

White Dog's Vise – Oddball Stuff

1. Monofilament Eyes for Shrimp, Crabs, and Crayfish

A great way to make eyes for these patterns is to use Monofilament and a Lighter. Do this in a ventilated area and don't inhale the smoke. Cut a piece of Mono about two inches and burn the end of it slowly with the lighter. The mono will begin to melt into shape prior to igniting. If, or rather when it catches on fire, blow it out immediately. With a little practice you will get a nice black eyeball. By leaving some of the unburned mono, you end up with a crabby looking "eye stem". Try using heavier mono, 25 to 80 pound test strength, for larger eyes. The color of the mono you use will be the color of the eye stem. All colors of mono will produce a black eye. Green Mono (like Trilene Big Game) is my favorite color.

Tip: This is a great way to utilize the butt section of your used leaders.

2. Mylar Wrapping Paper

Mylar Wrapping Paper makes killer wing material for dragonfly, damselfly, hopper, and "Flashback" nymph patterns. It comes in a wide variety of thickness and colors. I really like the thin, crinkled Mylar. It is cheap too. A couple of dollars worth equals hundreds of flies.

Tip: For wings, tie it in first then trim to shape. Also makes a highly reflective parachute posts.

3. Permanent Markers

Permanent Markers are a great way to make barred patterns without having to buy Grizzly Hackle. I like Brown, Black, Blue and Green. I use them on everything from bucktail to marabou to Mylar. If you touch up your marabou, let the ink dry then run your bodkin the feather to separate the feather (sometimes they stick together). If you use Mylar to make dragonfly, damselfly, and hopper wings, you can give them realistic barring as well. I also use them on spoon flies and my version of a Mylar Rapala to make shad marking (spots and backs).

Tip: Any permanent marker will work. Cheap is good. I use "Sharpies" most often.

4. AOL CD Tins

You know those things you get in the mail periodically from America On-Line? You can make a Nymph Storage Box for smaller patterns, holding bin for finished flies, or a cheap display plate by cutting a sheet of white Fun Foam the size of the interior and gluing it on one half of the tin with goop. Just stick the finished fly into the foam. I also use the tin as is to corral thread spools, rubber legs, etc. when tying.

Tip: Don't use "on the water" because you have to fumble with the top. But it is a cheap, durable and lightweight way to carry a ton of nymphs when traveling.

5. Seeing your fly on the vise

A contrasting background to the coloration of the pattern you are tying will help you see the pattern better. For dark flies use a light background. For light colored patterns use a dark background. I use two different things periodically. I use illustration board or Fun Foam, both of which can be found at the hobby shops and craft stores. Both of these work well because they don't produce glare.

If you choose Fun Foam, purchase one black sheet and one white sheet. Fun Foam also creates a non-skid surface, which keeps tools and materials from sliding around.

If you choose illustration board, choose a sheet that has a white or cream side and a green side, that way all you do is flip it over. Ask to have it cut to 8" x 10" or 10" x 12". Since one board makes about 10 of this size see if someone else is interested in going in with you. The board is not expensive, there's just a lot of it and they should cut it for free.