



Understanding Spey Lines

2015

by Simon Gawesworth

CHOOSING THE RIGHT LINE TYPE

A newcomer to spey casting would be forgiven for peeping into this sport, trying it out, or listening to the many different opinions out there, and then turning tail and running away from the mass of confusion.

There is a mind boggling array of theories, techniques, tackle and styles, and it is very difficult for the beginner to make head or tail out of the world of spey casting. To explain the subtleties and intricacies of this spey world would be like trying to explain the rules of cricket to the average American, or of baseball to the average Brit. However, as fly line manufacturers, we only need to make it easier to understand the fly line – the most important part of your tackle.

Let's start with a good rule of thumb. "**The shorter the head length you use, the easier it is to cast**". Use your rod length as an indication of "easy". A spey line that has a head 3 times longer than the rod (for example a 12 ft rod with 36 ft head length) is a lot easier to cast than a line with a head that is 5 or 6 times longer than the rod (60 to 72 ft on the same 12 ft rod).

Another advantage with shorter head length lines is that you can use them in much more restricted spaces than longer head length lines - which require enough room to form a decent D-loop behind. If you are not sure what the "head" is, this diagram will help. Simply put, the head is the fat bit at the front of the line, including front and back tapers.



The main advantage of a longer head Spey line is "fishing efficiency". An angler will spend a lot less time stripping in line between each cast, and have less slack line swirling around on the water in front of them with the longer line types.

There are three different types of lines that you will hear talk about in the spey world: "**Traditional Spey**", "**Scandinavian**" (usually abbreviated to "**Scandi**") and "**Skagit**". Each of these has an advantage over the others in certain situations. If you know what the advantages of each of these groups are, you can choose the type of line you need much more effectively.

TRADITIONAL SPEY

In the old days, anglers used heavy double tapers to cast the long two handed spey rods. While they worked reasonably well, the development of (what are now called) Traditional Spey lines quickly replaced the use of double taper lines, and became far better tools for Spey casting. Traditional Spey lines are usually lines that have a fairly long head length - something in excess of 50 ft, and usually with an integrated running line.

There are different types of Traditional Spey lines, mostly determined by how long the head is. The main three are “Short Belly” lines, “Mid Belly” lines and “Long Belly” lines – the differences being how long the head (or belly) of the line is. The advantage a Traditional Spey line has over the Scandinavian and Skagit type lines is that an angler needs to strip less line in between each cast – “Fishing Efficiency”, with the rule of thumb that the better the caster you are, the longer the head length of line you will be able to cast.

SCANDINAVIAN

As the name suggests, Scandinavian style heads originated in Scandinavia. They are usually shooting heads with long front tapers, and they are very pleasant to cast. The heads are short, usually no longer than three times the length of the rod, thus they are much easier to cast than Traditional Spey lines, and very good for smaller rivers and tight casting situations. The long tapers ensure tight loops, and great presentation of normal sized flies.

The main disadvantages with this type of head is that they don't cast heavy flies and fast sinking tips well, and that there is a lot of fishing time wasted at the end of each cast stripping the line back (if you make a long cast!).

SKAGIT (pronounced ska-jit)

Skagit lines/heads are short and heavy - even shorter than Scandinavian lines in most cases - working on a ratio of less than three times the rod length. Skagit lines almost always need a front tip added (whether floating or sinking) before they are ready to fish. The strength of Skagit lines is that they lift weight very easily. Anyone fishing large or heavy flies will find nothing casts these easier than a Skagit line. Likewise, a fast sinking tip is far easier to cast on the end of a Skagit line than either of the other two types. Also, as Skagit heads are so short, they are generally the easiest of all spey lines to cast.

The disadvantage with Skagit lines is that they don't have the same kind of presentation as the other two types, and tend to be clunkier when they land, particularly if fishing smaller flies. Because they are so short, they also have a lot of stripping in after each cast has fished out.

OVERHEAD CASTING

More and more people are using two-handed rods - both Switch and Spey - for overhead casting in the surf, or on a lake. The length and power of these rods are great for throwing big flies out against a wind and over incoming surf - and just for pure distance!

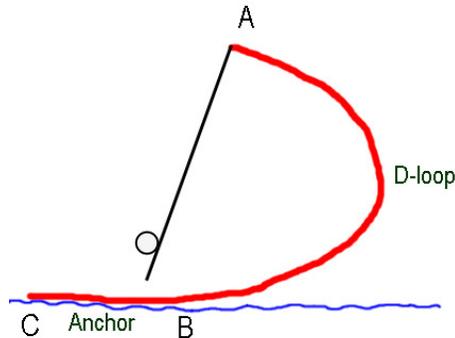
When choosing a line for overhead casting a two-handed rod there are two important considerations.

- 1. The head length needs to be short – certainly no more than three times the rod length.**
- 2. The line weight should be less than what the rod is set up for with a spey cast.**

The best design of line for overhead casting for maximum distance is a line with weight at the front. A good example of this is RIO's OutBound and OutBound Shorts, with the Shorts being the best choice for rods of 12 ft and less.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT HEAD LENGTH

Most "Spey" lines follow a simple principle - there needs to be weight in the back of the head to load the rod effectively when the line is formed as a "D-loop". There also needs to be a long fine front taper, so that the line lying on the water ("The Anchor") at the start of the forward cast has as little drag as possible.



In a spey cast the "D-loop" (from A to B) loads the rod and needs to be the heaviest part of the line. The "Anchor" (B to C) lies on the water. The more line there is lying on the water, the more energy is lost during the forward cast as it tries to tear itself off the surface film.

A typical spey line design will have a long tapered front end, and most of the weight in the back end of the head to make the most of these casting requirements:



Within this basic spey line design are numerous variations and permutations, but the main difference to compare is the length of the head. As stated earlier, the shorter head length Spey lines are usually the easiest to cast.

