rod for medium and large streams with plenty of nice sized trout maybe 14-18 inches in size, however, unfortunately for me I usually fished very small tight streams with smaller trout.

For me the transition using an oversized rod was very tough. Before then, my weapon of choice was a tiny 5 foot ultralite spinning rod, and I would bow and arrow cast tiny jigs under bushes and overhangs on small brushy streams or under a pine tree canopy with dead branches hanging in the way everywhere.

I found myself fishing water I normally didn't fish. I fished for bass in large ponds and larger streams just so I could improve my casting. I found that the rod was too large and heavy for smaller streams and it barely bent when a small trout was hooked on it.

A few years later, after learning more about the sport I purchased a 7' 6" 4 weight St. Croix outfit. This is a foot shorter and a little bit lighter weight rod for smaller streams and smaller fish. I found myself using it more and more on smaller streams where I would normally spinfish, and fly fishing became more enjoyable.

Feel free to add your own opinions or personal experience on rod size and weight. This is just a post to get opinions flowing, and to shed some light on what rod weight/length people prefer for their style of fishing.