

FLYING LINE & REELS FOR FLYING AN AMERICAN FIGHTER KITE

There are many choices of line to use to fly American fighter kites.

Threads of all types are used; polyester, cotton, quilting, Dacron, poly-cotton blends, button, upholstery, linen and crochet to name a few. Fishing lines are often used as well; the more popular ones are braided Spectra, braided Dacron and some low stretch monofilament. Some use the large packages of waxed dental floss from Wal-mart that costs about \$1. They all work.

Most flyers prefer a waxed cotton line. Typically, a larger gauge polished cotton thread than is used for home sewing is what's used. The thread is 'glaced' or polished at the factory to remove the small hairs often seen on threads; then flyers wax it with paraffin. The wax aids in gripping the line during flight and makes the line feel good to your hands. It also reduces the potential cuts or burns in your fingers from flying line 'zinging' through your hands in high winds. In addition waxing the line makes it stiffer and lessens the tendency of the line to tangle.

Some flyers prefer cotton line without wax....it is just a matter of personal preference. There is no 'right' or 'correct' flying line. If you find a line you like, that is the 'correct' flying line for you!

A few flyers use a Spectra or Spectra like braided fishing line usually of about 15#- 30# test. Although this is a very strong line and does not stretch, it can very easily cut your fingers quite deeply if you have the line zinging across your hands. If you chose to use Spectra line, be very careful using it.

There are some flyers who like monofilament fishing line as flying line. I personally find it difficult to grip, similar to Spectra in that way. And monofilament line stretches a little which may slightly delay the timing of how the kite responds to your line manipulations. This change could be a good thing or not, depending on what you are trying to accomplish with your kite. I think it's a good idea to test many different lines to find what you like best.

Tangles, snarls and knots

There is no way to prevent flying line from occasionally getting knotted, snarled or seriously tangled. This is part of American fighter kiting. I don't enjoy untangling line, so when my line gets tangled, unless I can quickly untangle it, I cut out the tangle, tie the line together and get back to the enjoyment of flying.

Attaching the flying line to your kite

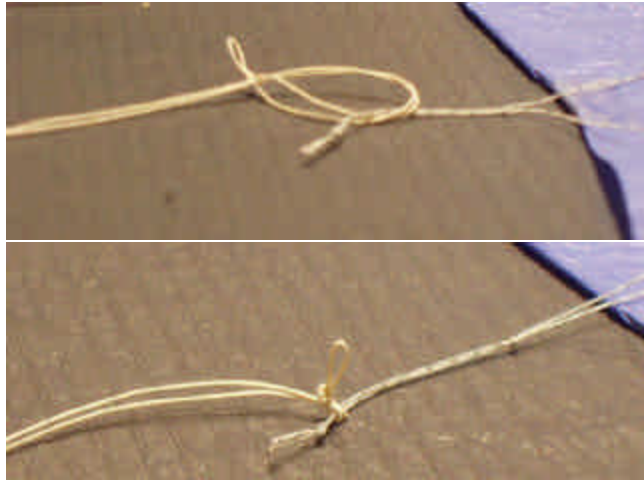
There are 3 popular methods for attaching flying line to the tow connection loop of a American fighter kite's bridle.

A. Tie the line to the tow connection loop; usually a tiller hitch knot is used for this because it is easy to untie.

B. Attach a fishing swivel/snap to the end of your line and snap your line onto the tow connection loop on the kite. The fishing swivel/snap in the photo at the left is a size 14; I have used size 12 also. The size 12 is a little larger and easier to handle.



- C. Make a loop, about 6" long, at the end of the flying line. To make the loop, fold over the last 7" of flying line and tie an overhand or figure eight knot to create a loop. At the very end of the loop fold over about 2" of it and tie another overhand knot to create a second, smaller loop at the very end of



the first loop. This second loop is used to release the larkshead knot that attaches the flying line to the tow connection loop on the kite's bridle; just pull on the small end loop to release the larkshead knot.

The best reel to use

The most popular reel is called a 'gator' style reel. It is about 6" in diameter, made of a tough plastic and has a flat side and a flared side. The flat side is placed on the ground with the flared side facing up. You can see in the photo on the left the profile of the gator reel. Why it has the name 'gator' is anyone's guess. This is the best style of reel to use when flying an American fighter kite.



Where to put the reel when you are flying

Place the reel so the flat side is on the ground and the reel is at your feet. Typically I partially straddle my reel. The reason for this placement is it allows the flying line to flow off the flared side of the reel without and hesitation. Any hesitation in the flow of line can cause the kite to crash or do something unplanned.



Bruce Lambert 8/2005

Excess retrieved line lies on the ground around the reel and your feet....this is normal. It's also why the line sometimes gets snarls or tangles. Because the wind will blow the pile of line around and tangles may occur....

You can purchase the reels and waxed polished cotton flying line at www.one-world-trading.com. When you are at the website, click on kites, then click on NA kites and you will see the line and reels. Also www.buyakite.com has cotton flying line and reels, if you don't see it on their website, email them for a list of what they have.

Biggrins, bruce