

## SURGEON'S SWIVEL

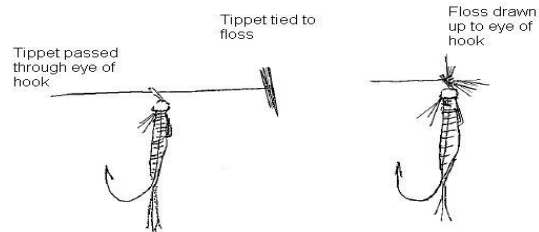
Laurence Davies

When I wrote in the October Bobbin about the Turtle Knot, I explained that I favoured it because the fly swims straight. On the bigger, heavier flies, the clinch, or similar knot can sometimes work its way around the eye of the hook, causing the fly to swim sideways. So I adapt the knot that I use to a particular application/aim.

When trying to put some order to my office desk this week, clearing out the clutter, I came across a diagram of the Surgeon's Swivel, a detail which had been sent to me by Ed Herbst. This is another knot which allows free movement of the fly, and which should also pull straight, and which could be added to your "knot collection for particular applications"?

Some years ago, I wrote to Ed about the "Bow Tie Buzzer" technique which John Mills had shown me a long time ago. He and his Rhodesian flyfishing pals used this technique with great success at the Nyanga dams in the early 80s. It was a technique developed by Frank Sawyer, an English river manager, writer, and inventor of the Pheasant Tail Nymph (as well as many other flies), so it was quite an old technique (late 50s).

The tippet was passed through the eye of the fly, from the point side, ie from the underside, and tied to a piece of floss with an overhand knot. The floss would be



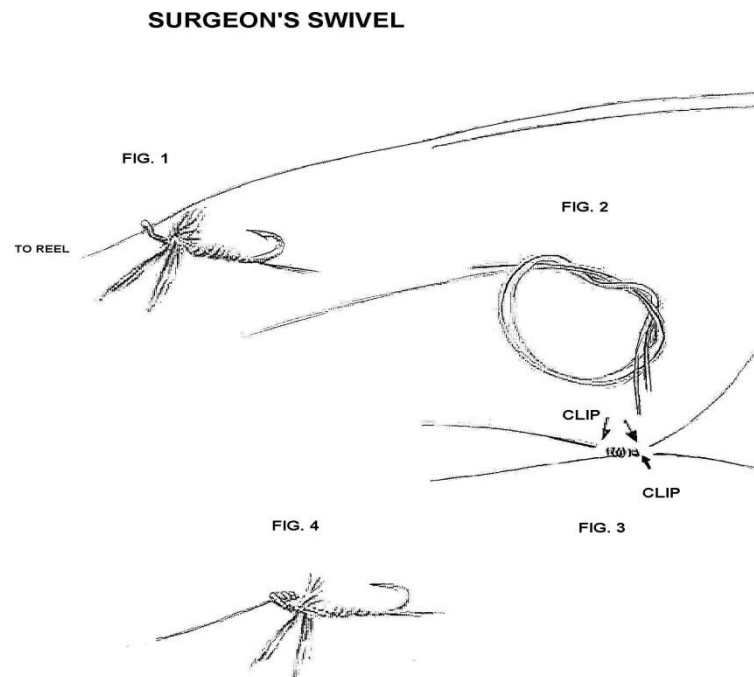
trimmed to suit and would act as the filaments of the midge pupa. The tippet would not be tied to the hook itself but would be left to run freely through the eye of the hook and the filament would sit at the front of the fly.

The picture shows a PTN fly with the yarn to be used and the sketch shows how the yarn is tied, and how the fly hangs in the water.

When fished, the floss will float in the surface film and the fly will hang straight down into the water. John usually fished it in a fair breeze, and left it to drift with the wind. To me, the advantage of this technique is that, if you do not have suspender nymphs in your fly box, a PTN, or similar fly, could easily be converted into one with the simple addition of yarn.

Ed's response to my email was as follows, *"The bow tie buzzer idea works well, I gather, and allows the fly to cock at the right angle, but it was superseded by Neil Patterson's suspender buzzer and, subsequently by the CDC shuttle cock. I think that any self respecting SA stillwater trout would make short work of the knot in the BT buzzer."*

With Ed's response he included the Surgeon's Swivel detail. We see that, with the Bow Tie Buzzer, he had some reservations about the strength of the knot.



The diagram is self explanatory, but in case some have trouble in deciphering the detail. I will explain it:

- In Fig 1 the tippet is passed through the eye of the fly and a 6" (or 150 mm for the younger flyfishers) length of similar tippet material is laid alongside the tippet end.
- Form a Surgeon's knot with the two pieces of tippet, as in Fig 2.
- Clip off three of the tags, leaving only the knot at the end of the tippet, as in Fig 3.
- Fig 4 shows how the Surgeon's Knot acts as a "stop knot", allowing the fly to swivel.

This should be a very useful knot where you want free movement of the fly, without having to use a loop knot, as in damsel imitations. The knot is less obtrusive than a loop knot and could prove a useful addition to your knot arsenal. Try it and let us know how well it works, or if you have used it previously, did it work for you?

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