

White Dog's Vise – TFF Fly Tying Festival

The most important thing I learned was that there is always something to learn.

The second most important lesson was that the only limits are those you impose on yourself.

We all know that fish will eat most patterns regardless of how well they are tied. That's the basis behind the theory of whether you are "trying to catch fish or fly fishers". However, there is nothing more satisfying to most fly fishers and tyers than a really well tied, balanced and beautiful pattern. Usually the difference between "the fish will eat it" and a really beautiful fly is just a little more time and a little more practice.

These are not complex tips, so try them out.

1. EZ Sparkle Hard Body (the stuff Charlie Cypert uses for his Hard Body Cypert Minnows) is a great adhesive for eyes, weed guards and poppers faces. If you want to add some extra sparkle try this instead of Goop or Super Glue.
2. EZ Sparkle Hard Body makes very cool eyes, especially the Yellow. Put a big drop on the fly where you want the eye to be. Be sure to place the fly or rotate your vise so that the eye location faces up and place the drop straight down on the fly. This helps it dry in a slightly raised circle. Once it sets firmly about 15-20 minutes, do the other side. EZ sets up hard after a couple of hours. Then take a black permanent marker and draw a pupil. Since it takes some time to set, do several flies at one sitting then come back later and do all the pupils.
3. Deer Hair can be pack so tight that when you are through with the scissor and razor, you can finish it with sand paper. (Yeah, this one even blew me away.)
4. Spin Pearl Easter Basket Mylar into deer hair patterns. When trimmed, it will give a faint sparkle for a cool "scale" effect. Flashabou doesn't spin and Krystal Flash and Lite Brite/Angel Hair mylar is too small to get the desired effect. This stuff was about the size of Krystal Flash but was kinky.
5. Coloring Rubber Legs. Bill Menefee showed me this the first time I saw it. When down at the Tying Festival, Dale Wilkerson of the Dallas club took it a little further. When your bug is complete, pinch the end of the legs between your thumb and index finger. Twist the legs around each other by sliding your index finger along your thumb so the legs wrap around each other. Then take a permanent marker and make stripes down the length of the legs. Let go of the legs and check out the results. If my memory serves me correctly, Bill used a colored leg and a black marker. Dale took it a step further by using white rubber and several different colors of marker. This makes a cool looking "tiger stripe" effect.
6. The Overhand Weave. We have just recently seen Gary Miller produce an awesome fly with this technique, the Granny Bug. Down in Houston and at other venues I have seen thread, chenille, yarn and other materials used to make Catalpa Worms, Woolly Worms, Caddis Nymphs, Stone Flies and even very realistic Mayflies. This Technique is simply an overhand knot tied around the shank of the hook. It is tied so that the color you want on top is always the top of the knot.