

FLY TYING for beginners

Learn all the basic tying skills
via 12 popular international fly patterns

Includes
QR code
video tutorials
for each fly



BARRY ORD CLARKE

The Feather Bender

FLYTYING

for beginners



To Oscar

You made me see the stars and hear the music.
Live, love, learn and enjoy life always.

Granddad



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via 12 popular international fly patterns

BARRY ORD CLARKE



THE FEATHER BENDER
EST. 1961



MERLIN UNWIN BOOKS

First published in Great Britain by Merlin Unwin Books, 2021
This ebook edition published in 2021

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Published by:
Merlin Unwin Books
Palmer's House
7 Corve Street
Ludlow
Shropshire SY8 1DB
U.K.

www.merlinunwin.co.uk

Designed by Merlin Unwin Books

ISBN 978 1 913159 38 2

The Feather Bender beginners' flies on YouTube

To watch the YouTube videos of the basic flytying techniques and of the author tying each of the flies, you can follow any of these options:



1. To use the QR code: open the camera on your smartphone or chosen device. Hold the camera over the red QR code and your web browser will pop up automatically, leading you to the YouTube video of Barry tying that very fly.

2. Or key in to your browser the URL (YouTube link) as shown in the book immediately beneath the 'Watch the Video' heading.

3. Or type in to your web browser the full fly title as it appears at the start of each step-by-step tying section of the book. The video will come up.

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Glossary of Flytying Terms

Abdomen

Rear section of the fly body behind the thorax.

Barb / Fibre

A single fibre of hackle, or a strand of hair. Also, the sharp projection between the point and bend of a hook which prevents it slipping out of the fish's mouth.

Bead head

A metal, plastic or glass bead that is threaded onto the hook shank behind the eye of the hook. They add weight and an attractor element. Sometimes slotted or counter sunk.

Butt

A turn or two of material to separate the abdomen from the tail of a fly.

Cape

Bird skin from the neck/back area which is covered in hackle feathers.

CDC

The feather from a duck's preen gland. Prized in flytying for its natural buoyancy.

Collar hackle

Traditional style of hackle that is wrapped around the hook shank behind the head of the fly.

Counter wrap

Technique in which a rib of tying thread, tinsel or wire is wrapped around the hook shank in the *opposite* direction to the body material. Used to reinforce fragile material like peacock herl.

Dry fly

A fly which is designed and dressed in such a way that it sits on the surface of the water. To a trout it appears as a fly sitting on the surface about to take off, or perhaps one falling onto it, exhausted and spent.

Dubbing loop

A loop of tying thread used to spin dubbing or other material into a dubbing noodle (a brush-like rope).

Dun

Dun is the stage of a mayfly' development between nymph and adult, a phase in the lifecycle which often prompts a trout feeding-frenzy. Dun is also a dull greyish-brown colour of hackle.

Emerger

An aquatic insect about to hatch and fly off the water. Imitated by fly patterns which hang in the surface film (eg. the Klinkhamer).

Flare

To make a bunch of fibres, such as deer hair, fan out when compressed with tying thread. See step 18 page 101.

Floatant

Substance which the angler applies to dry flies to help them float longer. It comes in many forms: gel, liquid and paste which all stop your dry fly absorbing water. In powder form it dries an already soaked fly.

Guard hairs

Long, stiff hairs which lie over the softer shorter under-fur on an animal's pelage (eg. beavers, hares, foxes etc).

Hackle

Feather from the neck (or sometimes saddle) of a rooster. Flytyers wrap hackle feathers around the hook in various styles adding buoyancy to dry flies.

Hair wing

The type of wing popular for modern dry flies. Most commonly made from deer hair, elk hair or calf tail.

Herl

The barb of a feather, normally from a peacock or ostrich, used for dressing the abdomen, thorax and wing cases on many fly patterns.

Nymph

The immature form of some invertebrates, particularly aquatic insects, which undergo a gradual metamorphosis before reaching the adult stage. Fished sub-surface.

Rib

Open spiral turns of wire or tinsel over an underbody of another material.

Parachute Post

An upright vertical wing that can be made of either synthetic or natural material to create the support around which is wrapped a horizontal parachute hackle.

