

# Getting peacock herl right.

Ian Cox's interpretation a post by William Ensiferum



Peacock herl and pheasant tail are probably the two most ubiquitous body materials out there. But how many of us stop to look at the stuff really closely? Did you, for example know, that peacock herl as a good side and one that is not so good or that the way you tie your herl will influence which side is uppermost and working best? I didn't until I happened across an intriguing post on the Facebook page [Fly Tying](#) . It carried a post by German fly tyer [William Ensiferum](#) who has interesting stuff to say, unfortunately in German. Google translate is not the greatest but loosely translated you get much better results if you tie your peacock herl so that the good side is uppermost with the topside of the herl facing way from the eye of the hook. The good side is the one with the iridescent sheen to it.

I have has a go at translating (purposively rather than linguistically) what he said. I hope I got it right. Here it is.

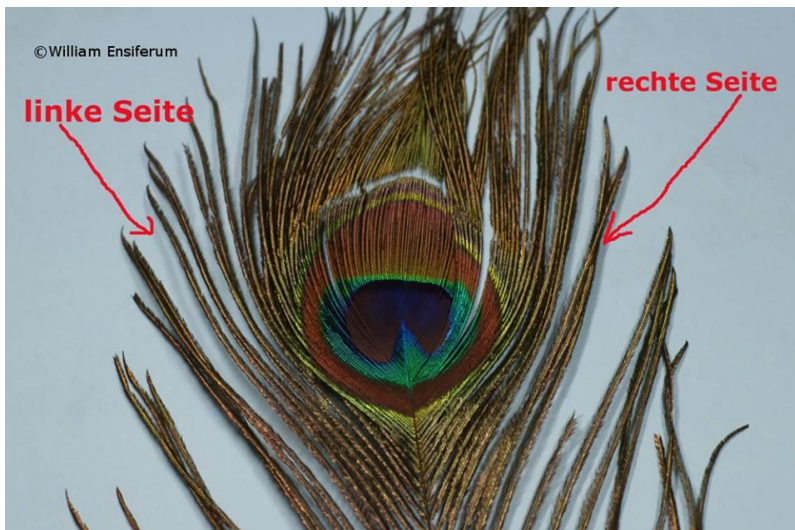
### Point one

Translations	
kurze	long
lange	short
querschnitt pfauengras	cross section of the quill



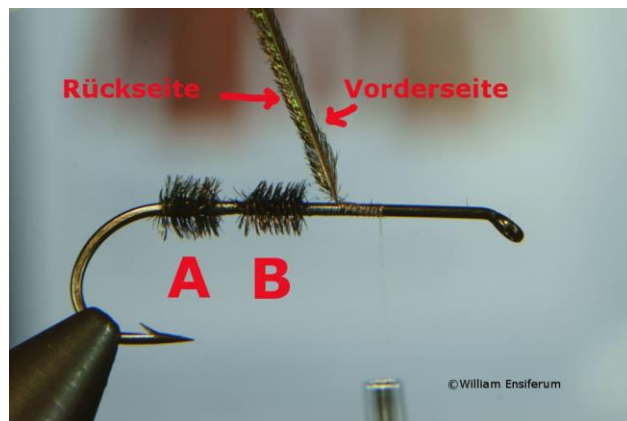
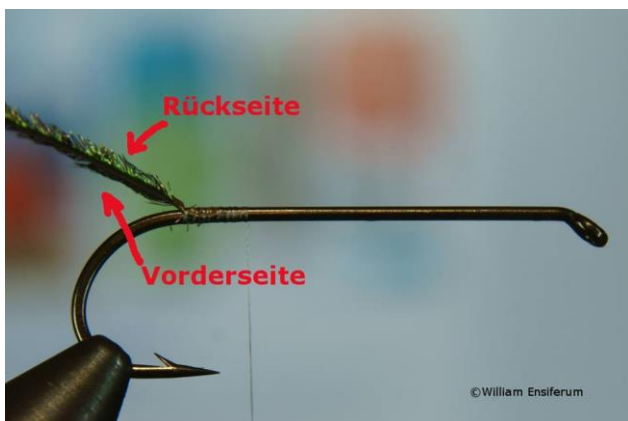
These two photographs illustrate the difference between the long and short side of a peacock herl. The good long side is the shiny side. You will also note that unlike a hackle the herl is located on the long sides of the quill rather than at the ends. This means that when you wrap peacock herl you will either be trapping one side or the other.

**Point Two**



Peacock herl comes off a peacock feather which like all feathers also has a left and a right side. The two sides of the feather are the same. However it is important to note that wrapping a herl from the left side of a feather clockwise will have the same effect as wrapping a herl from the right hand side of the feather counter clockwise and vice versa.

**Point Three**

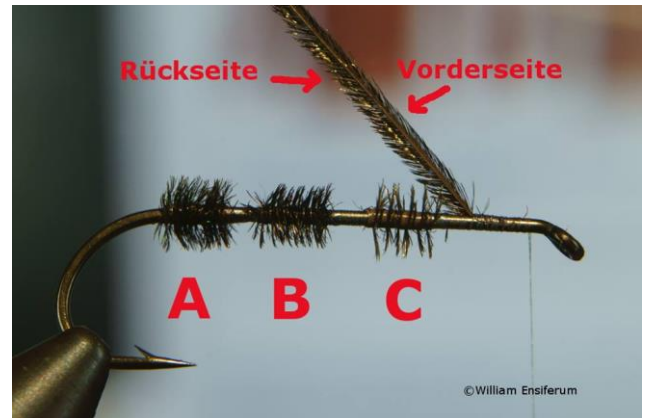
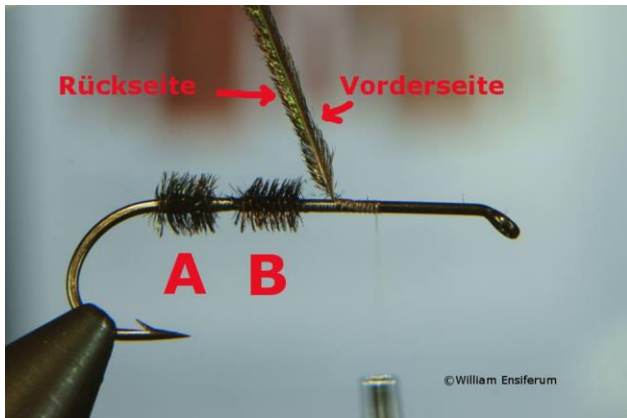


Translations	
ruckseite	backview
vorderseite	front view

These three photographs show the difference one sees when wrapping the herl taken from the left hand side of the feather clockwise (photos 1 and 2), thus placing the long herls uppermost and counter clockwise thus displaying the shorter herl (photo 3). In both cases the herl

is tied in so that it is facing backwards, that is to say, the top of the herl is facing away from the eye of the hook.

#### Point four



In this case the herl is tied in facing the other way, that is facing towards the eye of the hook. C is wrapped clockwise, that is with the back or short side facing uppermost and D the other way.

#### Conclusion

This is pretty esoteric stuff given how most of us use peacock herl but if you want to maximise the effect, wrap the herl with the top side facing away from the eye of the hook and in a direction that places the long shiny side uppermost.

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