
"The Fly" climbing rope by New England Rope

Posted by Treeman - 10/01/2003 10:06pm

There's a new tree climbing rope out that is different. It's called "The Fly". I'm not sure if it was named after an insect (as a child I had aspirations to become an entomologist) or it denotes the freedom of climbing high in a tree (the Peter Pan Effect). But it is a different rope from the multitudes of arborist ropes (many which are of fine quality) now being used. It's made by a well standing rope manufacturer, New England Rope.

What makes it different? It is a static rope as far as elasticity is concerned yet has the property of being pliant, unlike stiff static ropes often used by cavers. It is made with fibers that resist abrasion which is a MUST if you climb with the traditional double rope technique (DRT). It is also very light and smaller in diameter- somewhere around 7/16. I forgot what mm size it is. Someone please correct me. The rope is also very pretty to look at- much like a rock climbers kernmantle rope (which you should NOT use in a tree! The exterior sheath will melt on your first DRT climb).

Here are some of the reports I am getting about the rope. Working arborists say it is harder to grip, being smaller in diameter. It is very light, which makes it easier to handle in the trees. One rainforest canopy climber said it dries very quickly, which is very important if you climb in a wet region like the rainforest.

One fair haired climber (red head) had a contact allergic reaction to the rope. He thinks it might be the red dye that made his hands break out. Now he climbs with gloves while using the rope.

I have not personally used the rope. I like the grip from a full half inch arborist rope (I use red candy stripe Yale XTP). Are there others who have used this rope? Please give us your feedback.

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Fly

Posted by rtrem - 10/02/2003 09:10am

I have used Fly Rope for about 4 months.

I am relatively new to climbing, 3rd season. I mostly climb on Braided Safety Blue by New England Rope. I have also climbed on Blue Streak and 7/16" Sport Line. BTW, Fly is true 11 mm diameter.

My comments about Fly are: Rope is very supple even on first use. I also found it to grip extremely well. My experience with new rope is that it is waxy and a bit creepy on first use. Not so with Fly.

It is also very compact. I have pretty small hands, so the blake's hitch is 1/2 of a handful rather than a whole handful with 1/2" rope.

It also stays round. My experience with Sport Line or other non-cored rope is that it deforms as it is loaded in the blake's hitch. Fly acts just like cored arborist rope.

Bottom line, I like it. I am going to keep using it. I'll probably buy more. I can't find any downside to it.

Bob
Tree Climbing for ALL
www.arborquest.org

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Waiting for some....

Posted by Josh - 10/02/2003 05:57pm

I ordered 150' of the Fly back at the beginning of September after reading so many good reports about it. Unfortunately, Isabelle hit and I am still waiting for it. I got a local supplier to call New England Ropes to send me a sample, which they did. Very nice stuff. Can't wait to climb on it.

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the fly

Posted by NickfromWI - 10/02/2003 08:44pm

Originally posted by Treeman

One fair haired climber (red head) had a contact allergic reaction to the rope. He thinks it might be the red dye that made his hands break out. Now he climbs with gloves while using the rope.

If there was an allergic reaction, it wouldn't have been from the dye. This rope (and practically all arborist CLIMBING lines) do not use a dye in the ropes that can rub off. Some arborist rigging lines (Samson Stable-Braid, for example) lose their color during use. The individual strands that make up the rope are red and will stay that way unless you change them or I guess they'll lose a bit of color due to UV exposure.

Many companies put a waxy coating on their ropes. This helps build a protective layer that minimizes damage to the inner strands.

Fly is good stuff. 11mm....that way it will work on many mechanical devices (ascenders, etc) that weren't designed to be used with full half-inch ropes. Talk of the town is that other companies will soon follow suit and release their own versions of the Fly.

Right now it only comes in red and white. Yes, it is pretty! The best part is...it's spliceable!

This is a great lightweight rope would be nice if you have to carry it long distances to your favorite tree.

love
nick

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Posted by Sophia Sparks - 10/04/2003 12:05pm

At New Tribe we were debating whether to add The Fly to our Ropes selection, and right then Tengu called us with a glowing report about this rope. He's been on it for about 6 months, part of that time in the rainforest. Here's a great benefit he told us about: The Fly resists getting wet! It doesn't get soggy or heavy in wet conditions. Add that to all the other fine qualities New England has built into this rope, and you've got a winner. No other static rope is good for BOTH DRT and SRT. Something to think about.

So, of course, we are excited to ADD The Fly to our "line."