Because the loading weight of a spey line is at the back, it is most important that casters pull the whole head off the reel before attempting to make a spey cast, otherwise the casting weight is left on the reel, and the rod will feel under loaded. For that reason, a long head spey line needs plenty of length outside the rod to make an efficient cast. A caster using a longer belly line has to form a big D-loop, which means they need more space behind them. As a very rough guideline you need about a fifth of the head length of room behind to make a good cast, so a line with a 80 ft long head, needs 16 ft of space behind, while a line with a head length of 30 ft needs only about 6 ft of room. This is a very loose guideline, as the casters skill level and rod length can make a big difference.

Space behind isn't the only consideration for when choosing which head length of line to use:

1. **Casting Ability:** You need to be a better caster to handle the longer head length lines.
2. **River Size:** Small rivers don't need long head spey lines
3. **Rod Length:** A short rod does not have the same lift as a long rod, so the shorter the rod is, the shorter the line's head length should be.
4. **Sinking Tip:** With sink tips or heavy flies it can be really tricky to get the sunken line to the surface with a long belly line. A short head line means that the sink tip is closer to you and easier to get out of the water.
5. **Stripping flies:** Some fishing techniques/species require you to strip the fly in to entice a take. The short head lines are perfect for this as you must strip the head to the rod tip before making a cast.
6. **Fishing Efficiency:** When the fly has swung round to the dangle and has stopped fishing, an angler will want to cast the fly back out across the river again. With short head fly lines and long casts, there will be a lot of wasted fishing time spent stripping the head all the way back to its casting length – especially if stripping the fly is not part of the fishing technique. Using a longer head fly line reduces the amount of stripping time, and therefore increases effective fishing time. It also means there is less stripped line lying on the water in front of you, swirling around and getting caught in the current.
7. **Iced up rod guides:** When fishing in the coldest of conditions, the act of stripping line in pulls water into the rod guides which can freeze up and block the guides, making it impossible to cast. By using a longer head fly line, that requires no stripping in, anglers can eliminate this frustrating experience.

SPEY LINE HEAD LENGTH COMPARISON



Short head - 30 to 40 ft



Medium head - 50 to 60 ft



Long head - 70 to 80 ft

A good rule of thumb is to start with a short head length line and, with practice, get to a skill level where you can cast the whole head at the tip of the rod - without stripping anything in. When this is easy, move up to the mid lengths, then to the longer head length lines. This will certainly advance your skill level.

RIO's 2015 Spey selection

The previous section is designed to help anglers understand some of the theory behind Spey line design, and be able to make more knowledgeable decisions. The next part of this document is a more detailed description of each line RIO makes and their particular advantages. It also shows the best match ups between shooting heads, lines and tips.

On that note, it is worth mentioning that the majority of Spey casters use shooting heads to fish with these days, and not full length lines with integrated running lines - for four main reasons:

- 1) The use of shooting head keeps the number of reels and spools purchased down to a minimum.
- 2) Shooting heads are much cheaper than full length lines.
- 3) There is nothing as fast, or as efficient, when an angler needs to change line type, than looping off one shooting head, and looping on the new one.
- 4) An angler can travel very lightly, with a single reel and half a dozen lines

Each shooting head has to attach to a shooting line via a loop-to-loop connection.

This is most applicable with the shorter head length lines. The longer head length lines still tend to be integrated between head and shooting line, and have no loop-to-loop connection.

One great asset for the angler trying to find the ideal Spey line is RIO's short film "Choosing the right Spey line". You can watch it here: <https://vimeo.com/rioproducts/review/70431251/5331ffcb69>

SKAGIT SHOOTING HEADS

RIO has developed two different types of Skagit lines, both offered as shooting heads. Each Skagit head requires a matched shooting line at the back, and a tip (floating or sinking) at the front to be fishable. RIO's recommended match ups of head size to shooting line and head to tip size can be found at the end of each relevant section.

1) Skagit Max: Skagit Max heads are the ultimate Skagit weapon for Spey anglers. They are an exceptionally easy casting Skagit style shooting head that will cast big flies, and the heaviest sinking tips with the utmost of ease. A unique taper design not only casts all the nasty stuff associated with Skagit fishing, but also forms beautiful loops and is extremely pleasant to cast. The heads are built on RIO's ultra-low stretch ConnectCore for the very best in casting control and sensitivity, and feature a highly visible orange section to easily determine which end to attach the shooting line to. Skagit Max heads are available between 425 and 750 grains in 25 grain increments, and are ideal for rods between 12 and 13.5 feet in length.

A sub-series of these heads are the "**Max Short**" heads, which are a selection of extra short Skagit heads (18-20 ft in length) that are designed for short Spey rods, Switch rods and Single Handed rods in particular. These short heads are also ideal for fishing in the tightest of casting situations and have the maximum weight per foot of any Skagit line, so deliver the most powerful punch of all – perfect for casting the very largest of flies or heaviest of tips. They are ideal for rods less than 12 feet in length. Max Short heads start at a light 200 grains and increase in grain weight by 25 grains all the way up to 625 grains.

Another sub-series are the "**Max Long**" **(New for 2015)** heads, which are a longer head Skagit line (27-30 ft in length) and designed for the bigger Spey rods on the market. They are ideal for rods longer than 13.5 feet in length. Max Long heads are available between 500 & 750 grains.



SKAGIT MAX SHOOTING HEAD

2) Skagit iFlights: RIO's unique Skagit iFlight is a short, powerful Skagit head with a clear camo intermediate tip (for stealth). The back 8 ft of the head floats and is a highly visible pale orange color that allows anglers to track and control the fly as it swings across the current. This exceptionally easy casting head holds further down in the water column, ensuring deeper and slower presentations – ideal for the colder months. It is also a very good line to use when there is wind, or awkward water hydraulics affecting the swing. For 2014 the heads are built on RIO's ultra-low stretch ConnectCore for the very best in casting control and sensitivity. As with the Skagit Max, a complete series of shorter heads, called **iShorts**, are available, and are perfect for short Spey rods, Switch rods and Single Handed rods in particular.

