

Tips from Gordon

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These fly tying tips are taken from Gordon van Der Spuy's weekly e mail. Gordon is now supplying a range of top quality fly tying materials and barbless hooks. He can be contacted at gordon.vanderspuy@gmail.com .

- #5 When buying partridge feathers go for skins, it simply gives you more options. Mind you go for skins , period, regardless of the bird. With a skin you are able to select matching pairs of feathers, in the case of a papa roach for example you'd need both a left (feather from left side of skin) and a matching right for the 'wing case', these feathers are mirror images of each other. When tied tent wing style you'll get a more 'Aquodynamic' fly, tie two rights like that and very often you have a spinning fly, no good. Skins also offer you a wider choice in terms of feather types. They may seem expensive but in the long run they are more economical than buying hundreds of packets of materials in search of perfect pairs.
- #6 When dubbing around mono eyes, like you do for damsel and dragons **don't dub in a figure of eight fashion around the eyes**, this gives you a round head. Dragonflies and damselflies have flat heads so rather **dub around the individual eyes**, this will give one a flatter broader head very much like the naturals you intend to imitate.
- #7 Turkey biots make awesome bodies for both nymphs and dries, especially mayflies. They are longer than goose biots so you don't run out of material in mid wrap, they are easy to use,

durable and look cool too. They have a natural taper which provides for beautiful carrot shaped abdomens every time. On the one edge of the biot you have microscopic little hairs, when wound one gets a gilled effect, crustaceous even. **Before tying biots in wet them for a minute or two**, this will soften them and makes them easy to wrap. Sometimes they are rather brittle, this wetting helps a lot. I put them in my mouth, spit is great stuff, but if you are more civilised than me just put them in a little bowl of water.

#8 The most misunderstood concept in fly-tying today is the concept of thread control, mind you, thread selection is also a major problem. I've seen enough guys tie to realise this. When tying small there are two threads I rely on. Gordon Griffiths sheer in 14/0 and Uni Trico in 17/0. Both these threads lie **flat**, they consist of many micro fibres which are independent from one another. Most guys just wrap thread when tying, the secret to tying these little dudes is to actually **manage** your thread, understand what it's doing while you're working with it. Thread twists up when you wrap it, you need to counter this by untwisting the thread every now and then thus keeping it flat and minimising bulk as you go, hence the term **THREAD CONTROL!!!!!!** To do this let the bobbin holder hang motionless, it will naturally spin in the way it is untwisting itself. Gently help it along, look at where the thread comes off the hook shank to see when it is flat. Wrapping thread in flat is half the battle won when tying small flies.

#9 Hair stackers are cool. Traditionally they are used for aligning the tips of elk and deer hair when tying wings for elk hair caddis' and hoppers etc. but they are equally useful for other hairs and feather fibres. I use my stacker to even up the tips of squirrel tail hair when I tie Para Rabs for example, you get a nice clean looking fly, just my preference, not sure the trout care, probably don't, but confidence does catch fish and aligned tips make me feel more confident so I guess I'll be sticking to aligning the tips of my squirrel tail hair. They are also great for aligning Gallos de leon Fibres when tying flies like Luis Baeza maenas pardon de Meana.