Happy and Safe Climbing,
Sophia

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Posted by Wild Bill - 10/07/2003 11:44am

My brother, Joe of the Jungle, has used the Fly extensively in the rainforests and agrees with most of the positive points mentioned in other messages on this board. If Peter "Treeman" Jenkins will make this message board accessible to him, he will reply in person rather than making me do it for him.

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the negatives....

Posted by NickfromWI - 10/07/2003 07:04pm

So what are the bad things about the Fly?

love
nick

pseudo-negative?

Posted by Patrick - 10/07/2003 10:50pm

I've used the Fly several times and like it. After almost a full season of use, other climbers' Fly ropes don't seem to snag as much as my Sportline does.

The one thing I noticed with it is that seems really bouncy for both SRT and DRT. Not necessarily a negative considering its construction, just noticeable. I like it enough that I'll be getting some of my own soon.

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The Fly

Posted by jmaher - 10/09/2003 09:31am

Now that I have finally managed to get myself logged onto this message board, let me share some information about the Fly

During this past summer, while working in the Panamanian rainforest, Tengu was good enough to bring along a 150 length of Fly for me to use. I fell in love with the stuff right off.

There are several reasons why I really like the stuff. First, this was a rainforest and therefore things stay pretty wet. The rope does not seem to absorb a lot of water and when it does get wet it dries out more quickly than the other rope I have been using (sportline). If the rope gets muddy all that is necessary is to rinse it in a bucket of water and the mud seems to come right out. Another reason, of course, is that it works just fine for both SRT and DRT. Almost every climb in the rainforest will involve a combination of both SRT and DRT techniques. First ascents and entry pitches are almost always SRT while everything else is DRT. The rope works fine for both. Finally, while not as light as Sportline, it is still lighter than traditional arborist rope. Because it does not absorb as much water in wet conditions it is actually lighter than wet Sportline. It does not pack up as tightly as Sportline but still packs up smaller than most traditional arborist rope.

Tengu has reported a possible allergic reaction to the dye used in the rope. I was almost ready to agree with him, because I, too, suffered from a rash on my arms after I began using the stuff. However, since coming home from Panama at the end of the summer I have not had another problem with the rash and I suspect that the rash might have been a reaction to the vegetative matter through which the rope passed while in the rainforest. Sort of like dragging your rope through poison ivy. Tengu was also in the rainforest and his rope passed through a whole lot of foliage just as mine did. A good friend of mine, who is a biologist, corroborates my belief that the rash is more likely due to something similar to poison ivy rather than the dye in the rope. If anyone else has a problem with a rash while using this rope, I would certainly like to know about it.

There is one other thing users need to know about using the Fly. I have found that once tension is off the climbing knot (Blake's Hitch, whatever) that the knot will tend to loosen and unset itself. I got a real surprise the first time I stepped off a limb after a brief rest and found myself doing a very short but exciting descent. Everything tightened itself up after I had moved only a few inches but it was a surprise, nevertheless. I would recommend that anytime you have allowed tension to come off the knot, that you check to make sure it is seated before leaping into space. The knot was in no danger of coming untied. It simply had loosened itself enough to necessitate a re-seating. No problem at all if you are aware of it. It is also possible that once this rope has received more use and become a bit worn, that this problem will solve itself.

I give this rope an "A+"

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Posted by Tom Dunlap - 11/25/2003 03:19pm

If we were to quantify the incremental step in the construction of arbo ropes we would put three strand manila as a 1. Then in the late seventies, along comes Arborplex, 12 strand. Ropes make a fifty point increase in performance. Soon, sixteen strand arbo ropes come along. We pick up another ten points over A-plex. Things have been stable in the arbo climbing line field for years. Then, in the summer of 2003 NE Ropes comes up with Fly. We gain fifteen points. Not as dramatic as the difference from manila to A-plex but a big jump.

Since it weighs 2/3 what sixteen strand does and the volume is 2/3 also more rope can be carried with less effort or the same amount of rope can be carried in a smaller pack.

It has just enough stretch to allow some cushion if its used in SRT. Less stretch than typical arbo ropes.

Fly has caused the other rope companies into a "catch up game". Soon, there will be other 11mm ropes on the market. By then, NE will probably have a new version around to tempt us.

Tom

How's the Extended Wear of the Fly?

Posted by JimK - 03/07/2004 11:34pm

Now that we're approaching a year of using the Fly, are there comments concerning its extended performance?

Is the rate of drying the same?

How is it wearing from friction - especially the Blake's Hitch?

Regards,
JimK

Fly report

Posted by gnarl - 03/09/2004 11:24am

I've been using Fly ropes for about 8 months now. They seem very tough and aren't showing much sign of wear. I haven't observed any milking. I think Tengu says he's been getting a little milking in his Fly, yes?

