



Introduction To Fly Tying Tools

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Objectives

Participating young people and adults will:

1. Identify fly tying tools and their uses
2. Demonstrate proper selection of tools for their purposes
3. Compare and contrast various models of basic tools
4. Explore preferences in tying tools
5. Practice using fly tying tools
6. Have fun while learning

Youth Development Objectives

Participating young people will:

1. Enhance consumer skills related to fly tying tools
2. Enhance fine motor skills
3. Enhance interpersonal communication skills
4. Enhance decision making and problem solving skills
5. Explore vocational and avocational activities

Roles for Teen and Junior Leaders

1. Demonstrate use of fly tying tools
2. Supervise hands on tool use by members
3. Assist participants with tool use as needed
4. Set up and take down teaching space
5. Share personal experiences with specific tools
6. Discuss selection of tools for the beginner
7. Discuss personal preferences based on experience

Potential Parental Involvement

1. See "Roles for Teen and Junior Leaders" above

Best Time: Introductory lesson

Best Location: Comfortable, well-lit setting

Time Required: 60 to 90 minutes

Equipment/Materials

Multiple examples desirable if available

tying vise	hackle pliers
tying bobbin	bobbin threader
scissors	light bodkin
hook sharpener	hair stacker
dubbing twister	material clip
hackle gauge	wing burner
whip finisher (rotating and Thompson)	

Safety Considerations

Exercise caution with bodkins, scissors, razor blades and other sharp or pointed instruments.

Wing burners or wing cutters should be used only under supervision.

Use caution with solvents and glues.

Avoid open flames.

Evaluation Suggestions

1. Set up several consumer decision making exercises using fly tying tools.
2. Lead participants in discussing pros and cons of several equipment options.
3. Use small groups to learn uses of tools.
4. Observe interactions and conversations

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2. Arrange for or provide teaching location
3. Arrange for or provide materials and tools
4. Arrange for or provide transportation
5. Arrange for or provide refreshments

among participants, teen leaders and adults.

Lesson Outline

PRESENTATION:

Specific uses of these tools can be shown by tying in individual materials on a bare hook. (Example: using a hair stacker to prepare squirrel tail for a wing. Stack the hair, then tie the wing to a bare hook). Show what happens when you **don't** use a stacker.

Discuss the pros and cons of buying a full tying kit, or accumulating the tools individually.

NOTE: It is always a good idea to get the help of an accomplished local fly tyer for this presentation. They will usually have a variety of tools and are a great source for tips and techniques. Check with local fly shops, tackle stores, sportsman's groups, Trout Unlimited and Federation of Fly Fishers.

INTRO TO FLY TYING TOOLS

Tying your own flies can be a lot of fun. It adds a whole new dimension to the sport. It can, however be a very frustrating experience if youngsters do not have the proper tools and quality materials. Fly tiers develop their own style and individual preferences as they progress. Starting right and building a good foundation of knowledge and experience is the key to success, just like in tying a fly.

Purchasing a fly tying kit from a tackle shop or mail order catalogue is a good way to begin. For a reasonable price you can acquire a set of tools, small amounts of the most popular materials and some basic instruction that will get you started. Avoid "cheap" bargain deals, however. Expect to spend \$25 at a minimum for a good starter tool kit and \$35-40 for a kit with both tools and materials.

Tools that don't work well and "junk" materials will only lead to frustration. Quality is the byword. Help the youngsters understand they do not need to purchase every new tool they see. Help them "grow into" the tools they have, and after gaining some experience they can pick up other devices (see optional tools below) which may help speed up the tying or make a difficult task easier.

A good beginning selection of tools should include:

WISE - good quality is important here. This will be your "work horse" tool and will probably be the most costly item on the fly tying bench. There are several styles to choose from, with the lever type made famous by the D.H. Thompson Co. being the most popular. The jaws and height should be easily adjustable.

You should be able to move the vise around to access all sides of the fly, without having to take it out of the vise.

SCISSORS - there are a great variety of scissors available made especially for fly tying. Each tyer eventually finds a style that he or she prefers. Start moderately priced and work into the more expensive precision models.

To keep scissors usable longer,

1. Use only the scissors tips for easy to cut materials (hackle tips, thread, etc.)
2. Try to cut as far back into the blades as possible for heavier cutting needs.
3. Avoid dulling the blades on the shank of the hook.
4. Keep an inexpensive pair around to do much of the heavier cutting.

LIGHT - use a good adjustable desk type lamp that can handle a 100-watt bulb and be placed close to your work. Good lighting is essential. To silhouette your fly and make it easier to see, use a piece of white or gray paper hung behind the work area.

BOBBIN - this handy item is used to hold tying thread. The best models have ceramic tubes (to reduce thread abrasion) and adjustable spool holders. Start with a moderate to low priced one.

BOBBIN THREADER - a six inch long piece of thin wire (or stiff monofilament) can be bent in half and inserted into the bobbin tube to pull the thread through the tube. HINT: a bright plastic bead or small painted cork can be used to hold the wire ends together, making it easier to find and handle.

HACKLE PLIERS - used to hold hackles and other materials when adding them to the fly. There are endless versions, and hackle pliers tend to be one of the more expensive tools. HINT: circuits found at electrical supply houses can make very useful, inexpensive hackle holders.

BODKIN - needle attached to a dowel or pushed through a cork. This simple tool has a myriad of uses: applying cement, teasing dubbing, picking out hackle, etc.

HOOK SHARPENER - there are many good hook files and whetstones on the market. Choose one that will accommodate several sizes of hooks. HINTS: a nail file (found in most drug stores) is excellent for smaller hooks. Always crush the hook barb and sharpen the point of every hook you put in the vise. Make this a habit.

OPTIONAL TOOLS:

HAIR STACKER - a small tube, closed at one end, is used to even up hairs (especially bucktail) for tying wings, etc. There are a wide range of prices. HINT: an old lipstick tube or similar item can be used quite effectively.

WHIP FINISHER - used to tie off a fly with a "whip finish knot." This can also be accomplished without a tool by using your fingers. A loop of monofilament attached to a wooden match stick can also be used.

DUBBING TWISTER - Easily and quickly makes very neat and large dubbing bodies.

MATERIAL CLIP OR HOLDER - a spring or clip type tool that attaches to the vise neck. Used to hold long materials out of the way until needed.

HACKLE GAUGE - used to measure hackle length to match hook size.

WING BURNERS - used to burn feathers to the desired shapes needed for some wings.