

The Two Fly Setup

By Clint Losee

Fly fishing involves many different techniques that can be used to catch that spooky little trout in your local waters. From the basic dry, nymph, or streamer fishing techniques to more advanced Czech and French nymphing options, there is a vast amount of ways to land your next fish. When you're first starting out learning how to fly fish, you'll mostly likely start with attaching just one fly to the end of your tippet. But what would happen if you add a second? Today I'm going to explain the **two fly setup**, also known as a **tandem fly setup**, for fly fishing.

Two Fly Setup Terminology

When you attach a fly to end of your tippet, that fly becomes what is called the point fly. Without any other flies attached, that is basically the end of it when utilizing only one fly. When you add a second, or maybe even third, fly to your line, those additional flies attached are called droppers.

This naming convention can get confusing depending on where those "dropper" flies are positioned in the line as the dropper flies can either be tied off from tag ends of the leader or off from the bend of the point fly (more on this later). For the sake of simplicity, the fly that is attached directly to the end of your tippet is what I consider the point fly. Any fly attached to a tag piece of leader or from the bend of the hook on a point fly will be called the dropper.

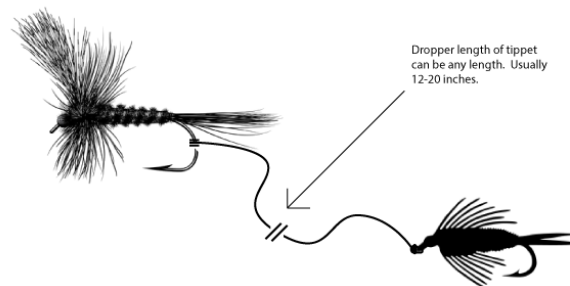
Two Fly Setup Options

I consider there to be three main options for the two fly setup:

- The dropper fly is attached to the bend of the hook of the point fly
- The dropper fly is attached to a tag end of leader ahead of the point fly
- The dropper fly is attached to a tippet section tied to the eye of the point fly.

When anglers first start out experimenting with the two fly setup, they most often choose to first option of attaching a dropper to the bend of the hook of the point fly. I will admit this is the easiest route to get started, but is not my preferred method. Each setup has their pros and cons, which we will go over shortly. For a basic overview of how each of these options look, check out the illustrations below to give you a better visual to get started:

Option 1:

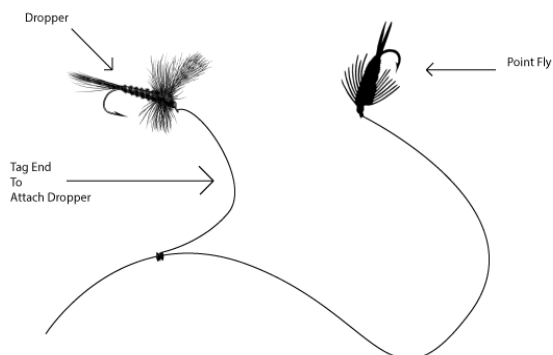


Two Fly Setup – Attached to Bend of Hook

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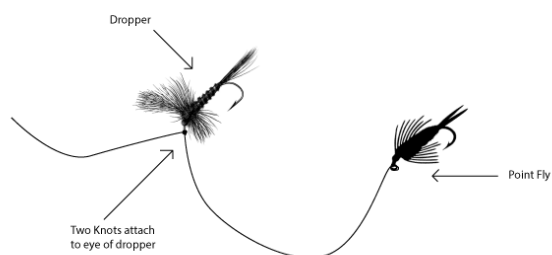
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Option 2:



Two Fly Setup – Attaching to Tag End Off Leader

Option 3:



Two Fly Setup – Attaching to Eye of the Hook

Two Fly Setup Option 1 – Attaching to the Bend of the Hook

The first option for a two fly setup, and the easiest to start with, is attaching the dropper to the bend of the hook of the point fly. For this setup, you will rig up your leader and tippet as if you are going to fish with just one fly. Once you have that fly attached to your leader, it becomes your point fly. What you are going to do now is cut off a length of tippet material to be used to attach your dropper fly. This can vary in length depending on the depth you want to fish. Some people choose to use a 10-15 inch length of tippet allowing your point fly and dropper to be

closer together, giving the fish more options at once, while others choose to go with a 20+ inch length. In my experience, the shorter the length of material you have, the more of a chance you have in accidentally snagging fish that go after the point fly and miss. I prefer a length of 20+ inches.