I had Sherrill make me some soft eyes for Fly rope. Those splices make me feel a little nervous. The problem is that the 24 strand splice is so complicated that I don't understand it. If it ain't understandable then it's nerve-wracking by definition.

Other observations:

--A Blake's hitch can slide on a new Fly rope when you first load the Blake's. This problem seems to go away as the Fly is broken in with use. I use a broken-in split tail, which has some fuzz. That also stops unwanted sliding. But I always make sure the Blake is tight before I load it on a Fly rope.

--Fly rules in the rain. It resists water penetration and seems to dry faster, too.

--Sweet slippery smooth action. Great for rope throws.

--It can kink up if you're using a figure 8. I descend with a Petzl Piranha (when I'm climbing DRT and using a cambium saver). (That is, I use the Piranha to supply most of the friction during descent, but the Blake's is there too.) But ... the Fly turns into a corkscrewy can of worms.

--Sorry, Treeman, I don't like that red color. I don't like climbing with a candycane!

cheers,
Gnarl (Richard)

Fly

Posted by Ponderosa - 03/12/2004 08:13pm

Just to add my two cents. I've been climbing on a Fly for about six months with no problems. It stuffs well in my backpack for wilderness climbs, dries fast and handles well on the limbs. I've never experienced a problem with my Blakes loosening up, but then I check for a tight knot before taking off. I SRT descend on a piranha without any problems using the Fly. And I think its kinda cute.

Posted by Tom Dunlap - 03/14/2004 08:37pm

Robert,

While the NE Rope website touts the excellent knot-holding quality of the Fly, the Samson catalog gives it only good knot control, moderate flexibility, and moderate UV resistance

Is Samson comparing their ropes to NE's on their website? Can you post a link?

I don't think there is a better combo rope made than the Fly. For strictly SRT its a little stretchy but not extreme.

Tom

fly rope

Posted by Patrick - 03/15/2004 02:14pm

Originally posted by Tom Dunlap

I don't think there is a better combo rope made than the Fly. For strictly SRT its a little stretchy but not extreme.

Tom

I'd definitely agree with this. I used it in Panama in January (as did most of the other climbers who went). It didn't get caught up on bark, dried very quickly, and had great knot holding power for limb walks and other activities that involved lessening of knot tension. Worked great for SRT, too. I used Sportline (a 7/16" rope ordered from NT) before I got the Fly. The Fly has done a better job of resisting glazing in the Blake's hitch than my Sportline.

New England Rope - the Fly

Posted by wahoo101 - 06/15/2004 05:33pm

My son and I ordered a 200' length of the Fly from Ben Meadows Company (1-800-241-6401) for 116.00. It was shipped right out the next day and we got it 3 days later north of Seattle. Our is a full 11mm, great for gripping and we love its flexibility. We descend with the Petzl Pirana and have had no troubles with kinks, of course we are a couple of light-weights and our rope is fairly new (we will watch it, though). I sewed a 1/8" poly loop into one end, whip stitched it into place and used rope dip to protect the whip stitching. This makes it way easier to pull over a limb as there is no big knot to catch. We are going for a 600' reel on our next order (338.00 and 12 lbs.) We'd like to be able to climb up one end of the line and Tyrolean traverse over to the ground or a neighboring tree - all on the same rope (we have some awesome old growth Firs on quite steep slopes). Climb safe and relish that "treetime!" Ben & Logan

11mm or 1/2"?

Posted by Dietley - 07/07/2004 01:50am

I'm going to buy the Fly, too! I'm hearing from people here that it is 11mm in diameter, but some catalogues have it listed as 1/2 inch. Are there two thicknesses available, or are these suppliers just generously rounding up?

Posted by stevebullman - 07/07/2004 01:26pm

its apparently 11mm rope, but when i first got my fly and laid it alongside my 10.5mm beal, it seems a heck of a lot thicker for a supposed .5mm difference

Posted by Dietley - 10/03/2004 04:23am

You can add me to the list of people who like the Fly. I haven't used it in the wet, but my early impressions are very positive.

Steve Bullman, your impression of its size was right on. According to my trusty vernier caliper it measures a full 12 mm (unladen). By comparison my Sportline was an honest 11 mm, and my Yale XTC was 13.5 mm.

Not that I'm complaining; I find the extra mm. makes the Fly more comfortable in hand than the Sportline, yet it is still a lighter and more compact line than regular 1/2" arborist ropes.

And, in addition to all its functional virtues, it is an attractive rope. And that's good! Why should only the rock jocks have pretty gear?:P

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