

Spinning Rod

Guide Sizing and Placement

The New Guide Concept System, properly understood and implemented, is one of the very best methods for sizing and locating the guides on any spinning rod.

In the last issue we discussed guide placement for casting rods. In this issue, we'll cover guide placement for spinning rods. Throw out all the old concepts regarding spinning guide sizing and placement - we've got a much better way now. It gets the line down and under control quickly and reduces weight on the rod's mid and tip areas, both of which improve casting distance, rod balance and sensitivity. Okay, let's get started.

How Many?

Following the recommendations given in the volume 10 #2 issue of this magazine, you'll need a number of guides that equals the length of the rod in feet, plus one, plus a tiptop. For instance, a rod 7 feet in length is going to require about 8 guides plus a tiptop. On half foot sizes, say, 7 and 1/2 feet, round up to the next full length. So a 7'6" rod would require about 9 guides plus a tiptop. Refer to the earlier article on determining proper guide number if you have any questions.

Guide Sizing

There are two sets of guides used in the New Guide Concept. First, the reduction guides which are located between the reel and a predetermined "choker" guide. And second, the running guides which include the choker guide. The running guides will be identical in size and frame style. They should all be low framed guides, regardless of whether you are using single or double foot models. Low profile casting or fly type guides are highly recommended.

On rods where you expect to use 10lb mono or less, I suggest you use size 6 running guides. On rods where you'll be using 10lb to 14lb mono, I suggest size 8 running guides. On very heavy rods where you'll be using 15lb mono or above, try size 10 running guides. **On very heavy surf rods where shock leaders are employed, you'll have to test cast to find the smallest size that will still pass the shock leader knot. It is not unusual to use size 12 to 16 running guides on very heavy surf spinning rods.*

For braided lines, anything under 20lb should work well with size 6 running guides. Larger or heavier braid should do well with size 8 running guides.

Your running guide sizes are now set. The reduction guides will be sized automatically in just a moment. First, let's get the first running guide, the "choker," placed on the rod.

The Choker

The New Guide Concept System that we'll be setting up will be created around the placement of just one guide - the "Choker." Some people call this the intersect guide due to an earlier method of placement, but we'll use the term "choker" for the remainder of this article.

To determine the placement of the choker, obtain the reel that you intend to use on the rod and measure the outside diameter of the front of the line spool lip in millimeters. Record this number and multiply it by 27. The resulting figure is the distance beyond the front of the line spool face that you will locate the choker (1). *See sidebar for notes on metric measurements.

Running Guides

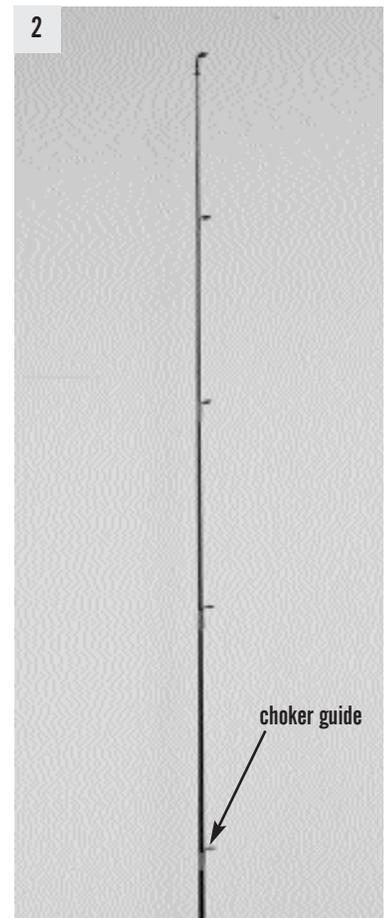
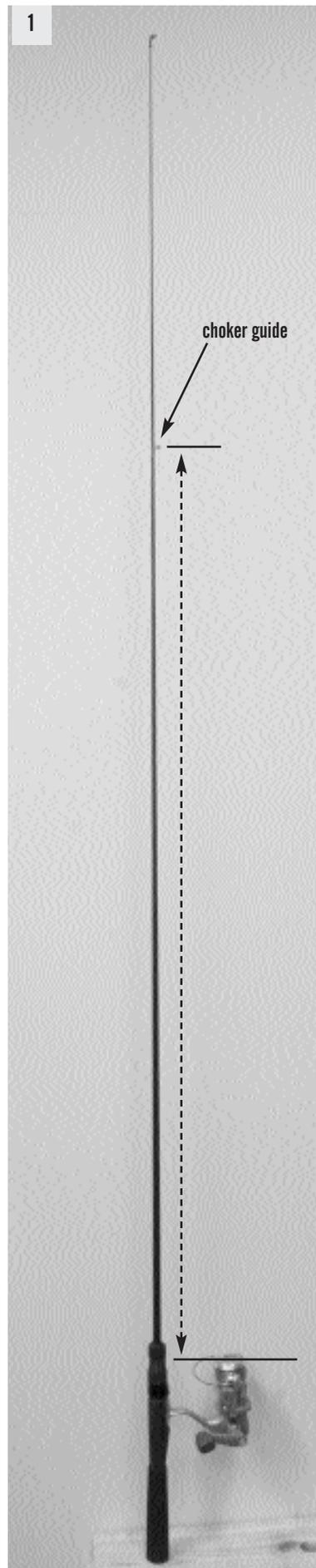
Place the choker on the rod per the distance as figured above. Between the choker and the tip of the blank, you will place additional running guides, equidistant, until you reach the tiptop. Measure the distance between the tip top and the intersect guide. Divide into equal segments and set the guides so that they are no closer than 4 inches to each other, yet no further apart than 5 inches from each other (2). On very heavy rods, such as those used for heavy surf fishing, you may space these guides up to 6 or 7 inches apart.

