

Basic Rod Building Questions & Answers: Matt Lubaway

1. **What tools do I need in order to get started in rod building**
 - a. Cardboard Box; cut out area to rest rod in and cut holes in the rear for rod wrapping.
 - b. Bowl; to hold thread.
 - c. Telephone book; to act as a thread tensioner.
 - d. Razor blade.
 - e. Two Hangers; bent to form v-stands.
 - f. Round File.
 - g. Artist brush.

2. **How do I locate the spine of the blank?**
 - a. Place the butt on a flat surface, hold the tip in the palm of you hand and apply pressure in the center of the blank, with the other hand. The blank will “jump” and settle in one place. This is “effective spine”.
 - b. The spine on a multi-piece rod is located separately on each section of the rod.
 - c. On multi-piece rods; the stiff butt sections are done in the same manner. You may instead sign down the natural curve of the butt section and mark that as close enough.

3. **Where should I locate the spine on my rod blank in relation to the guides?**
 - a) Spine on top gives more power on the forward cast.
 - b) Spine on bottom, ensured stronger play in the back cast. More power lifting line for a cast.
 - c) Disregard spine and locate the rod's stiffest axis then the fish is fighting against it. Find the natural curse and locate the blank so the tip and butt are up. Maximum power.

4. **How do I make a rod stable under load?**
 - a. The only way is to locate the guides on the bottom of the rod.
 - i. Fly and Spinning rods are inherently stable.
 - ii. Casting and Boat Trolling rods are inherently un-stable.
 - iii. Consideration for Spiral Rods.

5. **How do I get rid of bubbles in my finish?**
 - a. Avoid bubbles by slowly mixing epoxy.
 - b. Use a spatula instead of a brush.
 - c. Apply gentle heat near bubbles to release bubbles. Alcohol lamp, Butane lighter, or heat gun. (ALWAYS USE CAUTION WHEN WORKING WITH ANY OPEN FLAME)

6. **Should I thin my finish?**
 - a. Most often there is not need. In fact High Build epoxy is preferable in some circumstances.
 - b. I prefer a thin first cost to penetrate the thread wraps and apply light sanding after dried.
 - c. As an alternative slightly warm the epoxy in a microwave oven or with one of the above means of removing bubbles.

7. **How many guides should I use on my rod and what size should they be?**
 - a. Use a recipe with the fewest and smallest guides for the rods required task and use.
 - b. Large enough to allow connecting knots to pass easily.
 - c. Strong enough to provide long term durability.

8. **Where should I put them?**
 - a. Use masking tape to set guides temporarily and observe under load.
 - b. Static Testing to ensure line under full load follows the rod blank. The PERFECT LINE at 45°.

9. **Is it possible to slow down the action by adding more guides to the blank?**
 - a. Mostly no.
 - b. Adding extra guides may create a ‘softer’ rod the react more slowly and dampens slower.

- c. Extra guides may just add weight and reduce efficiency of the blank.
10. **Will using double footed guides make a rod stiffer?**
- a. Double foot guides will make it act 'softer'; single foot guides make it 'stiffer'. However, the amount of stiffing is almost immaterial. Example 3 inches of 'wrap' on a 90 inch rod.
 - b. Note, stiffening with a butt wrap may be noticeable.
11. **Is there any difference between glue and adhesive?**
- a. In most cases, the terms glue and adhesive are used interchangeably by nearly everyone.
12. **How tightly should my guides be wrapped?**
- a. Run your thread through the bottom pages of a dictionary (a think on that should give you enough tension. Use extra books to increase tension.
 - b. As you advance you can use a thread tensioner from an old sewing machine.
13. **Do I need to wrap the ferrule in any way?**
- a. Wrapping a metal ferrule is not necessary for strength, but a slight over wrap tends to seal out the elements.
 - b. Fiberglass and Graphite ferrules can be wrapped to add strength.
14. **What can I use to take up the space between my reel seat and the blank?**
- a. Most common builders wrap the blank with masking tape until the reel seat fits tightly.
 - b. Graphite or Composite Foam and even cork are recommended.
 - c. Wood was used in the past but add considerable unnecessary weight.
15. **What is the best adhesive to use for rod building?**
- a. Epoxy, 2 part Epoxy. Compare for the least amount of yellowing.
 - b. Spar or Ultra Urethane
 - c. Spar Varnish bamboo rod
 - d. Coach Varnish (Spar + Tung oil mixture) for antique Tonkin cane.
16. **Are the high modulus graphite rods brittle and do they break easily?**
- a. Graphite scrim provide tremendous strength along its length.
 - b. Very fragile to perpendicular forces. (Such as a door)
 - c. And also fragile to twisting forces.
17. **What does the term "Action" refer to when used to describe a fishing rod?**
- a. See Common Sense System.
 - b. Rod action rating vary significantly by manufacturer.
 - i. Light
 - ii. Medium
 - iii. Fast
 - iv. Ultra Fast
18. **How can I remove a guide from my rod?**
- a. Use extreme care with a single edge razor blade.
 - b. Always cut away from yourself.
 - c. Slow small cuts do not cut too deep.
19. **I applied my two-part epoxy to my thread wraps and even after 2 or 3 days it is still tacky. What went wrong and what can I do about it?**
- a. Best answer, remove it all and start over.
 - i. Cut off with single edge razor
 - ii. Finish clean up with Acetone and extreme care
 - b. In emergency situation CA glue will coat and help set the Epoxy, but NO GUARANTEES.

20. **I am finding that custom rod building is addictive. Is there any known cure?**
- a. Perfect you are doing it right.
 - b. No known cure known.