



- **HOOK**

Salmon hooks are usually black and have a turned up eye (TUE). Whether they are for wet, dry, or double hooks, they come in various thicknesses of wire, lighter dry flies, and heavier wire for wet flies. The size varies from 5/0 to 8 (5/0 being the largest). In choosing a hook size, remember that with a number followed by a / and another number, e.g. 2/0, the larger the first number is, the larger the hook. With hook sizes designated with a single number, e.g. 2, the larger the number, the smaller the hook. What you use will depend on the fly pattern and your personal preference. My experience is that in fishing wets, I want a hook heavy enough to get down where the fish are. In fishing dries, I want a hook light enough to stay afloat, but strong enough to hold a large fish. I also prefer a hook that is sharp enough to penetrate that tough jaw. The most popular steelhead hook is probably the black, looped eye salmon hook. They are manufactured by such companies as Mustad, Partridge, and Tiemco. Others prefer the standard wet fly hook with a turned down eye (TDE). For both types of fishing, consider using barbless hooks for easy removal from the fishes jaw and a greater possibility of releasing the fish unharmed. For more information about salmon and steelhead hooks, see [Salmon and Steelhead Fly Tying Hooks](#).

- **TAG**

Salmon flies and in many cases steelhead flies are almost always tied with a tag consisting of several turns of silver or gold tinsel, or floss. This is tied in over the point of the barb of the hook. Some times the tag is tied in conjunction with a small tinsel segment called the "**TIP**" that is built up to the thickness of the tag and occupies a little more space on the hook shaft.

- **TAIL**

The tail usually consists of a few strands of a topping like Golden Pheasant Crest. Consider purchasing a whole head of Golden Pheasant as you will undoubtedly be using alot of those yellow feathers for future tying. The tail should be about one and a half times the gap of the hook. Choose one that is fairly straight but has a nice curve. When tying these in, applying a drop of cement over the tie will help hold it in place.

- **BUTT**

The butt is a short segment tied just beyond the tag and over the ties holding the tag and tail. It is usually tied with a material like ostrich herl, which comes in various colors. The fibers around the hook shank should be about 1/8 inch long and fairly even.

- **RIBBING**

The ribbing is tied in after the butt, but not wound forward until the body is finished. It is usually tied with a flat or oval, gold or silver tinsel. It is spiraled up the body segment and tied off at the location called for in the pattern.

- **BODY**

The body is tied in after the butt and is made from floss, wool, fur, or tinsel. It is wound forward to form a tapered appearance. Some tyers prefer to tie the body material in about 3/16" behind the eye, then wind it rearward and forward. When a particular pattern calls

for a number of different materials for the body, each will occupy a certain portion of the hook and will be tied in at different points.

- **WING**

The wing is exactly as the name applies. It is placed over the body facing to the rear of the hook in the case of wet flies, facing upward in dry flies. It is made from a variety of materials, sometimes by themselves or in combination. Typical materials include, bucktail, bear fur, squirrel tail, and mallard flank feathers.

- **TOPPING**

Some salmon and steelhead flies are dressed with a Golden Pheasant crest feather over the wing. This is referred to as the topping. It is attached over the point the wing is tied in and runs along the top of the wing to the tip of the tail. A drop of cement also helps to hold this in place.

- **SHOULDER**

The shoulder is tied in along the side of the wings. Typical material for shoulders are Blue Kingfisher body feathers, sections of black-barred Wood Duck feathers, Jungle Cock, or Jungle Cock imitations. The term "shoulder" is sometimes used interchangeably with the term "**CHEEK**", but a pattern may call for both. The shoulder is longer than the cheek on a classic pattern and placed on before the cheek. A particular pattern may call for a shoulder, it may call for a cheek, or it may call for both.

- **THROAT**

The throat is usually made from neck hackle feathers and forms a bunch of whiskers under what would be the neck area of the wet fly. It is usually tied in by the tip of the hackle feather and wound on as you would for the collar of any wet fly, i.e. pointing to the rear of the fly. The terms "throat" and "COLLAR" are sometimes used

interchangeably, but a collar usually means wound evenly around the hook, and a throat is usually bunched toward the bottom.

- **HORNS**

The Horns are a narrow matching strips of material like blue or gold Macaw (usually just a couple strands), tied on the sides and extending rearward to the intersection of the tail and topping. They are usually tied on last, before the head is finished.

- **HEAD**

The head is where it all comes together. If the material tied in before the eye of the hook is not too bulky, the thread is wrapped around it to form a neatly tapered appearance. The color will vary according to the pattern and can be controlled by the color of the thread used or the color of the laquer it is finished with.