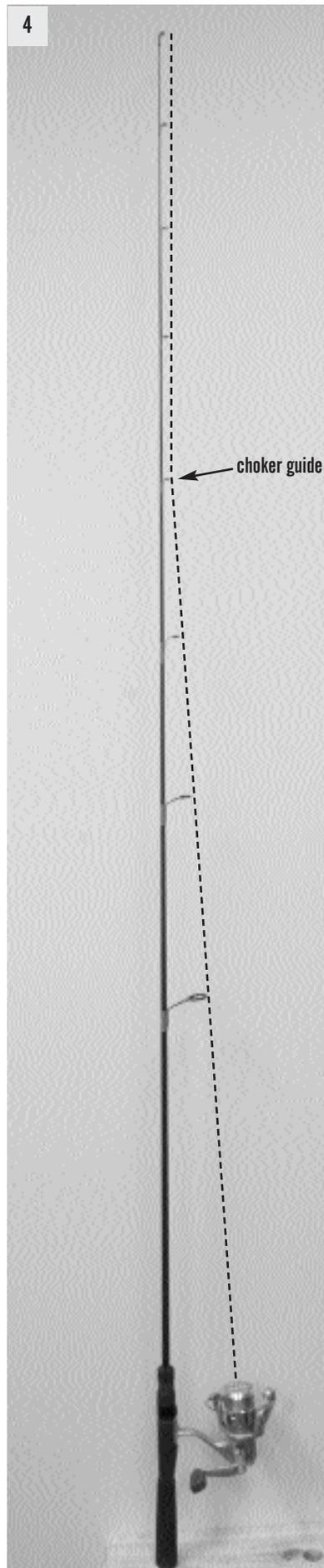
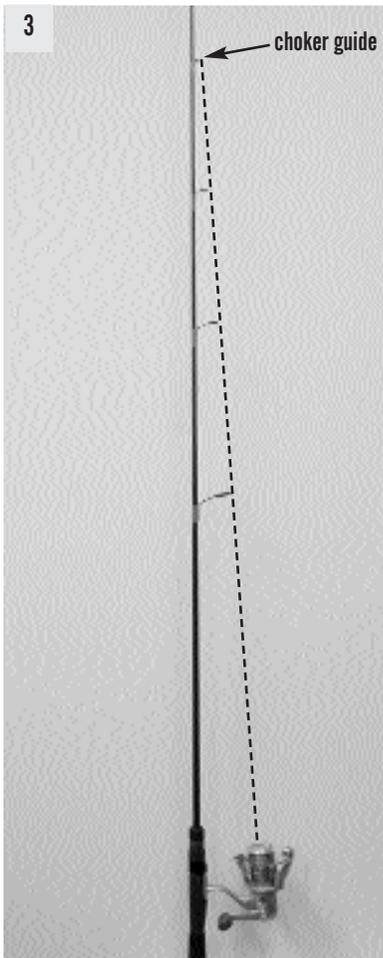
Remember, all the running guides should be the same size and frame type. Use as many as you need to fulfill the criteria listed in the previous paragraph.

Reduction Guides

We're almost done. Set the rod, with reel attached, on a surface that will allow you to plot a straight line between the exact center of the line spool and the outermost edge of the choker guide which was placed earlier. A yardstick or other similar straightedge can be employed. Set the straightedge on the floor and set the rod over it, or place a piece of tape on the floor to emulate a straight line.

On lighter rods with small reels, you will likely need 2 guides in-between the reel and the choker guide. On medium rods with medium sized reels, you'll need about 3 guides in-between the reel and the choker. On the heaviest rods, you may use up to 4 guides between the reel and the choker. You will *never* need more than 4 reduction guides, even on the heaviest rods. And never less than 2 on even the smallest and lightest Ultra-Light reels. In general, and between the ex-





tremes, 2 or 3 guides will be required *between* the reel and the choker guide.