The longer iFlights start at 450 grains, and increase by 25 grains up to 750 grains, while the iShorts start at 350 grains increase by 25 grains up to 575 grains.



SKAGIT iFLIGHT SHOOTING HEAD

It is important to match the right size of shooting line to the size of the head used to ensure the best possible flight time. The following guideline is a good place to start if you want to match a head weight to the right shooting line size. It is only a guideline, and casters can use heavier or lighter shooting lines based on personal preference.

Head Weight	ConnectCore	GripShooter	Powerflex	SlickShooter
275 to 450 gr	0.026"	25 lb	0.024"	25 lb
450 to 575 gr	0.032"	35 lb	0.030"	35 lb
575 to 675 gr	0.037"	44 lb	0.035"	44 lb
675 gr +	0.042"	50 lb	0.040"	50 lb

It is equally important to match the right size sink tip to a head, and again, the following guideline is a good place to start. However, more so than with the shooting line recommendation, anglers should vary their tip size and take into account fly size (heavier fly, heavier tip) and water/weather conditions.

Head Weight	10 ft Tip	15 ft Tip	MOW or iMOW	InTouch Level T
Less than 300 gr	#4	#4	Light	T-8
300 to 375 gr	#5	#5	Light	T-8
375 to 425 gr	#6	#6	Light	T-8
425 to 475 gr	#7	#7	Light	T-8
475 to 550 gr	#8	#8	Medium	T-11
550 to 575 gr	#9	#9	Medium	T-11
575 to 625 gr	-	#10	Heavy	T-14
625 to 700 gr	-	#11	Heavy	T-14
700 gr +	-	#12	Ex. Heavy	T-17

3) Skagit Max VersiTip An ultra-powerful, ready-to-fish package designed for easy casting and distance. The Skagit Max VersiTip is a ready-to-go Skagit style shooting head system that includes a floating Skagit Max head with a balanced set of MOW tips (3 different tip lengths) and an appropriately sized ConnectCore shooting line. Available in 400 to 650 gr – in 50 grain increments.

For longer Spey rods (in excess of 13.5 feet), anglers can/should buy the **Skagit Max Long VersiTip (New for 2015)**, while anglers using Switch rods, single handed rods and shorter two handed rods (less than 12 feet) would be best served with the **Skagit Max Short VersiTip (New for 2015)**.

TIPS FOR SKAGIT HEADS

All Skagit lines need a front tip to be added to complete the rig and there are numerous options. Some anglers put Poly or VersiLeaders on the front end as a tip. While this works in some cases, the diameter difference between the thick front end of the Skagit head and the butt of a Poly/VersiLeader is quite large (especially on the bigger heads) and the energy transfer is less efficient than with actual tips. In most cases anglers will be better served adding a sinking (or floating) tip to their Skagit head, and RIO has four options for tips that are ideal for attaching to the front of a Skagit head.

15 ft Tips

One option, tried and tested over the years, is to attach a 15 ft tip to the front end. These tips are tapered and allow for a much better presentation than level tungsten tips. RIO makes five 15 ft tips to choose from, each with a welded loop on both ends for easy rigging:

1. **Floating (#5 to #11)**
2. **Intermediate (1.5 - 2 ips - #4 to #12)**
3. **Type 3 (3 - 4 ips - #4 to #12)**
4. **Type 6 (6 - 7 ips - #4 to #12)**
5. **Type 8 (8 - 9 ips - #8 to #12)**

Each tip has a standard weight for a given size. For example, all #10 weight tips weigh 150 grains, which makes it really easy to change tip densities and keep a balanced outfit. The tip weights are as follows:

#4	61 grains	#9	129 grains
#5	73 grains	#10	150 grains
#6	84 grains	#11	166 grains
#7	95 grains	#12	190 grains
#8	109 grains		

10 ft Tips

These are a shorter version of the 15 ft tip and ideal for shorter rods, tight casting situations, or smaller rivers. There are 4 density options available:

1. **Floating (#4 to #9)**
2. **Intermediate (1.5 to 2 ips - #4 to #9)**
3. **Type 3 (3-4 ips - #4 to #9)**
4. **Type 6 (6-7 ips - #4 to #9)**

Like the 15 ft tips, each tip has a standard weight for a given size:

#4	45 grains	#7	75 grains
#5	55 grains	#8	85 grains
#6	65 grains	#9	95 grains

InTouch Level “T” tips (New for 2015):

The “T” series are level, fast sinking lines that can be cut to the length and weight of an individual’s preference. With no tapers these tips have the most punch at the front end, and are better for casting the biggest flies. Level T is sold either in a jumbo 500 ft spool or in a 30 ft pack. InTouch Level T material is color-coded to easily identify each tip; T-8 is a dull burgundy color, T-11 is a dull green, T-14 a dull blue, T-17 is a dark gray and T-20 is black. In addition to the color change, the new T material is built on RIO’s ultra-low stretch ConnectCore for increased sensitivity, and is made with an easy-to-weld plastic, so anglers can quickly weld their own loops as needed.

