



Basic Fly Tying Tools



What You Need To Get
Started

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What You Need To Get Started Tying Flies.

By Northwest Outdoors

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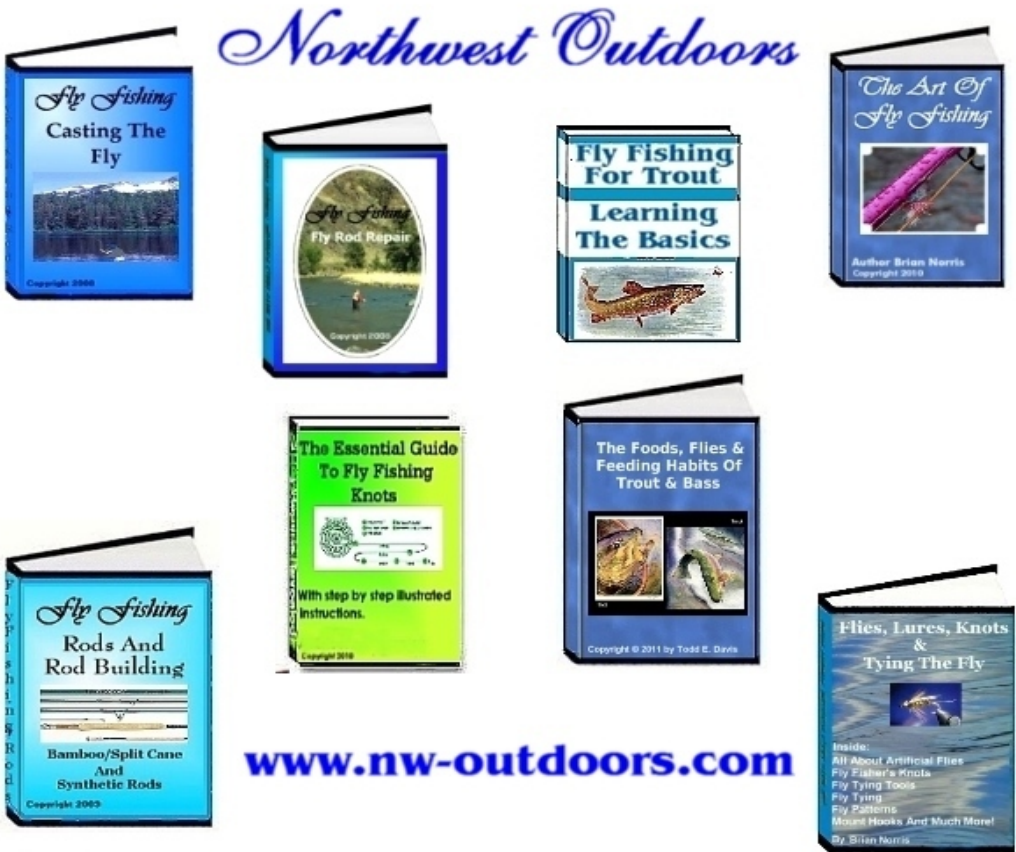
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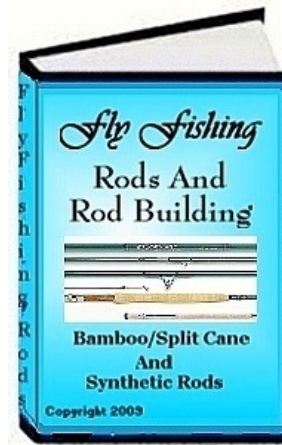
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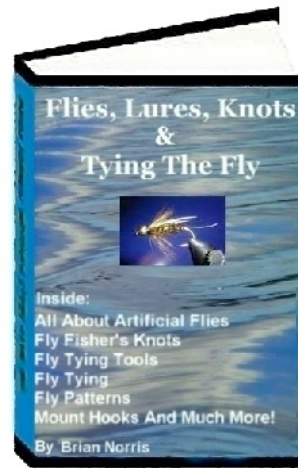
If you are interested in learning how to tie artificial flies, I highly recommend getting the book “Flies, Lures, Knots And Tying The Fly” By Brian Norris, you can find it as well as numerous other fly fishing books at Northwest Outdoors - www.nw-outdoors.com



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Tying your own flies can be very satisfying, especially when you are lucky (or skillful) enough to catch fish with them. Patience is a definite requirement of any fly tyer (which should not be a problem if you are an angler!) as is a deftness of hand and nimble fingers. To tie flies you are going to need a few basic instruments.

