

## What is the basic method for tying flies using the Fish-Spine?

The concept is very simple. Flies are typically created in four or five sections, i.e. a hook (at front or back) plus three or four articulated shanks all “daisy chained” together to form the body and tail of the fly.

A fly is tied in segments. Each segment is tied using one of the 3 or 4 articulated shanks or the hook. Typically, a fly is tied by starting first with the tail segment and once completed, more segments are added until you finish at the front of the fly.

To explain in a little more detail... each segment is created by tying the materials (natural or synthetic) onto an articulated shank which is held in your vise. Once a segment is tied, the articulated shank is removed from the vise and connected to the loop of the next size of articulated shank. In turn, this new shank is held in the vise and the materials in turn are tied onto that shank. This process continues until the segments of the fly (shanks and hook/s) are all connected together. The fly is then trimmed to shape and any final features like eyes or body markings can be added to finish off the fly.

## Q: What hook and shank configurations are possible?

A: Flies of varying sizes can be created by combining different hook sizes/lengths with different shank lengths. This gives you the flexibility to create different patterns to suit your local fishery. The Fish-Spine is highly customizable. Experiment with different combinations of shank lengths, hooks and materials to create your ultimate “swim fly”!

Typically, most Fish-Spine flies are tied with the hook in front of the fly, onto which is attached the body and tail section, comprised of either three or four shanks. An alternative is to place the shanks in front with the hook attached to the back of the fly. Or try one at the front and a smaller stinger hook at the back!

## Q: What fly tying materials can be used for the body of a Fish-Spine fly?

A: There is really no limitation on the type of materials that can be used. Potentially any dense synthetic or natural fly tying material used for tying streamers today can be used. Examples of synthetic materials include Cascade Crest Body Fur, Enrico Puglisi EP fibers & brushes, Harelines Minnow Body Wrap, and similar products. Flies can be weighted or unweighted. The magic is in the spine!



# Step-By Step Tying Instructions

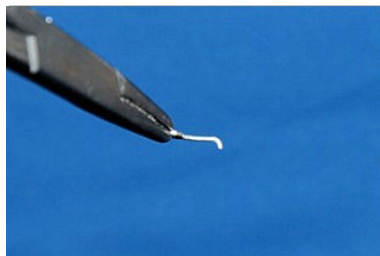


These are some instructions for a simple Fish-Spine fly tied with a single hook at the front.



## What Materials will I need?

- Vertebra:** Fish-Skull® Fish-Spine shanks (10mm, 15mm, 20mm, 25mm).
- Hook:** Any hook make, type and size appropriate to the size of fly you are tying. In this example, it is a Gamakatsu B10S 2/0 which has a nice wide gap on it.
- Eyes:** Any 3D fish eyes you want appropriate to the size of fly you are tying. We recommend Fish-Skull Living Eyes in 8.5mm or 10mm size for this particular fly.
- Body:** There are several other types of synthetic materials on the market that can be easily wrapped or tied onto the shanks and trimmed to form the body such as Cascade Crest Body Fur, Enrico Puglisi EP fibers & brushes, Harelines Minnow Body Wrap, and similar products.
- Tail:** Any straight synthetic fiber or hackle/fur fibers. In this example, we use DNA fiber.



**1.** Start by tying the **tail** segment of the fly using the smallest shank (10mm). Since you are not using a hook at the back of the fly, you need to modify the shank to make it easy to create the tail.

Using a small pair of side-cutters or pliers bend the back loop of the shank straight. Then cut-off about half the shank and make a small bend on the end. Note: This bent end makes it easy to hold the modified shank in the vice as shown in the next photo.

The end result is a 10mm straight shank with the eye on one end and a small bend on the other.



**2.** Put the modified 10mm shank in the vice and lay a thread base.

You are now ready to tie the tail segment.



**3.** Tie a small clump of DNA fiber onto the shank as shown.



**4.** Tighten the thread wraps at the back of the shank using enough pressure to spread (splay) the fibers into a basic fish-tail shape.

Holding in place, put some Clear Cure Goo on the base of the tail fibers and cure with the UV light. The Goo holds the tail fibers in place in the desired shape.

Finish the tail by trimming the fibers to get the fish-tail shape you desire.



**5.** Prepare your body material to tie onto the shank.



**6.** Tie in the body material as shown.



**7.** Wrap the body material forward using tight wraps and tie off your thread. **It is important to tie in and pack the fibers as tightly as possible. Get as much as you can on the shank!**



**8.** Trim off most of the body material from the tail segment as shown.

Note: Final trimming will be done once all the segments of the fly have been tied.



**9.** Trim the tail fibers to achieve the desired fish tail shape.

The Tail segment is now completed.



**10.** The next step is to tie the 2<sup>nd</sup> segment of the fly.

Loop the tail segment onto the loop on the 15mm articulated shank and hold the shank in the vice.



**11.** Attach your tying thread and lay a strong thread base on the shank.

In the process you will close the loop of the shank.



**12.** Attach the body material to the shank.

Wrap the body material forward using tight wraps and tie off your thread.



**13.** Trim the body material to get the desired shape.

Attach the completed segment to the next 3<sup>rd</sup> shank (20mm) and put this shank in the vice as shown.



**14.** The next step is to tie the 3<sup>rd</sup> segment of the fly.

As before, attach your tying thread and lay a strong thread base on the shank.



**15.** Attach the body material to the shank.

Wrap the body material forward using tight wraps and tie off your thread.



**16.** Tie off your thread.

Trim the body material to get the basic body shape.



**17.** There are now 3 segments of the fly completed.  
Hook on the next shank (25mm) and place in vise to begin the 4<sup>th</sup> segment.



**18.** As with the previous 3 segments...attach your tying thread and lay a strong thread base on the shank.



**19.** Attach the body material to the shank.  
Wrap the body material forward, tie off your thread and trim the body material to complete 4<sup>th</sup> segment.



**20.** You are now ready to tie the 5<sup>th</sup> and final segment of the fly.  
Put the hook in the vise and attach the 4 completed segments using a strong mono or wire loop.



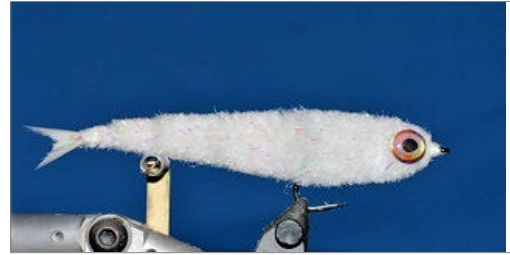
**21.** Attach the body material to the hook.



**22.** Wrap the body material forward using tight wraps and tie off your thread.



**23.** The 5<sup>th</sup> and final segment has been completed!  
Trim the entire fly to get a tapered fish shape.



**24.** Stick on the Fish-Skull Living Eyes (or other eyes of your choice).

The fly is complete! You now have the option to use permanent markers to color the fly to match whatever bait-fish you wish to imitate. Have fun and and go catch a big fish!

