

# The Happy Typesetter

## PREPARE

1. **Determine the longest line** to be set. Keep in mind that if lines are staggered left or right, your line must run the entire length from most left to most right.
2. To determine the **length of leading** to use: add at least 48pts to the line length (to give room for large spacing on the ends of each line) and round up to the nearest convenient furniture length.
3. **Set up your work area.** Pull your type tray out carefully and set it on one of the work counters. Set a good amount of the leading length and thickness that you've chosen next to the type tray. Check your leading to make sure it is all the same length (no oddballs).
4. Clear out the **spacing** compartments in your tray. The spacing in these trays are often a bit jumbled. Sort them out before you begin.
5. Retrieve some word-spacers, ems, and quads from the appropriate spacing drawer, and sort them into the appropriate compartments in your type tray. If necessary, you may want to pull out the spacing drawer and set it along-side your type tray.
6. Hold the **composing stick** so that your wrist is as straight and relaxed as possible. Have your thumb or forefinger poised to hold type as you set it in the stick.

## BEGIN SETTING

1. Lay in a piece of **leading**. If the leading is too long to fit easily, check the leading length and check the placement of the "stop" on the composing stick. If the lead is longer than it should be, cut it to size. Otherwise, adjust your composing stick so the lead can shift slightly. Always check with an aid before cutting lead.
2. **Begin your line** with at least an EM or a QUAD (use a quad if setting in 14 pt or smaller).

3. If your drawer seems light on any letters, count to make sure you will have enough to set your text.

**Set type from left to right, upside down.** Type should appear like so:

Upright string appears like so:

*As you're setting type, keep an eye to make sure all of the notches of your type are visible and line up. If a letter looks right but the notch is hidden, you've probably got a "p" instead of a "b" or some such flip. Remember that someone else sorted type into your drawer. They didn't necessarily do a good job.*

4. Place a piece of **leading for each new line.**

5. Each line should be of equal **tightness**, and no leading should be as tight in the stick as the type.

6. When tightening a line, never cram in **coppers or brasses**. Remove a larger piece of spacing, slip in the copper/brass, then cram in the larger piece.

7. **Method prevents madness.** It's wise to add spacing methodically, with the largest to the outside, and the thinnest up against the type.

8. If you find yourself adding two or three of the same kind of spacing, you could probably use something larger.

9. When your stick is full, or you are done setting for the day, **wrap your type** form with string: unlock your composing stick's stop. Slide your type form carefully onto a smooth, flat surface. Hang the composing stick on the wall. Pull out a length of string that is at least as long as your wingspread, longer for large forms. Beginning with the middle of the string at a corner of your form, begin wrapping one end of string around the sides of the form, leaving the other loose so that the wrapping string crosses over part of the loose end at the corner of the form. When you reach the end of the string, use a bit of leading to tuck it under itself. Repeat in the opposite direction with the remaining string.

10. **TAKE NOTES!** On or in your **galley**, be sure there is a slip of paper to indicate the quarter, your name, id number, program name, and, importantly, the name of your typeface.