“T”	Sink rate	Weight (grains per foot)
T-8	6 - 7 ips	8 g/ft
T-11	7 - 8 ips	11 g/ft
T-14	8 - 9 ips	14 g/ft
T-17	9 - 10 ips	17 g/ft
T-20	+10 ips	20 g/ft

Skagit “MOW” Tips (MOW rhymes with “sew”, not “cow”)

These extraordinarily easy casting and fishing tips are perfect for Skagit heads. The majority of tips are 10 ft long, which allows for a very efficient casting stroke. As a general guideline, the length of the tip you fish, should not exceed the length of the rod, making these tips ideal for spey rods between 11 ft and 14 ft. A welded loop in each end makes it very easy for anglers to interchange as necessary

There are four different series of MOW Tips; “Light”, “Medium”, “Heavy” and “Extra Heavy”:

- **The Light tips use T-8 as a sinking material and have white sleeved loops**
- **The Medium tips use T-11 as a sinking material and have green sleeved loops**
- **The Heavy tips use T-14 as a sinking material and have blue sleeved loops.**
- **The Extra Heavy tips use T-17 as a sinking material and have gray sleeved loops.**

Light tips are ideal for Skagit lines of 475 grains and lighter, the Medium Tips are great on Skagit lines between 475 and 575 grains, the Heavy tips are perfect for the heavier Skagit lines between 575 and 700 grains, and the extra heavy MOW’s are ideal on lines heavier than 700 grains. This is another “loose” rule of thumb, as fly size plays an equally important role. A very large, heavy fly will always cast best with an Extra Heavy MOW tip, even on a 450 grain Skagit line.

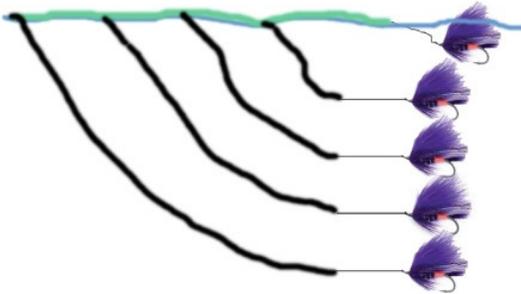
Each series of Skagit MOW tips feature 6 different tips with different lengths of sinking sections - allowing anglers to fish at a variety of depths, yet still fish one length of tip. For example, anglers can fish a short, 2.5 ft sinking tip, dropping the fly behind a particular rock in one part of the pool, then switch to a 7.5 ft sinking tip for another part of the pool and retain the easy casting stroke of all the 10 ft tips.

The six available tips are:

10 ft floating	2.5 ft floating/7.5 ft sinking
7.5 ft floating/2.5 ft sinking	10 ft sinking
5 ft floating/5 ft sinking	12 ft sinking



SKAGIT MOW TIPS (MEDIUM)



"MOWING" TROUGH THE POOL

MOW tips were the brain-child of steelhead gurus Mike McCune, Scott O'Donnell and Ed Ward. These three amigos have been using their own versions of these tips for years – their clients benefiting from the easy casting, fish catching success of such a simple design.

iMOW Tips

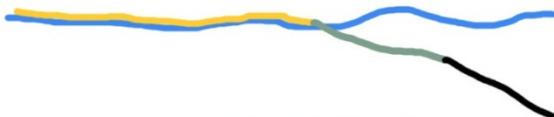
iMOW tips have an intermediate sinking section instead of the floating section of the regular MOW tips, and are available in Light (with T-8), Medium (with T-11) and Heavy (with T-14) options. Each option has four tips within the group, which are as follows:

- **10 ft intermediate**
- **7.5 ft intermediate /2.5 ft sinking**
- **5 ft intermediate /5 ft sinking**
- **2.5 ft intermediate /7.5 ft sinking**

One huge advantage of the intermediate section of the iMOW tips is that it gives a better depth transition between the floating Skagit head and the fast sinking tip, as the following diagram illustrates...



with floating based MOW tip



with intermediate based iMOW tip

iMOW tips are also a much better choice on intermediate Skagit heads such as RIO's iFlight.

SCANDI HEADS

RIO has developed two different types of Scandi heads, with VersiTip options for the prepared angler:

- 1) **RIO Scandi:** RIO Scandi heads are a very easy casting Scandi style shooting head, built on RIO's ultra-low stretch ConnectCore for the utmost in casting control and sensitivity. The family is split into two groups, with the **Scandi Short** heads being ideal for rods less than 13 feet, and the regular **RIO Scandi** heads ideal for rods longer than 13 feet. In addition, it is worth knowing that the shorter the head, the tighter the back casting space an angler can fish in, while with more room and better casting skills a longer head provides the angler with less line to strip in between each cast and more fishing time.

The available heads, and their equivalent Spey rod sizes are:

RIO Scandi Short			RIO Scandi		
#2	28 ft	210 grains	#6/7	36 ft	400 grains
#3	29 ft	240 grains	#7/8	37 ft	460 grains
#4	29 ft	270 grains	#8/9	38 ft	520 grains
#5	31 ft	300 grains	#9/10	39 ft	580 grains
#5/6	31 ft	330 grains	#10/11	40 ft	640 grains
#6	31 ft	360 grains			
#6	31 ft	390 grains			
#6/7	31 ft	420 grains			
#6/7	32 ft	435 grains			
#7	34 ft	450 grains			
#7/8	34 ft	480 grains			
#8	34 ft	510 grains			
#9	34 ft	540 grains			



RIO SCANDI SHOOTING HEAD

- 2) **Scandi Body:** The Scandi Body is a highly versatile Spey head, with a short body section (23 ft) and a neat welded loop in both ends. It is available in three different densities – floating, clear camo intermediate and full sinking type 4 (4-5 ips) – each with an orange rear loop for identifying which end to attach to the shooting line. Anglers simply attach this loop to an appropriate shooting line, and add the tip of their choice according to water conditions, rod length and other influencing factors.



SCANDI BODY

The versatility of the Scandi Body means an angler can attach a multitude of tips according to conditions and personal preference. Here is a simple guideline of what weight tips work best on each Scandi Body size:

Size	10 ft	15 ft	MOW/iMOW	"T" Tip
#4	#4	#4	-	-
#5	#5	#5	Light	T-8
#6	#6	#6	Light	T-8
#7	#7	#7	Light	T-8
#8	#8	#8	Medium	T-11
#9	#9	#9	Medium	T-11
#10	#10	#10	Heavy	T-14
#11	#11	#11	Heavy	T-14

For anglers that don't want to build their own system, RIO packages the floating Scandi Body with a selection of four balanced tips – in either a short version with 10 ft tips, or a longer version with 15 ft tips.

