

SMART Angler's Notebook

by Carl Haensel

A mayfly dancing down a trout stream or minnows chased by bass—either one is a situation well-suited to an angler with a fly rod. Flies may look complex, but tying them is actually much easier than you may think. Here are the basic techniques that will let you tie most of the flies you'll need. An enormous amount of additional information is available in print and online, so visit your local fly shop or bookstore (in person or online) for more references and guides.

INTRODUCTION to FLY-TYING

photos by the author



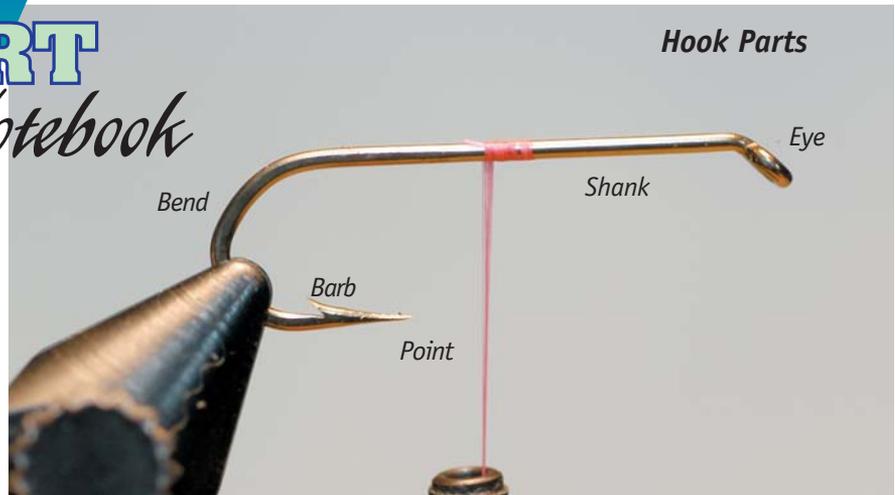
Beginning

You have your materials and you're ready to go. But before you start tying, here are a few basic techniques to practice.

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Tying on the thread

First, place a hook in the vise, as shown. Adjust the vise's tension so that the hook doesn't move when light pressure is placed on the eye. Next, hold the bobbin in one hand and the end of the thread in the other. Place the thread on the shank of the hook. Wrap the thread away from you over the hook. Then wrap the thread forward toward the hook eye and then back so that the thread wraps over itself. This step secures the thread to the hook. It also provides a base so that materials do not slip on the hook.