Parachute hackle

A hackle wrapped horizontally around a parachute post.

Palmered hackling

The technique where the hackle is wrapped in an even open spiral along the whole body of the fly.

Saddle

Part of a bird skin from the rump area, which is covered in the long, slender feathers used as hackles for dry flies.

Segmentation

The creation of contrasting divisions along the abdomen of a fly, to imitate the natural banding pattern of an insect's body.

Streamer

Style of fly that imitates a bait fish. Usually tied on a long-shank hook (streamer hook).

Fished sub-surface.

Tail

The part of the fly that extends past the hook bend. On a dry fly the tail is often used to support the fly on the water's surface.

Tag

A short, brightly coloured tail or the very rearmost material wrapped at the bend of the hook.

Thorax

The forward section of the fly body between the head and the abdomen.

Under fur

The fine, soft, dense hair that is located under the longer guard hairs on an animal's pelage. They lie close to the skin. Useful for dubbing but they need to be combed away when making deer hair wings.

Wet fly

A fly designed to be fished under the water, representing a nymph or very small fish.

Whip finishing

A simple slip-knot technique used for tying off the tying thread or finishing the head of a fly.

Wing case

The flat area that lies over the thorax of a nymph. This can be made of various natural and synthetic materials.

X-tie

This is an X-shaped wrapping technique used to hold a hackle 90° from the hook shank. Made by crossing the tying thread over the hackle stem and hook shank from left to right and then right to left.

Introduction

This is a guide book for those totally new to the art of tying flies. Until now, learning flytying from a book has not only been challenging, but often the cause of great frustration, with photographs or diagrams making even the elementary techniques difficult to grasp. Step-by-step images help a reasonably proficient flytyer understand the stages in making a fly, but for the new beginner, there will always be a gap between each step-by-step image, which can be bewildering! Seeing the manual manoeuvres that take place in these blank spaces can make the difference between success and failure for a new beginner.

For this reason, I aim to take learning flytying to a whole new level via this book. I want to make the essential techniques and skills required easier to master than ever before.

The techniques you will learn in this book are the building blocks on which all successful fishing flies, even the most complex ones, are based. Follow my recommendations for tools and materials, pay special attention to fly proportions and first watch the videos of me demonstrating the relevant techniques before you start to tie each fly. Then with a little patience and a good deal of practise, you will soon be tying beautiful flies.

Each technique and pattern in this beginners' book has a five stage tutorial.

- Guidance and instruction on all tools, materials and techniques used for each pattern.
- The very best step-by-step images to illustrate every single stage in great detail, from inserting the hook in the vice to the finished fly.
- Explanatory text for each step-by-step image that leads you through each technique and pattern.
- Unique among beginners' books, each pattern is supported by a Quick Response (QR) code, which instantly links you to my YouTube channel and the accompanying video for each fly pattern. Here you can watch me tie that pattern. Video is an ideal medium to see any special procedure or technique at first-hand, before you start to tie using the book.
- You can also send me your questions in the comments box of each instructional video, if you are struggling, need advice or just have a query!

If you follow the instructions carefully, and use the book correctly, along with its online support, you can master techniques, proportions, uniformity and perfection in your flytying.



Materials List for tying all the flies in this book

Hooks

Standard Dry: # 12, 14, 16

Long Shank Nymph: # 10, 12

Standard Emerger: # 10, 12

Standard Streamer: # 6, 10

Materials

Tying threads: black, grey, red, brown, tan and olive

Lead wire (fine)

Hare's mask

Gold oval tinsel #14

Ring neck pheasant tail

Varnish

Copper wires: gold, silver and black

flat copper wire

round copper wire (medium)

Peacock eye feather

Deer hair (undyed)