First and foremost is the **fly tying** vice. Without a vice you will find it nigh on impossible to make a presentable fly. At this point it is a good time to decide if you want to bells and whistles model or something basic that gets the job done.

The former will have a few features lacking on the basic type such as a multi angle tilting head, perhaps it may also include a steel plate (allowing it sit freestanding rather than having to be clamped to a table), or maybe it includes an extra arm to hold the spool of thread or tying silk.

You can also buy a vice that comes with several different sized jaws that accommodate larger hooks (for bass or slamon fishing for example) and also ones for tiny hooks that you would tie a midge pattern.

Having decided what vice you want next are some essential tools you should have, they include a Bobbin Holder, Hackle Pliers and Scissors. When you become more advanced you may want to consider buying a Dubbing Twister and Dubbing Brush.

Next to consider is just what type of flies you are going to create. This will depend largely on what type of fishing you regularly do.

Flyfishing can be broken down into two disciplines, wet or dry fly fishing.

Dry Fly fishing it could be argued is a pursuit of purists, however there is no reason for this to be as anyone can master the dry fly. As the same suggests the flies are not submerged in the water, rather they float of the surface of the lake , river or stream.

The Summer months are the most productive time of year for dry fly fishing as insects abound, however spring (the mayfly season is often referred as duffers fortnight!) and autumn time are also good times so should not be dismissed.

More common is Wet fly fishing. This can be broken down into further categories which include nymphing and the use of larger patterns known as lures. It is this type of fishing that produce the most results probably because it is the style more often used.

If you are new to *fly tying* then you could do no worse than starting with basic patterns such as the Pheasant Tail nymph or a Stick fly. These are not hard to master at the vice and they are great flies to use on Trout Fisheries or lakes.

Now enter the wonderful world of; Hooks, Beads, Dubbing, Capes, Furs, Varnishes, Glues, Epoxy & Waxes, Tinsels Wire and Weights, Threads & Flosses. Your choice of what to buy will include some of the factors discussed above. Have fun at the vice, start with simple patterns and enjoy using the fruits (or flies!) of your labour.

Fly Tying Tools

Of all of the ways to catch fish, there are few are as exciting and rewarding as catching a fish on a fly that you have tied yourself. An artificial fly can entice the slow rise of a trout, gentle sip of a grayling, huge run of a Muskie or explosive strike of a largemouth bass. For many fly fishermen tying flies is as satisfying as landing the fish.

The art of fly tying is the craft of combing a few basic elements on a fly, that of the tail, body wing and hackle to create the final artificial fly. It can be achieved with just a few basic materials like wool, fly tying fur, fly tying feathers and thread or silks and a few simple tools. Once you have learned the basics your find many patterns that are simple to tie. The simple tools a fly tyer will utilize basic fly tying tools include a fly tying vice, bobbins, scissors, hackle pliers, hair stackers.

Fly Tying Vices



While it is possible to hold the hook with your fingers and it is amazing to watch old traditional fly tyers tying dressed salmon flies entirely by hand however this is not normal today, with hooks going down to size 24 or even 32 the majority of fly tyers would not dream of tying a fly and not using a vice. A good fly tying vice will be easy to use, hold the hook securely and adjust to a wide range of hook sizes.

Actions on vices include lever action which is sufficient for most tyers, however for large pike, bass or saltwater patterns a spring loaded vice may be used. Normally fly tyers prefer a simple lever action that is pressed down once after the jaws have been adjusted to suit that size of hook. The jaws should be hard tempered in order to withstand many years of wear.

Vices come with C Clamps which attach to your desk or tying surface or alternatively pedestal models, good vices may have both options . Pedestals need to be heavy enough so that they stay in one place as you tie. These are generally less portable than C Clamp vices because of the weight in the base. Vices may frequently have replaceable heads allowing different types of hooks to be connected. Specialist attachments may be available for tube flies tying.