Securing materials

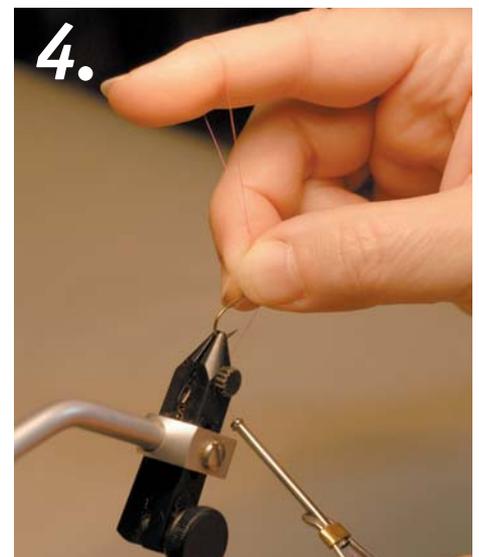
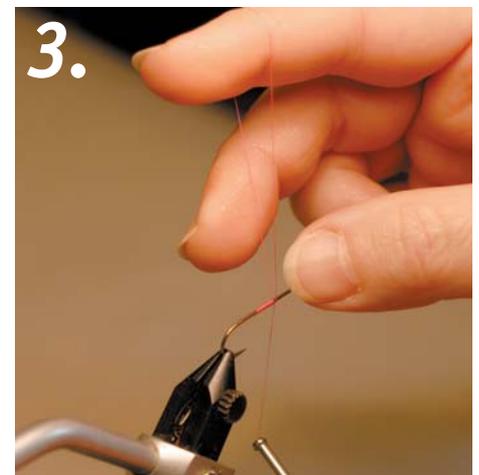
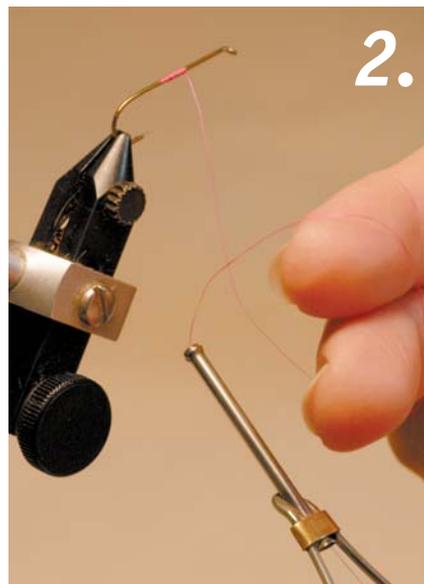
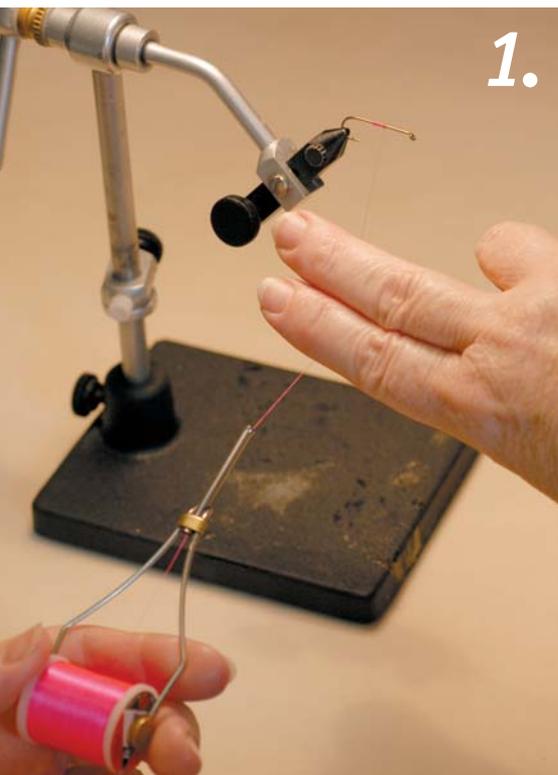
After attaching the thread to the hook, the next step is to anchor the materials to the hook. Hold the mate-

rial that you wish to attach next to the hook. Wrap the thread away from you tightly against the materials. Use as few wraps as possible to attach the material.

The half-hitch

After attaching materials to the hook with a few strong wraps, a half-hitch can work well to secure the material. A series of half-hitches can also be used to finish the fly. The following directions are to complete a half-hitch.

Begin your half-hitch by bringing the bobbin toward you in your left hand. Take your free hand and place your index and middle fingers on the thread between the bobbin and the hook. Rotate your right hand away from you to create a loop in the thread. Bring this loop under and against the hook. Remove your fingers as you slide the loop closed. Pinching the thread to the hook can help avoid tangles. Your half-hitch is complete.



Finishing the fly

After you've attached the materials to the hook and your fly looks done, it's time to finish it. Wrap enough thread near the hook eye to form a small head. Do not cover the hook eye with the thread. At this time, you can perform a series of half-hitches or use a whip-finish tool to secure the thread. When this is complete, cut the thread and apply head cement.



Tying a Woolly Bugger



1. After securing the hook and attaching the thread, the first material to attach is the marabou tail. Remember to keep the proportions of the tail appropriate.



2. After trimming any extra marabou, first attach the hackle and then the chenille facing rearward.

Materials

- Sizes 4 to 12,
3x long-shank streamer hook
- Chenille
- Marabou
- Saddle hackle



3. Next, wrap the chenille forward and secure it, and then trim it. Then wrap the hackle forward and secure it. The last step is to wrap the fly head and finish it as you wish.

Now that you've begun tying flies, you might hunger to learn even more! Ask in local fly-fishing tackle shops about fly-tying groups and others with similar interests. Get involved so you can learn new fly-tying skills and share your knowledge. ☐