Scandi Short VersiTip: Perfect for rods less than 13': The Scandi Short VersiTip is a ready-to-go system for the Spey caster using rods of 13' and less. The package includes a floating Scandi Body, and a wallet with 4, 10 ft long interchangeable tips in floating, clear intermediate, Type 3, Density Compensated sinking and Type 6 Density Compensated Sinking densities.

Each tip has a welded loop on both ends for easy rigging, and features a smooth front taper for the best in presentation and turnover. The total length of the Scandi Short VersiTip is 33 ft (with one of the 10 ft tips attached), and it casts as easily and effortlessly as any Scandinavian shooting head. When conditions dictate bigger flies, or more aggressive sinking tips, simply remove the 10 ft tips and the head becomes a Skagit head with enough power to easily cast MOW, iMOW and "T" tips.

The Scandi Short VersiTip is specifically designed for fishing in really tight quarters, when there is only room enough to throw the smallest of D-loops. It is a fantastic line for smaller rivers and was designed particularly for the Great Lakes tributaries and smaller coastal steelhead/salmon rivers. While it is outstanding on Switch rods and smaller Spey rods, the Scandi Short VersiTip also works extremely well on single handed rods - though being rated on the "Spey Standard" it is important to use a line three sizes lighter than the single handed rod; For example, use a #5 head on a #8 single handed rod.

There are 6 sizes of Scandi Short VersiTip available, from a light #4 to a powerful #9 weight,



SCANDI SHORT VERSITIP SHOOTING HEAD

Scandi VersiTip: Perfect for rods of 13' and longer: This head is the bigger brother to the Scandi Short VersiTip and comes supplied with 15 ft long tips in a ready-to-go system. The package includes a floating Scandi Body, and a wallet with 4, 15 ft long interchangeable tips in floating, clear intermediate, Type 3, Density Compensated sinking and Type 6 Density Compensated Sinking.

Each tip has a welded loop on both ends for easy rigging, and features a smooth front taper for the best in presentation and turnover. The total length of the Scandi VersiTip, with one of the supplied 15 ft tips attached, is between 38 and 40 ft (depending on the line size), and it casts as easily and effortlessly as any Scandinavian shooting head. When conditions dictate bigger flies, or more aggressive sinking tips, simply remove the 15 ft tips and the head becomes a Skagit head with enough power to easily cast MOW, iMOW and "T" tips.

There are 5 sizes of Scandi VersiTip available, between #7 and #11 weights.

Like all shooting heads, attach the back of the chosen Scandi head to a shooting line. RIO suggests the following shooting head/shooting line combinations for the very best in performance:

RIO Scandi	Connect Core	Powerflex	GripShooter	SlickShooter
240 – 425 gr	0.026"	0.024"	25 lb	25 lb
425 – 525 gr	0.032"	0.030"	35 lb	35 lb
525 – 650 gr	0.037"	0.035"	44 lb	44 lb
650 gr +	0.042"	0.040"	50 lb	50 lb

Scandi Body/ VersiTip

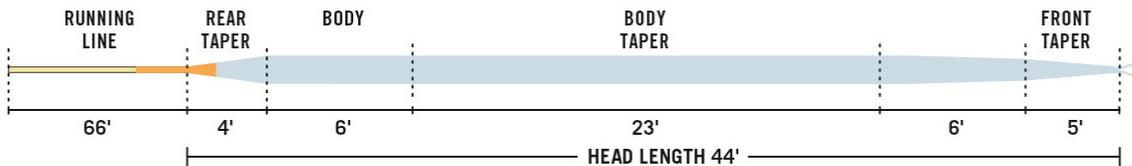
#4 - #6	0.026"	0.024"	25 lb	25 lb
#7 - #8	0.032"	0.030"	35 lb	35 lb
#9 - #10	0.037"	0.035"	44 lb	44 lb
#11	0.042"	0.040"	50 lb	50 lb

RIO Scandi Kit: The RIO Scandi kit is a ready-to-go Scandinavian style shooting head system that includes a floating RIO Scandi head with a balanced set of VersiLeaders (3 different densities) and an appropriately sized ConnectCore shooting line. Available in 6/7 to 10/11 sizes.

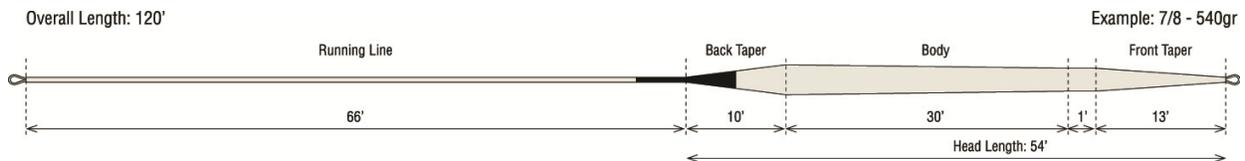
“TRADITIONAL” STYLE SPEY LINES

RIO has three different head length options of “traditional” spey lines:

1) Short Head Spey: The Short Head Spey line is a very easy casting, traditional style Spey line, and ideal for Spey casters moving up from easier casting Scandi and Skagit heads. The head length varies between 40 ft and 50 ft, depending on line size, and it is a great choice of Spey line for anglers using shorter rods and when fishing in tight quarters. The longer head lengths (when compared to Skagit and Scandi heads) allow for less stripping in time at the end of each cast, which means more fishing time, and less loose line to handle and shoot with each cast. The Short head Spey line is available in sizes 5/6 to 10/11.