Super Fine dubbing: olive, black, grey and blue dun

Gold Holo braid

Tape eyes: small, yellow

Squirrel 'zonker' strips

Brass beads: large

Silver beads: small

Marabou: olive

Krystal Flash: pearl

Chenille: olive, black, fluorescent green

Peacock dubbing: olive

Para-post wing: white

CDC feathers: natural

Elk hair: bleached

Polypropylene yarn: black

Mallard flank feathers

UV resin

Hackles

Cock hackles: olive, black, grizzle dyed brown, golden
badger, blue dun

How to Use this Book

The fly patterns I will demonstrate in this tutorial have been listed by their degree of learning difficulty, and in each one you will learn different techniques. I have carefully chosen each of the twelve patterns to demonstrate the tying techniques you need to learn in order to become a competent flytyer. At the start of each pattern, I indicate which of my accompanying background beginners' techniques videos I recommend you to watch. Together the twelve patterns cover the most common insects and food items on the trout's menu: midges, caddis flies, mayflies, ants and bait fish. They are also twelve of the very best international fishing patterns to represent these food items, so you will know how to tie flies that catch fish in most trout-fishing situations.

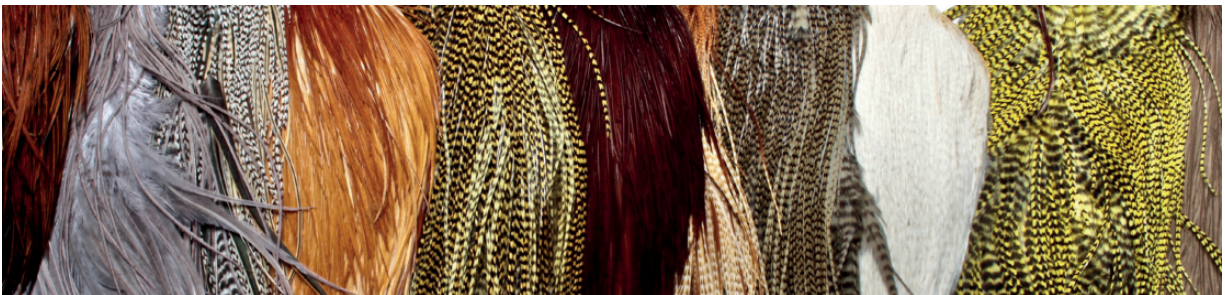
The index at the end of the book tells you where to find particular patterns, techniques, materials or tools. Each of the 12 patterns is listed with a dressing (ie all the tying materials you will need, with recommended hook style and size). These are listed in the order that I use them in the book's step-by-step images and in the 12 videos. This will help you to select and prepare your materials for each pattern beforehand. I recommend you follow the tying sequences in the book in the order they appear because they are the building blocks for your skills.

Tools. Here I cover the essential flytying tools used in this book. I explain their purpose and applications, and this section also serves beginners as a reference when you use one of the tools in a new pattern. I have also made videos of some of the key tools (linked in the book via QR code) so you see them in use.

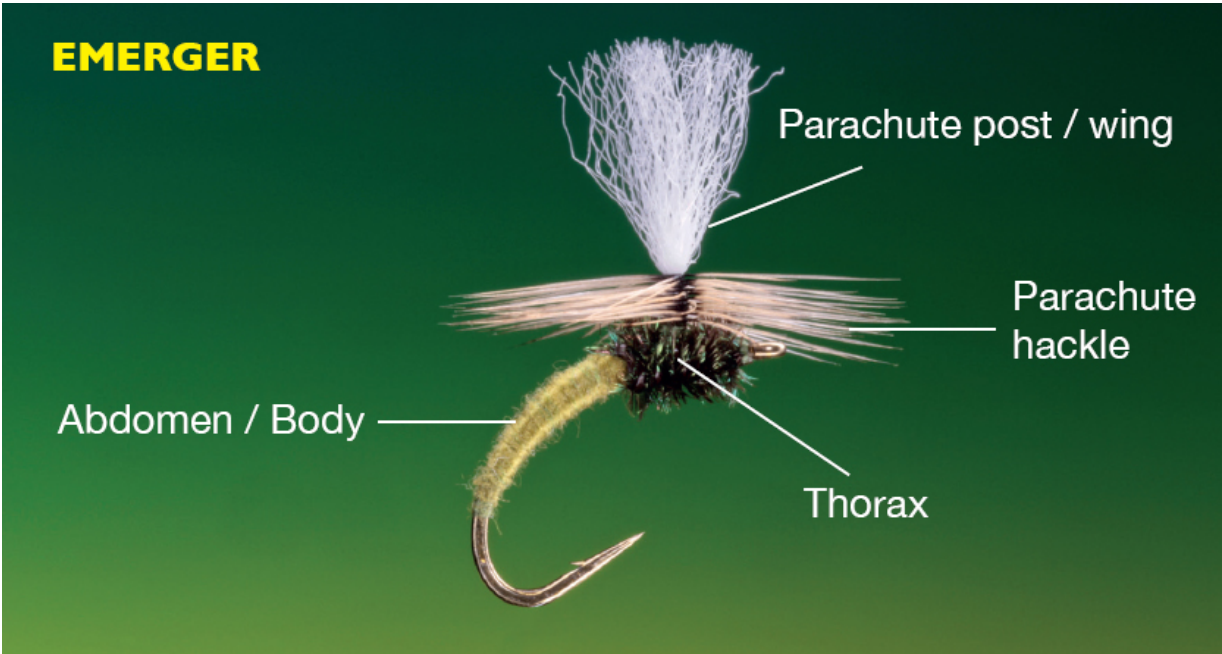
Materials. Here I explain each material used in some depth so that you learn what to look for when buying them. Quality, colour, sizes, variants: this chapter provides you with essential knowledge to understand each material, its qualities, uses and applications.