Finally you can get small streamside vices, very small vices that you use at the river bank to match the hatch.

Scissors



A fly tyer will have a range of different scissors for fly tying. Key is that they are extremely sharp and have a very fine point for close-up work. Scissors will be generally smaller than used by craft or domestic users. Tungsten blades are available which are excellent. The blades on scissors can be straight, curved or serrated according to the cutting requirements.

Typically fly tyers keep two pairs of scissors handy, one as a workhorse to cut through tough materials like feather stalks, hair and tinsel and a second pair for delicate tasks like trimming hackle, this second pair usually having smaller finer points. Generally it is worth keeping a razor blade handy also, especially if using some of the modern Kevlar or gel spun silks available, frequently these are tougher than the scissors!

Bobbin Holders



While it is possible to tie a fly by removing a length of tying thread from its spool there are many advantages to using a Bobbin Holder, ranging from reducing wastage to keeping tension. So the Bobbin Holder performs more functions than are apparent at first sight. Not only does a bobbin hold the spool of thread or silk as you tie, it maintains the tension

on the fly & being tied so furs and feathers do not spring loose.

Whenever you pause the bobbin simply hangs below the hook with the weight of the bobbin stopping the fly from unravelling. Additionally bobbins can be spun tightening the thread so that the thread or more modern tying silks like Semperfli Nano Silk which is a form of Gel Spun Polyethylene which is virtually unbreakable yet has extremely thin diameter equivalent to a 12/0 or 50 denier silk. It is small enough not to create build up on the smallest Klinkhammers or other flies.

Bobbins come with brass, plastic or for modern silks like Semperfli with ceramic tubes through which the thread the silk.

Bobbin Wire Loop Tool



A Bobbin wire loop tool is extremely simple. Put your silk thread on its spool into the bobbin holder. Now simply push through the bobbin holder tube, slip the thread through the wire loop tool and retrieve the tool through the bobbin holder tube and your thread is ready for tying. Many people suck the thread through the bobbin tube but the wire loop tool makes this an extremely simple process!

Hair Stackers

A hair stacker is an essential tool which allows alignment of many different types of fibres, including naturals like elk hair and synthetics. Hair stackers come in different sizes ranging from small to magnum typically used for aligning larger bundles of hair for bass bugs, saltwater lures or pike lures.



To use a hair stacker put a small clump of hair into the funnel tips first. Tap the stacker firmly against a hard surface or bench several times. The tapping aligns all of the tips. Remove the funnel and grasp the tops of the hair fibres carefully, all of the tips should now be perfectly aligned for tying.

Dubbing Needles or Bodkins

Dubbing needles for combing of underfur, applying head cement and teasing dubbed materials, dividing wing tips and freeing trapped hackle fibres.

Whip Finish Tools



It is perfectly possible to whip finish a fly with fingers alone, however many tyers find using a specially made tool beneficial. Models vary but generally most whip finish tools have a straight handle with a hook at one end with often a sprung wire arm.

Hackle Pliers



Hackle pliers simplify the job of winding hackle. A set of Hackle Pliers will grasp the hackle tip firmly without slipping. The jaws should be smooth as rough surfaces could cut the hackle while winding. If the hackle pliers are cutting too many hackle tips then consider dulling the edges with a fine metal file or even a hook honer. There are different shapes of hackle pliers including traditional English, teardrop, rotating all have the same purpose of helping you wrap the hackle around the hook.

Dubbing Twister

A dubbing twister is a great tool for creating dubbing loops twisting dubbing and threads into a rope which can then be easily wound around a hook. Dubbing Twisters keep the tension on the thread loop to keep the fur in position. With sprung metal arms and a heavy circular body a Dubbing Twister keeps the thread taught.

Other Useful Fly Tying Tools

Other useful fly tying tools include; tweezers for holding small materials, small pliers for de-barbing hooks. Finally organisers are always useful as you tend to gather lots of small materials and bobbins with thread, chenilles and other materials.