Osprey Fly Box

Balanced Leech

contributed by

Sandy McKinlay

The genius behind the contemporary balanced system is credited to Jerry McBride who placed a tungsten bead on a beading pin and then tied it on top of a 90 degree jig hook in order to counterbalance the weight of the materials and gave the fly the ability to ride horizontal in the water column.

Long time Osprey member, Phil Rowley quickly jumped on the bandwagon and developed the Balanced Leech.

Tying horizontally balanced flies is no more difficult than any other fly pattern. The trick is in getting the fly to hang in a horizontal manner. The key lies in extending the hook shank and applying a weight in front of the hook to obtain balance.

Finding the correct balance will depend on hook weight and length, the size and weight of the bead and pattern design *(eg: the length and weight of the tail materials)*. It may take a few attempts to get the balance right.

Balanced flies are intended to be suspended beneath an indicator using a Non Slip or Duncan Loop knot. A reasonable surface chop animates both indicator and fly. Loop knots enhance this motion adding an important element of seduction. From a practical perspective balanced flies make sense as they represent the horizontal posture of many stillwater food sources.

The balanced leech is a deadly pattern for suspending under an indicator, but it has also proven to be effective when slow-stripped in stillwaters.

Phil's favourite variation is the Bruised Leech. The two other variations submitted by Phil for "The Osprey Fly Box" were the CBO and the Watermelon Red.

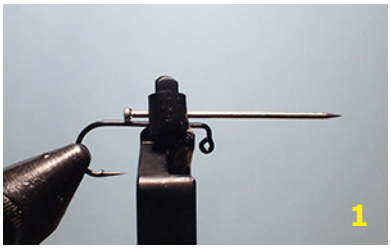
That said, any leech pattern or woolly bugger can be tied as a balanced fly.

Materials



Hook:	Jig Hook — Mustad 32833 or Daiichi 4640. Size #10
Extention:	Straight Pin- cut and lashed to shank.
Thread:	UTC 70 Denier - Colour to match body.
Bead:	Tungsten *(or Brass)* - 1/8"
Tail:	Marabou or Rabbit Fur to compliment body. Flashabou - 2 strands per side.
Body:	Arizona Simi Seal in dubbing loop.
Note:	Soak in near boiling water to style and train dubbing fibres into slender body
Variations:	Presented on Page 3 - Bruised Leech, CBO, Watermelon Red, Blood Leech, Ervin's Leech.

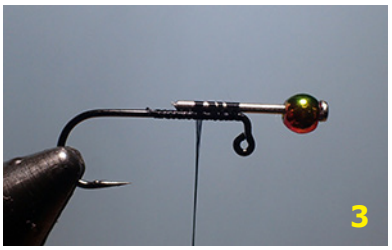
Tying Instructions



- Cut the straight pin to length. Measure the pin from the point of the hook to the eye and cut. The "fulcrum" of the fly is the eye - as the length of the pin increases, the more the pin must be extended in front of the eye to create balance. Keep the pin as short as possible.
- Pinch the barb. Lay down a thread base.
- Tungsten beads are the preferred choice of bead as their increased mass allows for short shank extensions. Brass beads can be used but the extention will need to be longer to create proper balance.



Tying Instructions *(continued)*



- Slide the bead on the straight pin with the wide end of the bead facing the pin head.
- Experiment to find the "sweet spot" with the type of beads you are using. Completed, the pin will extend approximately 1/4" in front of the bend the jig hook.
- Build up a small thread dam and lock the bead tight against the pinhead.





- Add a drop of Super Glue or Zap-A-Gap, whipfinish, and set aside to dry.
- If tying several flies, complete all to this step before moving on.
- **Note:** At this point it is OK for the head of the pattern sink below the horizontal line. The weight of the tail will balance the completed fly out.





- Tie in a small clumb of marabou *(rabbit fur can be substituted)*. The tail should be one hook shank in length.
- Tie in a couple strands of flashabou on each side of the tail, extending just beyond the tail fibres.





- Create a six inch dubbing loop at the tie in point of the tail. Insert a pinch of dubbing into the dubbing loop and massage the fibres with your fingers so that the fibres are perpendicular to the thread. Slide up to the top of the loop. Continue adding dubbing until loop is full. Spin. Tease dubbing in loop with velcro to get release trapped fibres.
- Wrap the dubbing loop forward. With each turn, stoke the fibres back to avoid trapping fibres.
- Continue wrapping all the way to the bead, with a couple tight wraps right behind bead. Tie off and clip the excess.
- Coat the thread with head cement. Make a few more wraps of thread and then whipfinish.
- Brush out the body of the fly with velcro.
- Dip the fly in near boiling water to straighten unruly fibres. Style the body into a slender body.



The Finished Fly



Balanced Leech

Variations



Bruised Leech

Bead: Gold.

Tail: Black Marabou or Rabbit Fur
Blue Pearl Flashabou.

Body: Arizona Simi Seal - Black Blue



CBO *(Canadian Black & Orange)*

Bead: Hot Orange.

Tail: Black Marabou or Rabbit Fur
Blue Pearl Flashabou.

Body: Arizona Simi Seal - Canadian Black



Watermelon Red

Bead: Gold, Black Nickel, Rainbow

Tail: Olive Marabou or Rabbit Fur
Copper Flashabou.

Body: Arizona Simi Seal - Watermelon Red



Blood Leech

Bead: Entice Red

Tail: Wine/Maroon Marabou or Rabbit Fur
Pearl Flashabou.

Body: Arizona Simi Seal - Blood Leech



Ervin's Leech

Bead: Black Nickel.

Tail: Black Marabou or Rabbit Fur
Gun Metal Flashabou.

Body: STS Trilobal Dub - Bloody Black Leech with a pinch of Silver Ice Dubbing *(very sparse)*