Set the guides between the reel and the choker guide by selecting guide sizes and locations that put the outer edges of the guides so that they just reach the straightedge (3). Start with the first or "butt" guide. The ring size of the butt guide should generally be at least 1/2 the diameter of the reel spool OD and the required height is usually attained by utilizing fairly high frame guide styles. The butt guide should generally fall between 18 to 22 inches from the spool face on most freshwater type spinning reels and 22 to 28 inches with much larger saltwater spinning. Typically, the larger the spool diameter, the further from the spool face the guide will be located. If your butt guide location falls outside the distance ranges just mentioned, back up and try different sized and/or higher or lower framed guides.

Continue with additional reduction guides again selecting and spacing them so the outermost edge of the guide just touches the straightedge (4).

Don't worry about trying to use every guide size offered by the manufacturer, or trying to use each successive size. Just select the guide that will allow the outermost edge of the guide to reach the straightedge. Do not be alarmed if you find that you end up skipping a size or two in order to fulfill the criteria for the placement of the reduction guides.

Unlike the running guides which were placed equidistant from each other, the reduction guides will be placed progressively, with the distance between each guide lessening as you move up the rod towards the choker. The placement and sizing of the reduction guides becomes almost automatic - if you fulfill the criteria of having the outermost edge touch the straightedge, you should find that size and placement fall naturally where they look good, and as it turns out, where they need to be.

It takes longer to explain this system here in an article than it does to actually implement it! So don't get overwhelmed by what seems like a great deal of information or a lengthy process. Once you get the knack for using this spinning guide sizing and placement method, you'll find you can set up almost any spinning rod in just a few minutes and that the results are usually right on "the money" the first time out. Give it a try and see for yourself why so many custom builders have adopted it! 🎣

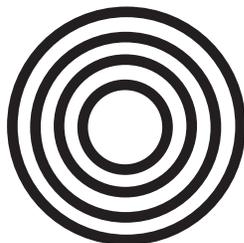
Is This Right?

How do you know when you've got the New Guide Concept set up properly? Here's one quick test you can do in order to know for sure. Take the reel off the rod so you can align the rod with one eye and then sight down through the butt guide all the way to the choker guide. Center the choker in the very center of the butt guide. Now take note of the other reduction guides. Each one should be perfectly centered in the proceeding guide. The appearance of the guides should resemble that of an archery target - a series of concentric rings. If this is the case, you're good to go. If you see anything else - perhaps the rings appearing to overlap each other, you need to remove the reduction guides and try again.

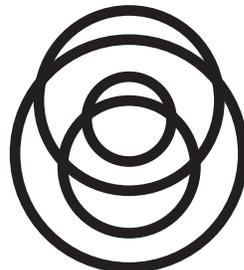
Ironically, most of the commercially made rods said to feature the New Guide Concept will show a sight window similar to what the bottom illustration depicts. And when the guides appear in this fashion, the fisherman will not get the results the New Guide Concept was designed to produce. The System relies upon correct implementation in order to deliver the stated advantages. Use of New Concept Guide System Placement Charts will NOT deliver the proper guide sizing, alignment and placement.

As a custom rod builder, you can take those few extra minutes to ensure that the system is properly set up and thus ensure that you or your customer will get the maximum benefits from the system.

Correct



Incorrect



Choker Guide Location

Earlier New Guide System instructions relied upon the reel spool upsweep in order to determine the location of what we're calling the "choker" guide. Trouble is, different reels possess different upsweep amounts and some reels with very little upsweep, when used on shorter rods, would result in the choker guide location being somewhere far off and beyond the tip of the rod blank!

Reel upsweep angle isn't really an issue in casting, however, as reels don't "shoot" line like a rifle shoots a bullet. The line is simply pulled off the reel spool and gravity begins pulling the line downward as soon as the line leaves the spool. Thus, a better method for locating the choker guide is needed. It is found by simply measuring the outside diameter of the reel spool at the forward lip and multiplying that by 27. The resulting figure is the distance that the choker guide should be placed in front of the reel spool face. In nearly all cases, this method will put you at a distance that is "just about right."

The Metric System

Using the metric system makes for quicker and easier guide placement. And... if you can count the change in your pocket, then you already know how to use the metric system. That's right - while we continue to use an outdated, crude and archaic system of measurement, we at least lean toward the metric system when it comes to our money.

There are 10 pennies in a dime. There are 10 dimes in a dollar. If you understand that then you already understand the metric system. There are 10 millimeters in a centimeter. There are 10 centimeters in a decimeter. There are 10 decimeters in a meter. There, you have it.

If you're still not convinced, think quickly and tell me what's half of 54 & 3/8th inches? Okay, if that takes you longer than 2 seconds you've just proved the point. Now tell me what's half of 104 millimeters? I'll bet you got that one in less than 2 seconds! (If you didn't, I doubt any system of measurement is going to be easy for you.)

Additional NGC Resources:

The New Guide Concept System • RodMaker Magazine Volume 5 #1

New Concept System Primer • RodMaker Magazine Volume 7 #1

New Guide System Primer • Online Library • www.rodbuilding.org

The preceding article is from the Volume 10 #4 issue of RodMaker Magazine.

www.rodmakermagazine.com