

A step at a time: MONTANA, SLIM & SPARKLY



Hook: Dai-Riki 270, #8-12
Thread: Gudebrod 8/0, black
Tail: Fox tail, black
Abdomen: Antron yarn - roped, black
Thorax: Ice Dub, hot orange
Wingcase: 2 strands of Antron yarn, black
Hackle: Hen, black

Step 1



Mount a hook in the vise. Tie in the thread and cover the shank to the hook bend. On a hook like this (without an actual "start" of the bend), use the barb as a guide.

Step 2



Cut a bunch of hair from fox tail and clean out the longer guard hairs. Put them aside... or in the waste bag. They are of no interest now. What we're interested in are the softer hairs. Tie in a tail, but don't trim the waste just yet.

Step 3



Tie down the surplus to about 2/3 of the fly's total body length.

Step 4



Cut the waste end and return with the thread to the back of the hook. Tight and touching wraps now, to create an even and compact underbody.

Step 5



First synthetic material... antron yarn. Looks a little bit like poly yarn, but the difference is that the filaments are triangular. This causes it to reflect light much better... and we like sparkly.

Step 6



Tie in the antron yarn and see to it that the waste end is long enough to cover at least 2/3 of the fly's total body length.

Step 7



Tie down the waste end to 2/3 of the body length with tight and touching wraps. Cut the waste end and let the bobbin rest for a while.

Step 8



Stretch the antron yarn and twist it quite hard. It's supposed to be like a round rope and compact enough to keep that shape while it's wrapped onto the hook.

Step 9



Wrap the antron rope forward to the thorax starting point. Make a loose thread wrap around it and then tighten the thread at the same time as you let the antron rope "relax" and collapse under the thread. This will give a neater tie-off. Secure with another few wraps and cut the waste.

Step 10



Cut another two pieces of Antron yarn for the wingcase. Flatten them out and untangle the filaments with the bodkin.

Step 11



Tie in the antron pieces together and try to keep the antron filaments evenly spread out on the top of the hook. Form a little cone with the thread that is pressing the filaments firmly against the hard abdomen and keeps them in a spread-out formation.

Step 12



Tie in a hackle feather with the dull side up. Rooster or hen is optional. I prefer hen though, since it adds a little "life" to the fly.

Step 13



For the thorax, we take a step further from tradition and use dubbing instead of yarn. There are many variants of synthetic dubbing and as long as they are sparkly (and preferably quite coarse), they will suit this fly. My own favourites are Ice Dub and Crystal Seal.

Step 14



Be firm when dubbing the thread. The thorax is supposed to be quite fat and at the same time compact. Don't take too much dubbing at a time. Coarse synthetic dubbing isn't as co-operative as natural dubbing. It's better to dub in steps and wrap multiple layers.

Step 15



A finished and compact thorax. Moderate amounts of dubbing on the thread and instead built with three layers.

Step 16



Take a few wraps with the hackle, tie it down and cut the waste.

Step 17



Cut the top hackle barbs as close to the stem as possible.

Step 18



Take the antron pieces and slide them between the fingers a couple of times to stretch out any loose filaments. Then fold them over the thorax.

Step 19



Lay the thread over the antron while stretched forward and tighten slowly while you move the antron back and forth to get it as spread out and even as possible. Secure them with a couple of firm wraps close to the thorax and build a little thread bump immediately in front of it to prevent them from slipping.

Step 20



Cut the antron as close to the thread as possible and even the head out with a few wraps of thread.

Step 21



Whip-finish and cut the thread. Cement the head and include a little bit of the antron where it disappears under the thread. Since the filaments don't collapse, each one slipping out will weaken the grip of the rest.

Done...



Vary colors, just as with the original Montana pattern. A few variants I like are yellow, red and chartreuse.