So now you have your extra tippet material in your desired length. You will then take your point fly and attach one end of your tippet around the bend of the point fly. Basically you will want to pretend that the bend of the hook is the same as the eye of a fly and knot the tippet to this in the same fashion. You can use the same knots you would as if attaching to the eye of a hook (clinch knot, Orvis Knot, etc.). Make sure you lubricate this knot very well! I have had many instances where this knot breaks when a fish takes the dropper fly.

At this point you will have your point fly attached to your leader and a length of tippet attached to the bend of the hook with no fly attached. All you do now is tie on a fly of your choice to this end. Once that is done, your basic two fly setup is complete. Is this the best method to choose though? Let's discuss the pros and cons.

Pros:

- Easy to cast

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- Easy to setup / simplest setup option
- Less prone to tangling

Cons:

- Higher knot breakage potential (my personal opinion)
- Potential to miss hookups due to tippet covering part of the hook bend on point fly

Two Fly Setup Option 2 – Attaching to a Tag End of the Leader

This has to be my preferred method of fishing with a two fly setup. It may be a bit harder to fish and only slightly more difficult to setup, but I feel that you have a greater advantage when on the water. This setup is created when you create your leader setup and tie on your tippet material. When you have your



Completed two fly setup attached by using the tag end of leader

main leader, you then select your desired length of tippet to attach your point fly to. The first step is to attach this piece of tippet to your leader using a surgeons knot, blood knot, or other knot that is used to attach two pieces of monofilament together. In the past when using these knots to attach a length monofilament to your leader, you probably have noticed

that the knot creates short pieces of material left over from tying the knot. These short pieces are what is called the tag end.

So now that you know what the tag end is, you can easily use the two fly setup by attaching the fly to one of the tag ends left over from your surgeons or blood knot. All you need to do is be aware of this when adding that additional length of tippet. Just compensate for this when choosing the extra length you desire and leave a little extra to use when tying the knot. This will allow you to have sufficient leftover material on the tag end to attach your fly. My advice is it's better to have too much leftover than not enough. You can always trim it down. Once you have your additional tippet attached to your leader and your tag ends left over, choose one of those tag ends to attach your fly to. In my experience, your dropper flies tend to break off easier. To help alleviate this, you may have noticed that your leader is generally thicker and has a stronger breaking point than the tippet you attached to it. When you tie your knot that creates the tag end, you will be left with one tag from the stronger leader material and one tag from the lighter tippet material. You can choose either one to attach your dropper fly to depending on if you need the higher breaking strength or the lighter, less visible material. I generally use the tag end left over from the stronger leader material, but it is up to you and your particular situation. Just take this tag end and it is just as if you were tying on your point fly. Thread the tag through the eye of the hook and cinch it down and you're ready to go.

What this method does is creates a sort of free-floating dropper fly attached to the tag. This gives the fly more freedom when drifting in the water for a more natural appearance. Just don't make your tag too long or you'll end up with many a tangled mess. I try to keep the tag in the 6 inch range. This allows enough to not tangle too much, yet allows for a few fly changes before having to retie the knot.

