



River Road Creations, Inc.
Wing and Foam Body Cutters
For the Art of Fly Tying

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Typing the RRC Mayfly

There are at least three ways to use bodies cut with the Mayfly Body Cutter. Think creatively as you tie, and you will probably think of more!

Some general comments

The cutters are intended to produce two-toned foam bodies that start out as two separate halves. The upper body is thicker and will usually be of a darker-colored foam. The underbody is cut from a thinner piece of foam in a lighter color to represent the lighter underbelly. The full range of sizes from Size 10 to Size 20 can be produced using combinations of 2mm, 1mm and 0.5mm foams, using progressively thinner combinations as you progress through the size range. For example, a Size 10 might use 2mm foam for the upper body and 1mm foam for the underbody. Although I might ultimately use a permanent marker to color them, I start with a light tan underbody for olive and brown mayflies; for yellow and gray mayflies, I start with a white underbody. On very small sizes, a single cut body might work fine. I use a thread underbody and a single black overbody on my Tomsu's Trico spinner.

To get a feel for the tying steps involved, I suggest you work through each method in sequence, since each one provides descriptions of techniques that are important in later methods.

Method 1 –Simple extended body

The simplest approach employs using only the last half of the cut bodies to form an extended abdomen that is tied to the top of the hook. Then, traditional winging materials, such as elk hair can be tied in (like on a Royal Wulff) and then the fly can be hackled. To form an extended body, cut out the two halves of the body as discussed above. Place the thicker overbody on a flat surface and apply a very small drop of Super Glue Gel to the very tip of the abdomen. Carefully place two or three Microfibbitt-type tails on the body, with the fine tips extending out as far from the body as desired on the finished fly. Allow the glue to dry completely and the tails will be permanently attached to the body. Trim the excess tailing material. Place a long, thin sewing needle in your tying vise with the needle's point extending away from the vise. Attach 8/0 tying thread toward the end of the needle using 8-10 lightly-tensioned wraps. That should be sufficient to hold the thread while performing the next steps. When the thread is attached properly, the thread should be hanging no more than 1/8 inch from the point. Hold the bobbin straight above the needle with your right hand (for right-handers). Pick up the two halves of the body, match them up and hold them (with your left hand) on either side of the needle with the thin underbody facing you and the thicker overbody on the other side of the needle. Bring the thread up between the two halves and take four turns around both bodies about 1/16th inch from the tip of the abdomens to form the first body segment. Bring the thread up between the two halves, advancing the thread slightly and repeat, forming the second segment. Repeat, evenly spacing the segments, until you have formed 6 segments and then whip finish the thread with a tiny amount of Super Glue to attach the thread permanently to the body. Cut the thread and gently slide the body off the needle. You can then remove the needle, place a hook in the vise, attach your thread, and tie in winging material like on a traditional fly. Tie the body securely to the hook using several wraps and cut off the excess body. Apply your hackle and you have a very nice extended-body mayfly. With a little practice, you should be able to complete the tying portion of this type of body in less than a minute.



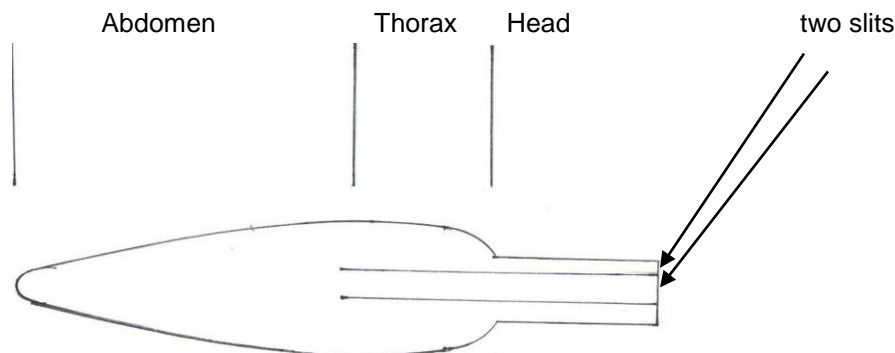
Method 2 – Non-extended body

Mayfly bodies can also be tied without any extended portion of the abdomen. That is, the two-toned foam body takes the place of the usual dubbed body. Cut two bodies as described above and then place a hook in your vise, attach the thread, attach the desired wing material, and wind the thread back to the end of the hook shank (right where the bend starts). Tie in your tailing material like on a traditional fly, spread the tails and return the thread to the end of the shank. This time, hold the underbody under the hook shank and the overbody above. Match up the tips of the ends of the two halves and take four turns around both, forming the first segment. Take one wrap around the hook shank to advance the thread and take four more turns to form the second segment. Repeat until you have advanced about 2/3 of the way up the hook shank. Take several turns to finish the body and trim off the excess foam. Attach dry fly hackle and palmer it as on a traditional fly, both behind and in front of the wings. Finish the fly as normal. I use this method for many of the spinner patterns I tie. No floatant needed.

Method 3 – Complete Mayfly body

The third method (a little more complicated, but easily mastered) allows you to form the complete mayfly body, including the head. I suggest you start with the largest size (10) and practice a bit before you move on to smaller sizes.

Attach tailing material to the overbody as described in the first method. Before forming the first 4 segments on the needle, take a single-edged razor blade or Exacto knife and make two parallel cuts in the front half of the overbody. These slits will extend from just behind the point where the body narrows at the front end of the body (the section that will become the thorax) and on through the narrow strip of foam at the front (the section that will become the head). The wings will extend through these slits and the foam will cover the base of the wings - just like on a real mayfly. When tied, the left and right pieces will go around the outside of the wing; the center strip will go between the wings.



Form the first 4 body segments on a needle as in the first method. Remove the body from the needle. Using a bodkin or a needle, poke a small hole in the center of the underbody, just ahead of where you tied the last segment on the needle. This will prevent the foam from tearing when you insert the hook in the next step.

Place a hook in the vise, attach your thread. Tie in the leg material about 1/3 of the hook shank back from the eye. Tie in the wings directly over the point where you tied in the legs and wind the thread back to the end of the hook shank. Leaving the thread attached, lift the hook from the vise, and push the point of the hook through the hole you just made in the underbody. Letting the body hang loose in the bend of the hook, carefully return the hook to the vise.

Place a very small drop of Super Glue Gel to the thread at the end of the hook shank. Take four turns around both bodies to secure them to the hook and form the next segment. Repeat until you are just behind the wings. That completes the abdomen section. Advance the thread to a point just in front of the wings. Bring the underbody up and take a couple of turns in front of the wing to secure it. Bring the center strip of foam on the overbody between the wings and take one turn of thread right in front of the wing to secure it. Bring each of other two sections around the outside of the wings. Holding all three sections of foam firmly, take three more wraps around both halves of the body to complete the thorax. Adjust the wings as necessary to place them in their final position.

Advance the thread a couple of turns. Place a small drop of Super glue to keep the body from turning around the hook. Tie down the last part of the body right behind the hook eye, forming a small head section. Trim off the excess foam and whip finish. Remove the thread.

On larger patterns, like the Green Drake pictured on our website, you can add burned monofilament eyes, although this becomes a little more difficult on flies smaller than a Size 14. I have tied this style body with eyes and legs all the way down to size 20s. If you add eyes, tie them in before you attach the wings.

The amount of detail is up to you. You can get amazingly realistic, such as adding body markings on the overbody with permanent art markers. I skip this step on most flies I tie for fishing. Believe me, the fish will be adequately impressed if you use fairly-realistic foam colors to begin with. Due to the growing popularity of foam flies, the variety of foam colors now available at your local fly shop (or craft store) is growing dramatically.