I recommend that you start by downloading the free QR code app for your mobile or tablet for scanning the QR codes - or using the other links provided - to watch the videos of me demonstrating the relevant techniques for that fly and then of me tying the specific pattern. Then return to the book and follow the step-by-step instructions, to tie at your own speed and leisure, referring back to the video if need be.

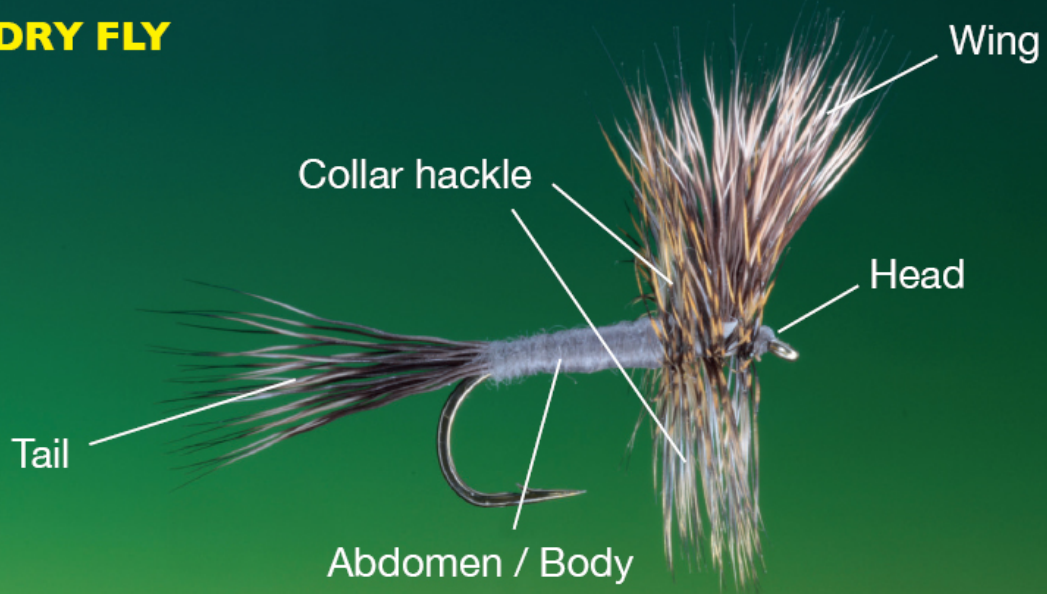
Once you are confident about the first pattern, and have tied at least half a dozen that you are satisfied with, move on to the next pattern and continue thus, until all 12 patterns and their techniques are mastered.



Anatomy of the Fly



DRY FLY



Flytying Materials for the Beginner

For the complete beginner to flytying, the sheer amount of materials available, both natural and synthetic, can be, to say the least... perplexing! Not to mention hooks which come in different models, sizes, finishes and makes...

The materials listed in the next few pages, like the twelve fly patterns you will tie with them, have been carefully selected for their individual qualities and their suitability for the techniques we are going to learn. And you will go on to use them as your expertise in tying flies grows, for these materials are used internationally in thousands of other fly patterns.

