

The Body Block

The Body Block: Using your body to help you get an abrupt stop

All fly casting requires the casting stroke to be a smooth acceleration to an abrupt stop. With lighter gear and shorter casts (short line) the stop can be fairly easy to accomplish.

But there are times when it is not as easy to stop the rod abruptly. If you are using a heavier outfit than usual, if you're using a longer casting stroke to achieve greater overall acceleration and loading, or you may need to be very efficient with your cast because you may have a limited stroke length such as when you're wading deep in the surf. In all of these situations the abrupt stop becomes important to maximize your casting efficiency.

I suggest using the body block as a tool to help you achieve this abrupt stop.

The body block is using the structure of your rod arm to force a complete stop at the end of your casting stroke. This is a term coined by Joan Wulff.

Specifically it is using the inherent structure of your forearm and upper arm. During the back cast stroke, keep your elbow fairly close to the side of your body.

As your forearm accelerates back, toward your upper arm, you reach a point where the elbow is fully bent. The forearm is now just touching the lower portion of your upper arm (lower bicep). When you reach this point, you can not easily move your forearm any further back.. Don't force your forearm any further or you will rotate your elbow forward, defeating the purpose of this body structure. The forearm and upper arm make this body block only when the elbow is kept close to the side. (**See picture 1**).



Picture 1.

It sort of creates a brick wall for your forearm to hit. This is what helps get that abrupt stop on the back cast.

That's all there is to it! The body block is a tool to help stop the rod. Try this body block the next time you are wading hip deep in the surf and see if this help you stop the rod more abruptly, keeping your back cast aimed higher, avoiding the rocks behind you and maximize your unloading of the rod.

On the forward cast you can also use the structure of the body to help get the abrupt stop.

This time we use the structure of the hand and wrist. Toward the end of the casting stroke, in the final phase of acceleration you push forward with your thumb (on top of the cork and along the spline of the rod) while simultaneously pulling back with your lower fingers ([See picture 2](#)).



Picture 2.

This causes your wrist to rotate quickly like a snap (Joan Wulff's power snap). The rotation is done late in the stroke, and is in a straight line toward your target (not a twisting motion).

This completes the loading of the rod and stops the rod abruptly for efficient transfer of energy on your forward cast.

So, you can use your body structure to help you stop the rod abruptly on both your back cast and forward casts and be more efficient with your casting.

Have fun and give this a try! Tight lines!

Sheila M Hassan

FFF Master Certified Casting Instructor