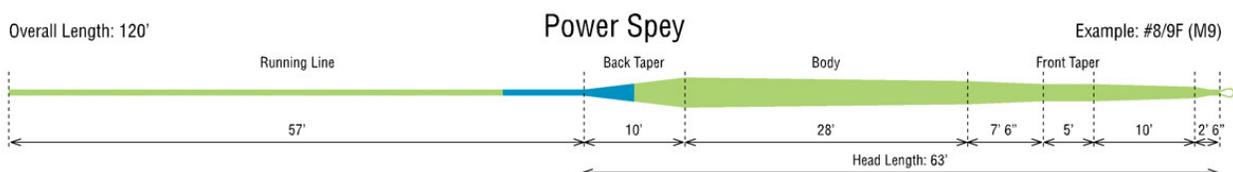


2) UniSpey: RIO’s UniSpey has a powerful mid length head that varies between 52 ft and 64 ft (depending on size), and is a great choice of line for longer Spey rods between 13’ and 14’ and for fishing larger rivers. With weight at the back, and a long front taper, the UniSpey is an easy line to cast and has no problem with larger flies and tough winds. The UniSpey is available in sizes 6/7 to 10/11, and is a great all-around, general purpose traditional style Spey line.



3) PowerSpey: The PowerSpey has a long, powerful head that varies between 57 ft and 71 ft (depending on size), and is a great choice of line for Spey rods of 14’ and longer, and ideal for fishing large rivers. With the long head, anglers have the least amount of line to strip in between each cast – ensuring maximum fishing time, and a minimum amount of loose line to handle with each cast. The line features a mid-length back taper, a powerful body, and a long front taper that unrolls with total efficiency. A loading zone at the end of the head shows anglers where the line casts most efficiently, and a welded loop on the front end makes for the fastest of rigging.

The PowerSpey is available in, 7/8, 8/9, 9/10 and 10/11 sizes.



SHOOTING LINES

RIO offers 4 very different shooting lines for the Spey caster:

- 1) ConnectCore:** RIO's ConnectCore shooting line is the very best floating, coated shooting line on the market with tremendous assets for the Spey fly fisher. Built on RIO's ConnectCore the shooting line has virtually no stretch, allowing anglers to stay perfectly in touch with their fly throughout the swing and feel every slight touch. A thicker diameter handling section prolongs the life of the line and ensures it is very easy to grip the line in cold conditions, while the highly visible front section makes it very easy to see when to stop stripping and make the cast. The unique core also ensures the most perfect coils of line when stripping in – resulting in far few tangles and snarls. A neat 8" welded loop at the front end allows for fast and efficient head changes, while the super-slick XS Technology coating floats high and shoots far. There are four different diameters available, each a different color for easy recognition:

0.026"	Gray with hot orange handling section	15 lb
0.032"	Pale green with hot orange handling section	20 lb
0.037"	Pale blue with hot orange handling section	20 lb
0.042"	Straw with hot orange handling section	30 lb

- 2) GripShooter :** RIO's GripShooter is based on the very popular SlickShooter, but has a thick, coated handling section that makes it very easy to grip in cold conditions. The thin nylon shooting line gives casters maximum distance, is light enough to hold off the water at range and allows anglers great control of their head and fly far out in the swing. A neat 8" welded loop at the front end allows for fast and efficient head changes.

25 lb	Blue with hot orange handling section
35 lb	Green with hot orange handling section
44 lb	Red with hot orange handling section
50 lb	Yellow with hot orange handling section

- 3) Powerflex Shooting Line:** RIO's floating Powerflex shooting line is built with a slick XS Technology coating that floats high and ensures the longest of casts. A large welded loop in the front end makes it easy for anglers to switch heads, and a loop in the rear end makes it simple to attach to backing. A range of diameters ensures there is a size for each head on the market.

0.024"	Orange	25 lb	0.035"	Blue	30 lb
0.030"	Green	25 lb	0.040"	Yellow	35 lb

- 4) SlickShooter:** SlickShooter is a super-hard, slick finish oval-shaped nylon shooting line, with no memory after being stretched and an extremely low coefficient of friction for long distance casts. Four sizes are available:

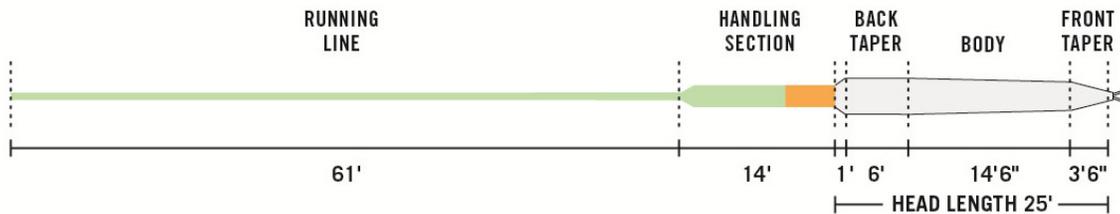
25 lb	Blue	44 lb	Red
35 lb	Orange	50 lb	Yellow

One great asset that helps anglers with their selection of the right Spey shooting line is the film "Choosing a Spey Shooting line", which can be viewed here: <https://vimeo.com/rioproducts/review/70445572/90c57d94f2>

LINES FOR SWITCH RODS

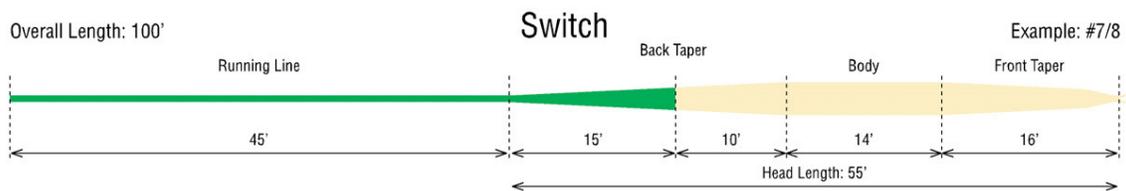
The previously mentioned Skagit Short and Scandi Short VersiTip shooting heads are ideal lines for Switch rods, and work very well on such rods. The Skagit Short is always going to be the best choice for throwing a large or heavy fly, or a fast sinking tip, while the Scandi Short VersiTip is an easy casting, versatile weapon for more “normal” sized flies and conditions. However, many anglers use Switch rods for fishing nymph and indicator rigs, and for that reason there are a couple of other considerations for Switch rods:

