

# MICRO MUDDLER

*Rob Denson ties an exquisite deer hair “nymph”*

**W**E'RE ALL familiar with the term Mini Muddler (as opposed to a Muddler Minnow, which is the size of a small household pet), but how “mini” do you go? Your average modern Mini Muddlers are generally size 10 or 12, and dressed on the heavy side. Shifting water and providing an imposing presence is the name of the game; perfect, then, for the top dropper and a good wave. Mini Muddlers are actually a little more versatile than that, and have a few more tricks up their sleeve than just flobbing around on the top dropper, screaming “chase me”, but that’s for another article. But what of decidedly calmer waters, and actively feeding fish? Muddle in micro, of course. At this point, though, we need to change our mindset. Micro muddling is a completely different kettle of fish; think nymphs, sub-surface, small, and you’re almost there.

This particular style of Micro Muddler came to my attention six or seven years ago, when having a quick shuftly through George Barron’s fly-boxes during a day on Llyn Brenig. Rather than snuggling alongside Dabblers, Bumbles and other Muddlers, George’s delightfully scruffy but seriously mouth-watering Micro Muddlers were keeping company with Diawl Bachs, Crunchers and Hare’s Ears; the penny dropped, and one was duly removed for research purposes. A selection of various colours was dressed and put to the test immediately. Fast-forward a few seasons, and my burgeoning collection of Micro Muddlers have seen a great deal of action, and also live in my nymph box.

I use the word “nymph” loosely: close-copying indulges the tyer, but seldom the fish. The majority of my “nymphs” are non-specific and are designed to suggest a variety of potential meals on the trout’s sub-surface menu. Micro Muddlers are no different and apart from doing more than passable turns as sedge pupa, buzzers and ephemeral nymphs in the latter stages of their ascent, to hog lice and shrimp, they fill a rather useful niche due to their ability to remain high in the water. Though their overall appearance is lean, their relative bulk and scruffiness compared to other “nymphs” such as Diawls and Crunchers, plus the buoyancy of the deer-hair head, slows the sink-rate



▼ Rob Denson has fly-fished for trout for 25 years, visiting all four corners of Britain and Ireland, combining his love of fly-tying, photography and a rolling wave. Website: [robdenison.co.uk](http://robdenison.co.uk)

- Hook** Size 12, 14 or 16 Kamasan B170
- Tail** Bronze mallard, mandarin, partridge or cock hackle
- Rib** Fine wire
- Body** Hare’s ear, seal’s fur, or any suitable dubbing of your choice
- Body hackle** Hen, to suit
- Cheeks (optional)** Jungle-cock splits
- Head** Deer hair, natural or dyed

nicely. This keeps them where we want them when fish are “on the fin”: high, but not dry.

A simple presentation on floating or slow-intermediate lines, and a carefully selected team of three suggestive nymphs should ensure good results no matter what’s on the menu. Micro Muddlers are best suited to the top dropper or point positions. Two slimmer and/or slightly heavier nymphs below a Micro Muddler will allow more depth to be covered. The Muddler will hold its ground while the quicker-sinking nymphs below work to the depth needed, governed by the choice of leader material, and speed of retrieve. Switching the Micro Muddler to the point will hold the slimmer nymphs higher in the water, for a more horizontal, washing-line type presentation of the team. Fine-tune depth with your choice of line density, leader material and style/weight of nymphs. A team of three Micro Muddlers can be irresistible on any line, representing nymphs, hatching buzzers and sedge pupa when fished high, or shrimp, hog lice and corixa when fished deep. **T&S**



**Micro Muddlers are substantially smaller than Mini Muddlers.**

## TYING TIPS

- Don’t be concerned with perfection when spinning the deer hair: Micro Muddlers are meant to be messy! Try to ensure the deer hair spins 360 degrees, then add a couple of tight turns of thread to give a secure finish.
- If you’re not skilled at muddling, practice on a size 10, then work down.
- I’ve avoided a specific dressing. The overall look of the fly, and its ability to stay high in the water is more important. Be creative (but keep it simple) with your favourite materials and colours, and to suit local hatches.
- If you tie a fly too neatly, attack it with a patch of velcro!