

Tying Bench - Muddler Minnow by Paul Sequira

Mark Hays' success with the Muddler Minnow at this year's Everglades trip sparked quite a bit of interest in this excellent pattern that has been catching fish since the 1930s. Developed by Dan Gapen to catch the spectacular large brook trout of the Nippegon River in British Columbia, the fly itself has spawned dozens of variations and new flies. In last month's Tying Bench, we featured Terry Kirkpatrick's Substitute Muddler. Since some members wanted to learn how to tie the Muddler, I demonstrated it at SFF's Tie-A-Thon last month. Here are the tying instructions for those of you who missed it.



Muddler Minnow tied and photographed by Paul Sequira

Materials

- Hook: Mustad 34891 3XL streamer, size 4 thru 10
- Thread: white 3/0 flat waxed nylon
- Tail: Mottled turkey feather slips*
- Body: Medium gold mylar
- Underwing: Grey squirrel tail
- Overwing: Mottled turkey feather slips*
- Collar: Deer body hair
- Head: Deer body hair

Instructions:

1. Mash down the hook barb and secure in the vise in the normal fashion. Attach the thread with a jam knot approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ the length of the hook shank behind the eye. Wrap the thread to the start of the hook bend in close wraps.
2. Cut two slips of mottled turkey feather, each approximately $\frac{1}{3}$ the width of the hook gap. The long fibers are used to create the tail. Match the pair with the dull side facing inward.
3. Secure the tail feathers to the top of the hook shank at the start of the bend. Hold the feather slips gripping the slips and the hook shank between your index finger and thumb. Slide the tying thread up between your thumb and the near side of the slips, and then down the other side between your index finger and the far side of the slips. Bring the thread back up between your thumb and the near side feather slip, pulling the thread directly up. This will tighten the wrap and cause the turkey slips to sit directly on top of the hook. Now wrap the thread forward (never wrap back past your first wrap) towards the hook eye trapping the remaining feather fibers. Make nice even wraps to create a smooth underbody, stopping at the tie-in point. Cut away excess fibers. The tail should be approximately twice the length of the hook gap.
4. Cut a length of gold/silver mylar about four inches long at a sharp angle. Lay the point of the mylar against the hook with the gold side facing you at the tie-in point and take 2 or 3 tight wraps to secure it to the hook. Now wrap the mylar towards the tail with each wrap butting up against the previous wrap. Stop at the start of the tail and reverse your wraps going forward to your original tie-in point and again make sure each wrap butts up against the previous wrap. Take 3 or 4 tight wraps to secure the mylar and cut away the excess. Take a couple of half hitches here with a drop of head cement to lock in every thing.

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5. Cut a small bunch of squirrel tail about the thickness of a wooden match for the under wing. Make sure that the tips of the hair are even and tie it in by the butts where you finished off the mylar. The underwing should extend to the hook bend.
6. Cut two more slips of turkey feather about 1/3 the width of the hook gap for the over wing. Just as you did for the tail, match the slips with the dull side facing inward.
7. Position them over the tie-in point of the under wing. Now tie them in following the directions in step 3 for the tail. The wing should extend to ½ the length of the tail.
8. Cut a bunch of deer body hair about the thickness of a pencil and remove all the fuzz at the butts. It is important to clean this stuff out or the deer hair won't spin evenly. Even the tips of the deer hair and trim the butts evenly.
9. Now place the batch of deer hair along side the bare hook shank at a 45° angle in front of the wing (You left this part of the hook bare didn't you?). Take two wraps of thread around the hair and the hook shank while holding the hair between your thumb and index finger and slowly tighten the thread by pulling down. As the loops tighten, release your fingers. Take an additional wrap or two as the hair spins around the hook shank forming a collar. The tips of the collar should extend back about ½ the length of the hook shank.
10. Move the thread forward in front of the spun deer hair and with your thumb and index finger nails, push the deer hair back towards the tail to make room for another batch of hair.
11. Cut a second batch of deer body hair about the same size, remove all the junk at the butts, cut the butts even, cut away the tips (you don't need them this time), place the batch in front of the bunch you just spun and secure the hair to the hook just as you did for the first bunch in step 9. Take a couple of thread wraps in front of the spun deer body hair, move the thread forward and tie off with a whip finish.
12. You're in the home stretch now. Take your scissors and trim the hair on the bottom of the hook flat, to open up the hook gap. Now with your scissors or bodkin, stroke the deer hair forward leaving the natural tips of the first batch of hair laying back towards the tail to form a collar, you don't want to trim them.
13. Now trim the rest of the hair to form the head in your desired shape. Do this slowly and methodically. If you cut too much, you can't put it back. A little head cement on the thread wraps and you're done.

This may seem like a complicated and lengthy process but it takes more time and effort to write these directions than it does to actually tie the fly. And what the heck, if it were really easy, it wouldn't be much fun.

**Note: Traditionally, the secondary flight feathers are used for the tail and overwing; you will need a matched pair of feathers, to create one left and one right slip. Only the long fibers are used, the short fibers, or biots, are not used for this fly. However, you may use one turkey mottled tail feather since the fibers of the tail feathers are the same length on either side of the stem. The secondary flight feather fibers are somewhat stiffer than tail feather fibers and make a slightly sturdier fly.*

Step-by-step pictorial instructions can be found at <http://www.charliesflyboxinc.com/flybox/details.cfm?parentID=54>