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Let's take a look at the pros and cons of this method:

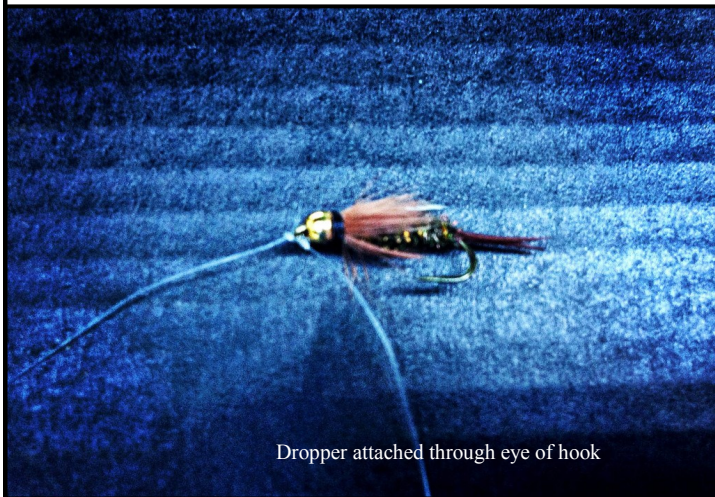
Pros:

- Fly moves more freely in the water
- More natural appearance
- No interference in the hookup due to line in the way on the hook bend
- Less prone to knot breakage (my personal opinion)

Cons:

- Slightly more difficult to cast
- After a few fly changes, the knot and tippet section needs to be redone

Two Fly Setup Option 3 – Attaching to the Eye of the Point Fly



Dropper attached through eye of hook

The third two fly setup option is one I don't use all that often. It involves attaching a section of tippet material to the eye of the hook on the point fly. Then to the end of this you will attach your dropper.

This option gives you the basic two fly setup and allows almost as simple a setup as attaching your dropper to the bend of the hook. You also get an advantage of easier casting with this method as you almost have a continuous leader. However, when fishing with very small fly patterns, attached two knots to the eye of the hook tends to create unneeded bulk at the eye of the point fly, which could potentially deter a fish from taking. Again, I don't tend to use this option very much, but some anglers swear by it.

Pros:

- Easy to setup
- Easier to cast

Cons:

- More bulk at the eye of the point fly can deter fish.
- Point fly sits at an abnormal angle when in the water.
- The eye of the hook on small flies does not make it easy to attach a second line and knot.

Conclusion

Now that you know the most popular **two fly setup** options available, you may be wondering when and where you might use these. The simple answer is anywhere that the regulations will allow you. However, there are a few setups that are tried and true options. For now, that should give you a good start and help you expand your fly fishing technique to start fishing with multiple flies. You may have noticed that this can be expanded beyond just two flies to three, four and more, depending on your local regulations though. Thanks and tight lines!



Tom Rosenbauer's 8 Tips To Becoming a Better Fly Fisher:

1. Observe everything. Look around every time you catch a fish and figure out why it was there and why it ate at that particular time. Look at the sun angle, the surrounding terrain, current threads in rivers, or highways on the flats.
2. Tie flies. I don't think anyone can be truly on top of their game until they understand how a fly is constructed and what it's supposed to do in the water.
3. Tie your own leaders. In fresh or salt, knowing how to modify a leader to make it behave better is best understood if you have tied a bunch of knotted leaders first. Even if you are starting with a commercial knotless leader, you will eventually need to modify it.
4. Improve your casting. No matter how good you think your casting is, it is not good enough. Take a lesson from someone who is a better caster than you. Don't be too proud.
5. Don't be an ass on the water. In rivers, give people as much room as you possibly can, even if you end up in water you don't really like. In the salt, find your own school or your own flat. Someone else got there first. Get over it.
6. Delight in every fish you catch- no matter how small. If you can't get excited about an 8-inch brook trout, you don't really get it.
7. Don't sweat it. The fishing will never be as good as you anticipate. The weather sucks? You blew an eat? You didn't catch a fish as big as you thought? You are just setting yourself up for a deficit of confidence—and fun.
8. Stop being so serious. Never take your fishing or yourself too seriously. You are just a tool with a silly pole playing with fish. How stupid is that?

