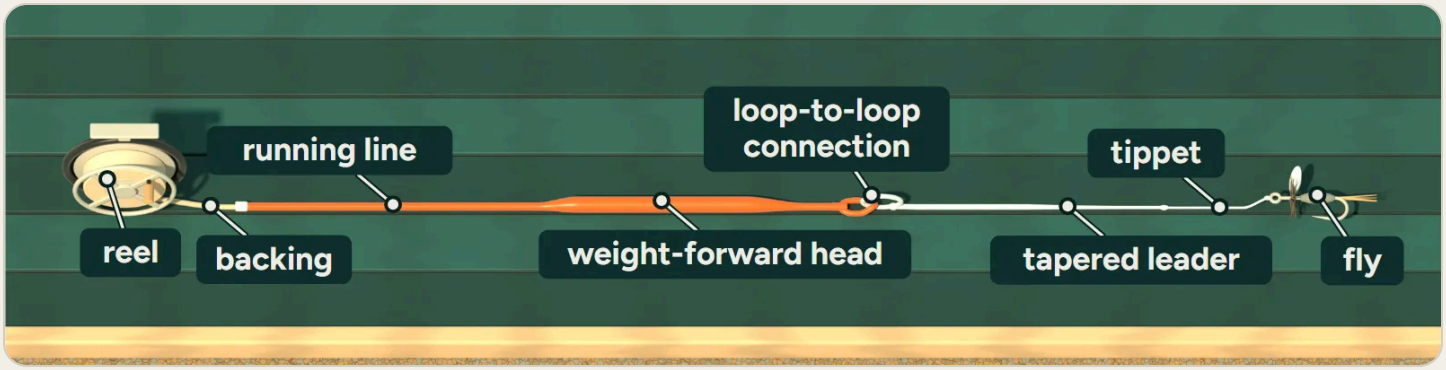
FIRST-SEASON GEAR CHECKLIST

To start fly fishing for trout you need a rod and reel, a floating fly line with the same weight number as the rod, a leader, tippet, a few flies, and four small tools. Waders, wading boots and a net can wait until you know the water you will fish.



The line system, reel to fly: backing, running line, weight-forward head, loop-to-loop connection, tapered leader, tippet, fly. Illustration: Fly Findr

NEED NOW IN ORDER

☐ **Rod**	4 to 6 weight for average to larger trout, the range Orvis gives for them.
☐ **Reel**	Sized for the rod's weight, with backing wound on under the line.
☐ **Fly line**	Weight forward, floating, the same number as the rod: WF5F on a 5-weight.
☐ **Leader**	7½ to 9 ft in 4X is a common start.
☐ **Tippet**	A spool one size finer than the leader: 5X with a 4X leader.
☐ **Flies**	A few small nymphs, some dry flies and a streamer.
☐ **Nippers**	Cut line.
☐ **Forceps**	Flatten barbs and unhook fish.
☐ **Floatant**	Keeps dry flies floating.
☐ **Stream thermometer**	In two Montana rivers no angled trout died below a 68 °F daily high; deaths appeared at 73 °F.
☐ **Fishing license**	From your state's wildlife agency. Many Fly Findr state pages link it.

CAN WAIT

☐ **Waders and wading boots**	Once you know your water. Check the sole first: felt is banned statewide in Alaska and Rhode Island (fresh water), Maryland and South Dakota, and in Yellowstone and Glacier (rules checked Nov 13, 2026).
☐ **Landing net**	Rubber or knotless mesh. Until you have one, unhook the trout in the water.
☐ **Polarized glasses**	Fly Findr's river guides list them for spotting fish.

Pinch the barbs. Barbless hooks cut unhooking time and injury, and some waters require them. They land fewer hooked trout: 63% against 76% for barbed flies on California waters.