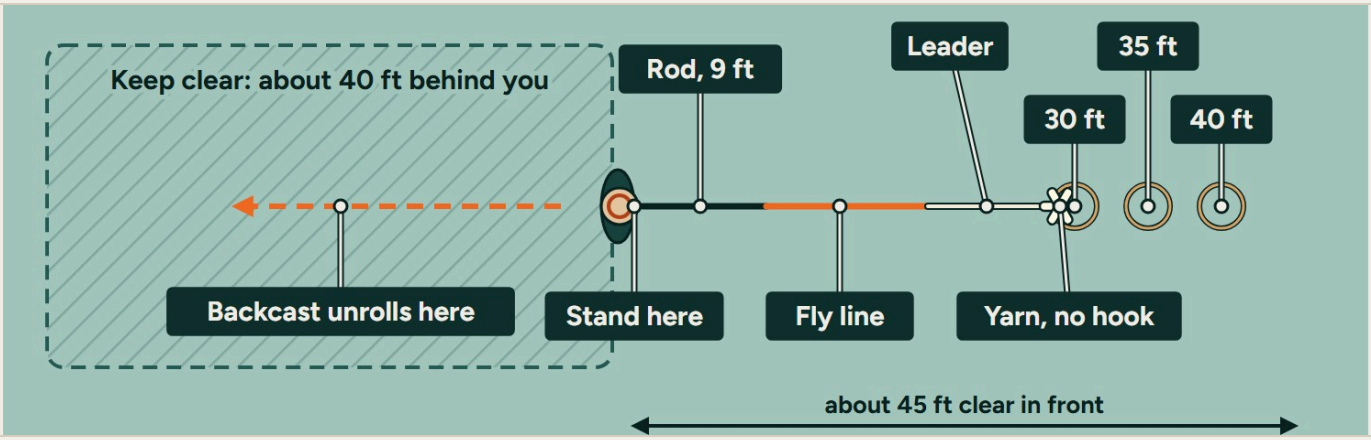
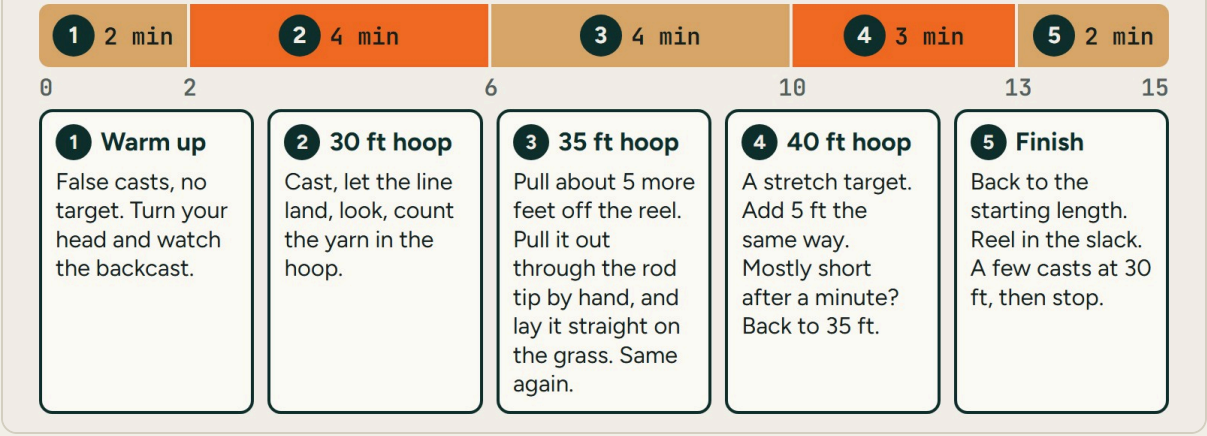
HOW DO I PRACTICE CASTING WITHOUT A RIVER?

Practice on grass. Tie a short piece of bright yarn to the end of your leader in place of a fly, with no hook. Set out hoops at 30, 35 and 40 feet and work through them in a 15-minute routine. Look behind you before you start, and stop when your arm tires or anything hurts.





A suggested layout and split of the minutes. Plan drawn to scale for a 9-foot rod; angler and yarn drawn larger. Illustration: Fly Findr

SET IT UP

- **The spot.** Flat grass, no branches or wires overhead. About 40 ft clear behind you, 45 ft in front, 10 ft each side. Less room: less line, hoops closer.
- **The line.** A little more than the rod's length of fly line, plus the leader: about 20 ft in all. For each farther hoop, pull about 5 more feet off the reel. Pull it out through the rod tip by hand, and lay it straight on the grass. 40 ft is a stretch target.
- **The yarn.** About an inch of bright yarn. Tie it around the middle with the knot you use for a fly, the improved clinch knot. No hook.

WHAT TO WATCH

- **The backcast.** Turn your head and watch it. If the line or yarn touches the grass behind you, it dropped.
- **The pause.** Wait until the line is almost straight behind you, then come forward. If you hear a crack like a whip, it usually means you came forward too soon. Check the yarn is still on.
- **The landing.** Line and leader straight and pointing at the hoop, or piled up?
- **The yarn.** Short, long, left or right? Count how many of each set land in the hoop.

Safety, every session. No hook, yarn only. Glasses or sunglasses: common practice, even with no hook. Look behind you before your first cast and whenever you move. Stop if a person, a pet or a car comes into the space.
When to stop. Stop early if your arm, shoulder or wrist tires or anything hurts, someone comes into the space, the wind picks up, or you hear thunder.
Method, not research. No study in Fly Findr's research covers casting practice. The routine, the distances and the safety steps are method.