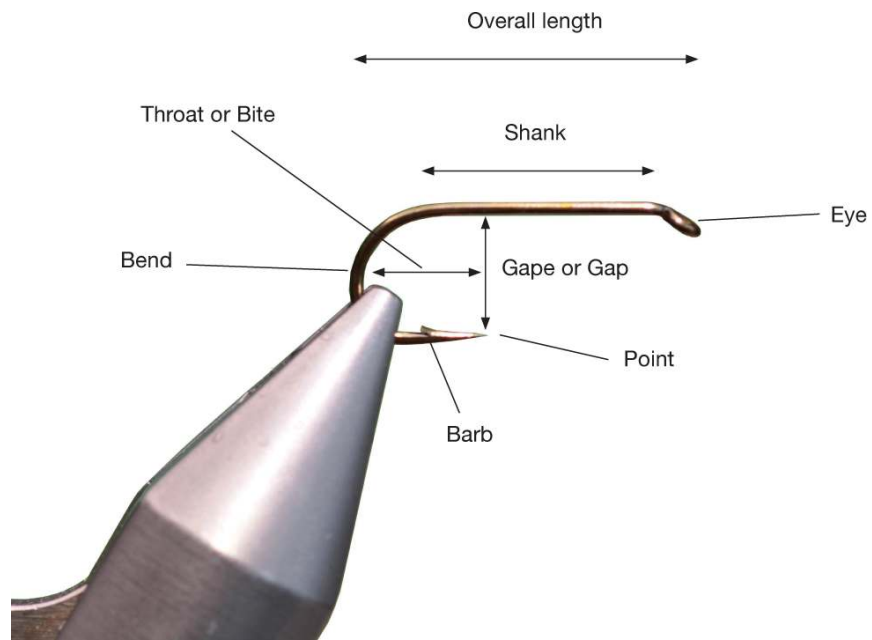
Getting to understand the materials you are going to use as a flytyer will increase your chances of tying good flies and will make your tying experience more enjoyable. More importantly, you will gain an appreciation of their potential, applications and limitations.

Once you start tying, you will quickly learn how much easier it is to tie with quality materials. When buying your materials, try to visit a shop with a decent flytying department with a wide selection of materials, and staff who are themselves flytyers to help you choose and answer your questions.

Even in these shops, the materials will vary. Always be aware that, no matter how similar they look, no two natural materials are the same. Feathers and fur come from individual birds and animals, whose lifestyles, geography, diet and time of year they were culled are all contributing factors to the quality of the material. A common mistake when buying materials, not only for beginners, is to take the first packet hanging on the peg in a shop. If you are going to buy a brown cock/rooster cape, depending on the quality, these can range from a few pounds to several hundred pounds per cape! Like any purchase, you look for value for money. Let's say for instance that there are eight brown capes hanging on the wall of the shop: look through all the packets and choose the one that works best for the patterns you wish to tie. You will spot varying quality in hackle size, colour, markings, sheen... not to mention quantity. This rule should be applied when purchasing all natural materials, which at first glance all look the same, but only under closer scrutiny are the defining qualities noticeable.

Synthetics on the other hand are identical from packet to packet, but you may find the naming of some synthetics a little confusing, because the same or similar materials may appear under different marketing names.

Anatomy of the Hook





youtu.be/UUHSnvn3peE

Flytying for Beginners fly hook anatomy with Barry Ord Clarke

HOOKS

A hook's size, shape and weight reflects the insect or animal body size and shape it is going to imitate; and how it will sit on the water surface or swim in it!

Dry fly hooks

Dry flies float on the surface of the water, so dry fly hooks are normally fine diameter, made from standard (S) or fine or even extra fine (XF) wire so that there is minimum weight in the hook, making the fly float better.



Wet fly and Nymph hooks

Wet fly (top right) and nymph hooks (bottom right) are both normally made with a heavier diameter wire (XH = extra heavy) to give the hook extra weight, in order to make it sink. Nymph hooks are normally longer than wet fly hooks (2XL or 3XL) to imitate the long, slender bodies of many naturals.