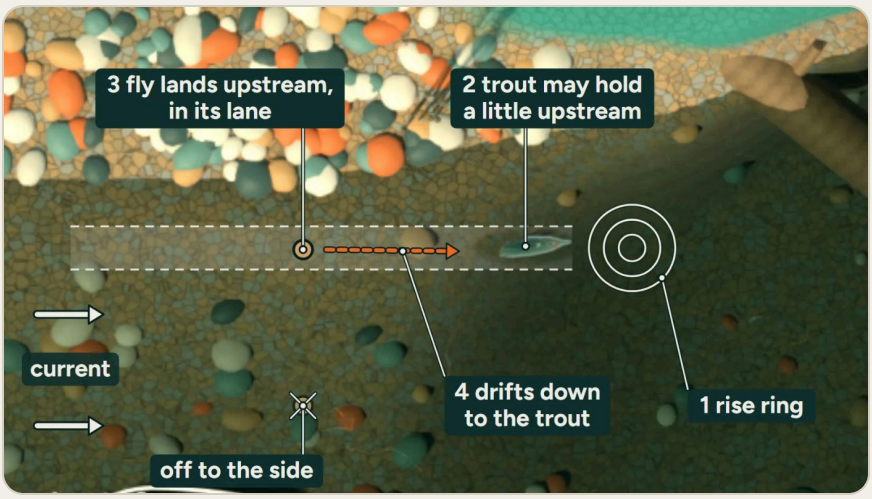
WHEN DO I USE A DRY FLY, AND HOW DO I FISH ONE TO RISING TROUT?

Use a dry fly when you see trout taking insects at the surface; with nothing rising, start with a fly under the surface. To fish one to a rising trout, watch where it rises, tie on a fly close in size to the insects on the water, and land it a short way upstream of the fish, in its lane, so it drifts down to the fish with no drag.



Seen from above, current left to right. 1 rise ring. 2 the trout may hold a little upstream of it. 3 land the fly upstream, in its lane. 4 it drifts down to the trout. Illustration: Fly Findr

WHEN TO TIE ON A DRY

Trout rising
The signal to tie on a dry. No rises, no hatch: fish under the surface.

A hatch
Insects turning into adults at the surface: a chance for a dry or an emerger. The nymph may still work.

Summer banks
Anglers carry a terrestrial pattern.

Some of both
Fish look up but also feed below: a dry dropper fishes both.

FISH IT TO A RISING TROUT

1	**Watch first**	Stay back from the edge and watch for rings, dimples and splashes, in slow water beside fast current and along banks.
2	**Find the fish**	Watch one fish rise two or three times. Mark where the rings start; the trout may hold a little upstream of them.
3	**Pick the fly**	Catch an insect. Match its stage, and pick the closest size inside the hatch page's hook range. Dress the dry with floatant.
4	**Get in position**	Below and to one side of the fish, low and back from the edge. False cast off to the side, not over the fish.
5	**Land it in the lane**	A short way upstream of where the fish holds, in line with it, not off to the side.
6	**No drag**	Mend or reach cast so the fly drifts with the water. Let it pass the fish before you lift it off, slowly.
7	**Refused?**	Anglers check the drift for drag first, then change the size or the kind of insect. If the fish stops rising, rest it.

What the studies don't settle. No study in Fly Findr's research tested what the shape of a rise tells you, and no controlled study in it tested whether fly size or drag changes how many trout you catch. The steps are how anglers fish, not measured rules.