



Derek McKenzie Outdoors Fly Fishing Outfitters Melbourne Australia

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Reduced to its simplest terms, there are really only three-rod actions: full flex, mid flex and tip flex. Rod engineering between manufacturers has resulted in an array of rod actions, at least in name and from there, two rods from different manufacturers are not likely to have the same action, although the weight and length may be the same.

- A rod with a **full flex action**, often referred to as a slow action such as fibreglass, is softer than its counterparts, having more flex or bend throughout its length. Considered by many as an old action, it nevertheless remains a favourite of many veteran fly fishers for very prudent reasons. If a soft, precise and accurate cast is required over a short to medium distance, we know of no better choice. Besides, the full flex action is the most forgiving of the lot to a casting error. Error on the cast and you will still be playing in the ballpark. Make the same mistake with a tip flex and the result will send you to the dugout to repair your snarls and wind knots. If "feel" is important in fly fishing, no other rod action that will compare to this.
- The **mid flex action** is somewhere between the tip flex and full flex actions. Like anything in the middle, it does not represent either extreme and is often referred to as a medium or medium fast action depending on where it comes in on the scale. This action is very popular with many fly fishers and well suited to anglers of all skill levels. In several instances, the manufacturer's advertising spin suggests you need a fast action rod and almost try to compare the action of a fly rod to it's owner or a car. Who wants to be a slow or medium fast fly fisher or worse yet, who wants a slow car? For us, we actually tend to prefer this type of action for a relaxed days fishing under clear skies and not fighting big winds. As to distance and presentation, that rests in the skill of the caster and we believe that in particular for those learning this sport, this is perhaps the best action to learn on.
- A **tip flex action** or fast action rod is the opposite extreme of the three actions. The tip does most of the initial work with the rest of the rod responding and flexing only on demand. This too is heavily dependent on the definition of the manufacturer and in some cases, rods are being produced that are actually too fast for most fly fisherman to enjoy and in fact, these same manufacturers have begun to tame their tapers in response. If you intend to fly fish where you are battling high winds, need to cast consistently to the horizon or are fishing saltwater for any number of tough big game fish, this is the action for you. However, in the hands of an inexperienced caster, this type of action can be difficult to control. While it is not forgiving of casting mistakes, the fast action rod throws a very tight loop a very long way, even in the face of adversity. Adversity in fishing, particularly in the salt is something we call "the wind." On occasion, many fly fishers have come to refer to the wind by other four letter words.