

{ MATERIAL OF THE MONTH }

FLASH MOB

Rob Denson explains deft ways of tying flies with shiny synthetic strands



FLASHABOU, KRYSTAL FLASH, KRINKLE-

Flash: just three of myriad names in the huge family of narrow, flashy, tinsel-type materials supplied in bunches (known as hanks) in lengths usually between 5in and 10in. Many tyers just refer to this family of products as flash, and so shall I.

At first glance, one could be excused for thinking flash is regular tinsel or holographic, but in a bunch. Look closer, however, and you will see that flash is very fine (.03mm to .05mm) and very thin, light and limp. Mobility is the name of the game, hence its delicate nature, and hence the hanked presentation. If flash products were spooled, they would curl uncontrollably when used.

The most common use of flash is to embellish the fur, feather or marabou wings or tails of lures, modern wet-flies and mini-lures. One or two strands are added to the base material to quietly pique the interest of passing trout. If more of a scream is required, the flash can be used unadulterated for the entire wing or tail. The other main difference between flash and tinsel is that flash is often corrugated, crinkled, or twisted to enhance movement and reflection. Add in the almost endless colours and finishes and the choices are mind-boggling.

PHOTOGRAPHY: ROB DENSON



SPARKLER

There's nothing but flash in the wing and tail of this Sparkler pattern (Dave Downie's Gold Marble), which reduces to nothing when pulled, but pulses nicely when paused, making a quick, simple and very lively baitfish pattern. It has caught brownies, rainbows, pike and mackerel for me.



BUZZER

Although at first glance flash products seem very similar to spooled tinsels, they are generally too fine, narrow and delicate to be a realistic substitute, but there are exceptions: strands of flash can be ideal for ribbing small flies such as this size 16 Buzzer. Adding a coat of varnish or UV resin will protect the rib nicely.



CRYSTAL CADDIS

A slim bunch of pearl Lureflash Twinkle tied the full length of the shank cleverly forms the tail and parachute wing-post on this Crystal Caddis. Sparkle, not movement, is required, so the Twinkle is trimmed short. The twisted strands reflect light nicely from all directions, giving an edge to an otherwise drab pattern.

DABBLER

Pick your colours and flash style wisely and traditional wet-flies can be transformed, becoming unmissable when pulled through a wave, yet still retaining that traditional feel. Greg White pulls this off beautifully with this leggy Dabblers by adding a few short strands of Mosaic over the wing.



DAWSON'S OLIVE

When you need to match the movement of marabou, it pays to use flash sparingly. Just three or four strands of Gliss 'n' Glow Rootbeer were more than enough to transform this Dawson's Olive double, now one of my most successful lures.



MUDDLER

Controlled chaos! Getting creative with different colours and types of flash is great fun and works so well on patterns like this muddled bait fish. Longer strands suit bigger patterns but be careful not to overdo the length or the number of fibres, which can compromise mobility. ■



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. Web: robdenison.co.uk

PREPPING



Sometimes, it's impossible to resist using flash to form a "tinsel" body, but you must protect it. Fold two or three strands in half over the thread, trap it in at the tail end and wind towards the eye, then counter-rib: wind your wire in the opposite direction to that which you wound the rib.



For a quick, easy and secure tying, whether forming a Sparkler-style wing or adding a few strands of flash over marabou or feathers, simply fold half as many strands as you need over the thread, trapping in at the fold, then build the head over the tying-in point.



Always store your flash in the pack provided. It keeps the strands tangle-free and prevents curling, making tying easier and preventing unnecessary waste.