



Making a Magnetic Fly Drying Strip

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Every fly tier who works with streamers, bucktails or wet flies needs to have some way to keep them suspended while head cement dries. This quick project makes a handy strip for drying flies and holding them in place so they do not get lost or covered with bits of material on the tying bench. They are simple to make and very handy on the tying bench.

Materials

The project can be made from nearly any scraps of standard 1" stock. Narrow strips measuring approximately 3/4" by 10 inches work best. Hardwood stock is heavier and more stable. Magnetic strips can be purchased from craft shops or discount stores. Usually it comes in a 1/2" wide strip with adhesive on one side for craft projects. Purchasing two or three feet is a good idea, since any left over material can be used to pick up hooks or for other purposes that may come to mind. Use shellac or a polyurethane varnish to finish the wood. Hardwoods are preferred because they are usually denser. The heavier wood will be more resistant to being knocked over by a hand or a dropped tool. A local cabinet shop or woodworker may be willing to donate suitable scraps, if you are willing to ask. Small strips often accumulate around the shop, and some of them may have beautiful grain.

The tools needed for this project are simple -- a ruler, square, hand saw (a back saw or miter saw would be excellent if you have one), plane and some sandpaper. Use a small block of wood for a sanding block to keep from rounding over the corners. You also will need a paint brush, a suitable solvent (alcohol for shellac and water for water-based polyurethane), and a container for cleaning the brushes.

Procedure

Select your piece of wood and cut it to size. If it needs to be ripped to width, have a leader do the ripping unless you have been checked out on power tools. Wider scraps (3" or more wide) could handle a pair of magnetic strips if you choose. Mark the locations for the magnetic strip by drawing a finger along the edge of the board and dragging the pencil parallel to the edge. Next, saw a kerf (the groove made by the saw) to hold the lower part of the magnetic strip. Start with the saw at an angle to one end of the wood strip to get the cut started. Once the cut is started, lower the saw until it is parallel to the wood's surface, and cut a uniformly deep kerf to a 1/3". Test the kerf with the magnetic strip to see if it will fit. If it is too tight, insert a piece of sandpaper and sand to open it enough to hold the magnet. Peel the tape off the magnetic strip and press it into the kerf. Trim the strip flush with the ends of the wood using a sharp knife.

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Finish the project by applying several coats of shellac or polyurethane. Allow each coat to dry completely, sand lightly with fine sandpaper (220 to 400 grit), and wipe with a tack cloth before adding the next coat. Two or three coats should produce a shiny, well-protected surface.