1) **Switch Chucker:** The Switch Chucker is an incredibly easy casting line, with a short head and plenty of weight at the front for casting indicators and nymph/egg rigs. The line features a long front taper that makes it a pleasure to roll and spey cast with, and a short back taper that allows anglers to shoot for distance with ease. An integrated running line ensures there are no loop-to-loop connections running through the guides. The Chucker is the best choice of Switch line for fishing tight in or in smaller rivers and is a great line for Switch rod users who wants the casting to be as easy as possible.



SWITCH CHUCKER

2) **Switch Line:** RIO's Switch line is a good all-round line for Switch rods, particularly for anglers fishing indicator rigs, as the powerful front taper will easily cast an indicator with a nymph/egg set up underneath. It has a long head and rear taper that allows anglers to mend and control the way the fly fishes at long range, and is the best choice of Switch line for anglers that want total control of the way the line and fly fish at distance. A unique taper design ensures that casters can either overhead cast, or spey cast according to their individual skills. The Switch line is available in 5 different sizes, from a 4/5 to 8/9, each with a head length of 55 ft. If mostly overhead casting, RIO suggests purchasing the line using the second number designation. For example, if you are using a #6 Switch rod, get the 5/6. If a caster is mostly roll and spey casting, RIO recommends purchasing the line with the first designation – the 6/7 for a #6 Switch rod.

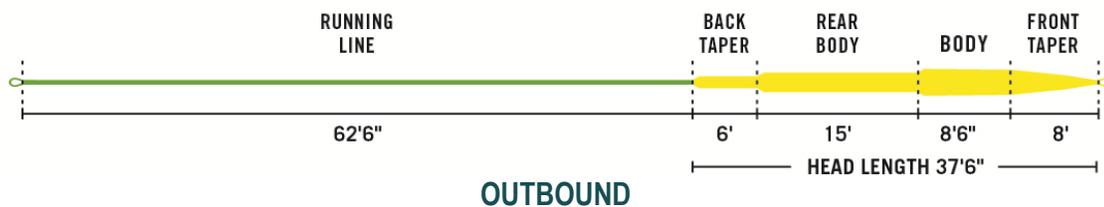


SWITCH LINE

LINES FOR OVERHEAD CASTING

Many anglers use the additional length of Switch and Spey rods for making very long distance casts on lakes and coastal shores. Due to the fact that these fishing situations usually result in the angler stripping the line all the way back to them before the next cast (as opposed to swinging a relatively fixed length of line in a river), the most suitable type of line for this style of overhead casting is going to have a lot more front-loaded weight. RIO offers three main lines that fulfill these requirements perfectly:

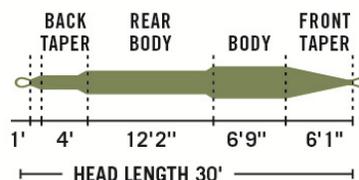
- 1) **OutBound:** Particularly useful in the salt, in lakes and for casters in rivers that prefer to use an overhead cast with a two handed rod, OutBound lines have long, powerful heads (38ft) that are great for maximum distances. Users need to be aware that these lines are rated on the single handed AFTMA standard, and RIO recommends stepping up 2 line size for most two handed rods.



- 2) **OutBound Short** lines only have a 30 ft head and are a better choice of line on shorter spey and Switch rods of less than 12 ft, and these lines are available with floating, F/I, Hover (S1), full intermediate and Type 6 sinking heads, as well as a selection with tropical coatings and cores for fishing in high heat. They are also front-loaded distance machines that need uplining two line sizes for most two handed rods.



- 3) **OutBound Short Shooting Head:** A quick change, easy-to-carry option is the OutBound Short Shooting Head, which allows anglers to carry multiple line sizes and densities. These heads are the same as the OutBound Short, but with no running line, and a loop on the back end to attach a shooting line to. Because they are based on the single-handed line standard, you will need to step up two line sizes for the equivalent Spey or Switch rod.



OUTBOUND SHORT SHOOTING HEAD

ACCESSORIES

VersiLeaders: While RIO Scandi and Spey heads are exceptionally easy to cast, adding a “Spey VersiLeader” to the front end can give even better casting and fishing performance. RIO has 6 different densities of these leaders in three lengths:

6 ft	Ideal for switch rods of 12 ft and less
10 ft	Ideal for rods between 12 ft and 14 ft
15 ft	Ideal for Spey rods of 14 ft and more

The leader densities are:

Floating (olive) (*not in the 6 ft length*)
Intermediate (1.5 inches per second – clear)
Slow sink (3 inches per second – green loop)
Medium sink (4 inches per second – red loop)
Fast sink (5 inches per second – blue loop)
Super-fast sink (7.0 inches per second– black loop)

HeadCase: The case features 10 zip-lock style bags in a neat, durable zip fronted cloth case that will hold a selection of shooting heads, as well as mesh pockets for leaders, tippets and other accessories. The HeadCase will hold the largest of heads comfortably, and additional sets of 5 Zip-lock style bags are available to increase capacity.

Anti-twist Spey Swivels: A tiny swivel connected to a braided loop at each end that fits between the shooting line and shooting head. It is ideal for anglers that twist up their shooting line when Spey casting/fishing.

Modern Spey Casting is the best instructional DVD on spey casting ever produced. Learn the basics as well as these casts: roll cast, switch cast, single spey, double spey, snap T, snake roll, wombat cast, Perry poke, jelly roll, Skagit casts, underhand cast, spiral spey, overhead cast, single handed spey casts and using the two-handed rods in the salt. It also includes fault recognition, a glossary of terms and a very useful biokinetic section.

Steelhead & Atlantic salmon knotless tapered leaders are a great addition to the front end of a spey line. RIO offers these tapered leaders in 4 different lengths – 6 ft, 9 ft, 12 ft and 15 ft. We recommend the longer leaders for floating lines and tips, and the short 6 ft leaders are ideal for fast sinking heads or tips. For low, clear water.

Steelhead/Salmon fluorocarbon 9 ft long leaders made of 100% fluorocarbon that can give an angler the edge in tricky conditions.

Steelhead/Salmon tippet is a medium stiff nylon with incredible abrasion resistance. It is ideal for the larger flies used when spey casting and aids a cast in turning over. Using a supple, thin copolymer might be tempting, but a soft tippet can drastically reduce the turnover power of a cast – particularly when used with a larger fly, or in a tough wind.

Freshwater Fluoroflex is a medium stiff fluorocarbon tippet with good knot strength. It is the fluorocarbon of choice for spey casting techniques and for when using larger flies.

GETTING TECHNICAL!

The next part of this booklet is dedicated to the more technical info behind “Spey”, and, for most people, will be confusing, and un-necessary information (so feel free to skip past this to the section on Switch rods and lines – if that interests you). Still, there are always people interested in going a bit deeper with technicalities, and this part is for them!

WEIGHT

Perhaps the greatest confusion lies in the weight/rating of Spey rods. Most fly fishers are familiar with the rating of a single handed rod – choose a #5 rod for trout, a #8 rod for bonefish and a #12 rod for tarpon, for example. Two-handed rods also have a similar rating – somewhere between #5 and #12, but the 8 weight fly line that loads your bonefish rod will never get close to loading a #8 Spey rod. The reason for this is that Spey rods are based on a different line standard – an #8 in the single handed line standard is not the same as an #8 in the “Spey” standard.

A single handed rod, rated for a #8 line, loads effectively with between 200 and 300 grains. A #8 Spey rod will take between 450 and 600 grains to load for spey casting. The “why” isn’t so important - just remember that a Spey rod needs more weight to make it load.

One confusing thing about spey lines is that most of them have more than one line number as a “size”. RIO’s old WindCutter lines had three numbers, such as 7/8/9, 8/9/10 and 9/10/11. The reason for this triple numbering system is that the first WindCutter line designed by Jim Vincent, was made by taking the body of a #10 line, adding some of a #9 to the front end and then finishing it off with the full front taper of a #8, thus the line became an 8/9/10. The numbering system stuck. However, it is rare to find triple number designated lines these days, and most line manufacturers use a dual numbering system.

With dual numbered lines (like RIO’s Short Head Spey, UniSpey and PowerSpey) use the higher number. For example a line designated 8/9 is, in effect a #9 line. To help choose the right line for your rod, we have compiled a chart on RIO’s web site (www.rioproducts.com) that recommends the right line for hundreds of spey rods on the market.

AFTMA vs AFFTA Standard

Okay, so how confused do you want to be? In an attempt to illustrate the difference in line weights between the single handed AFTMA standard and the two handed AFFTA standard the following charts might be helpful. On the other hand, they might cause you to go cross eyed and reach for the nearest bottle of Single Malt!

The **AFTMA** (American Fishing Tackle Manufacturers Association) standard is an attempt to standardize line weights for single handed rods so that whichever line manufacturer you buy a fly line from you know that they will all weigh about the same and load the rod equally – that is, of course, assuming line manufacturers actually make fly lines to the **AFTMA** standard (it is not compulsory!).

Before you look at the charts you need to understand that the two handed standard from **AFFTA** (American Fly Fishing Trade Association) actually has **four** different categories: **H**, **S**, **M** and **L**. More than regular casting the head length of the line in spey casting influences the weight. So, we have four standards (for ease of recognition RIO’s appropriate Spey line is listed after the category):

'H' is for shooting Heads and is measured at 40 ft. – **RIO Scandi & Short Head Spey**

'S' is for Short belly spey lines and is measured at 55 ft – **UniSpey**

'M' is for Mid length belly lines and is measured at 65 ft - **PowerSpey**

'L' is for Long belly spey lines and is measured at 75 ft.

Depending on how long the belly of the spey line is, the “weigh point” falls at different lengths. The AFTMA single handed designation is measured at 30 feet.

Now that everyone is clear on that, let's look at the AFTMA and AFTTA Standards (the numbers represent the weight in grains at the “weigh point”)!

Size	Single Handed	H	S	M	L
#5	140	-	380	-	-
#6	160	250	420	460	600
#7	185	300	470	510	650
#8	210	360	530	570	710
#9	240	430	600	640	780
#10	280	510	680	720	860
#11	330	600	770	810	950
#12	380	700	870	910	1050

This standard (the AFTTA one in particular) was formulated in the early 2000's and is now fairly out of date. For example, an average 6 wt Spey rod will load with about 380-400 grains of a Scandi head (around 30 ft), and about 450 grains with a Skagit head – far more than the proposed standard of 250 grains for a “H” head type line.

Oh, a final thing to remember is that the two handed standard has a plus or minus tolerance of 30 grains, while the single handed standard has a tolerance of plus or minus 6 to 12 grains (depending on the size). Thus you could have a spey line labeled S8 and it would be acceptable if it weighed between 500 and 560 grains.

Mega confusing! Just don't buy a single handed line for a two handed rod!!

Hopefully, this booklet will help you gain you a better understanding of RIO's spey line assortment and when to use what. If you are still in doubt, or confused, do not hesitate to contact us, either by phone; 800 553 0838, or email; rio@rioproducts.com.

www.rioproducts.com