JANUARY'S PROGRAM SPEAKER GLENN NELSON of the WVDEP

Glenn Nelson is WV Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Save Our Streams Coordinator of over three years now. Prior to assuming the coordinating role of citizen science he spent 13 years with the United States Geological Survey (USGS). As a field biologist, government boat captain and diver, he spent countless hours researching freshwater mussels, brook trout, striped bass, horseshoe crabs, amphibians, eels, and several other species. Much of his work was documenting endangered animal populations, reasons for their demise, and methods to mitigate their loss. He has a Bachelors degree in Environmental Science and a Masters degree in Aquatic Ecology. His immediate role as WV Save Our Streams coordinator is directed towards the volunteer monitoring and citizen scientists of watershed associations throughout the state. Save Our Streams is a three parameter approach incorporating Chemical, Physical, and Biological assessments to score the health and integrity of the wadable waters of West Virginia. As our Save Our Streams coordinator he makes it a priority to educate all walks of life, from academia to agencies, nonprofit to industry, of the connectivity of our water's health to that of our own.

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Proceeds go to the **Ernie Nester Chapter of Trout Unlimited** supporting conservation, restoration, preservation and reconnection of coldwater streams

Provided by and Pickup Location:

Spring Hill Rod & Gun
4901 MacCorkle Ave SW
South Charleston, WV 25309
304-768-2090

Anyone under 18 must be accompanied by parent/guardian

\$1.00 PER TICKET TICKETS AVAILABLE AT THE NEXT CHAPTER MEETING

6 TICKETS FOR \$5.00, 12 TICKETS FOR \$10.00, 18 TICKETS FOR \$15.00

24 TICKETS FOR \$20.00, 30 TICKETS FOR \$25.00, 36 TICKETS FOR \$30.00

42 TICKETS FOR \$35.00, 48 TICKETS FOR \$40.00, 54 TICKETS FOR \$45.00, 60 TICKETS FOR \$50.00

WINNING TICKET WILL BE DRAWN 5:00 PM, JANUARY 25TH, 2014 AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE
WEST VIRGINIA HUNT AND FISH SHOW

NEED NOT BE PRESENT TO WIN



Learn to Fly Fish...



Tie Flies...



Build A Fishing Rod!

(Fly, spinning, casting, surf.....any kind)

FIRST SESSION

Fly Tying
6:30 - 8:30pm
January 29
(6 weeks)

Beginning Rod Building
6:00 - 9:00pm
January 29
(7 weeks)

Intermediate Fly Fishing
6:00 - 9:00pm
January 29
(4 weeks; some fly fishing experience required)

SECOND SESSION

Intermediate Rod Building
6:00 - 9:00pm
March 19
(5 weeks; must have built one or more fishing rods)

Wilderness Fishing in WV
6:00 - 9:00pm
March 13
(4 weeks)

Introduction TO FLY FISHING

6:00pm - 9:00pm
April 6 & April 9 April 13 & April 16
(Two nights a week for 2 weeks)

Note: Fly fishing & fly tying classes also will be presented in Hurricane April 20.

To register or for more information, email ENCTUClasses@gmail.com

Classes are conducted at the Elk Elementary Center, Rt 119 N, 1.5 miles from I-79, Mink Shoals exit. All classes are open to the public. Classes are conducted by the Ernie Nester Chapter of Trout Unlimited in conjunction with the Kanawha County Schools Community Education Program & the Putnam County Parks & Recreation Department. Minimum age: 14 years old or 12 if their parent or relative takes the course too.

* The registration fee is \$30 for all classes and some classes have supplies & materials fees.

UPCOMING ENCTU EVENTS

January 13th, Membership meeting SCPL 7:00PM-9:00PM, Speaker will be Glenn Nelson from the Environmental Protection Agency

January 23-25th, WV Hunting and Fishing Show, Charleston Civic Center.

January 27th, ENCTU Board meeting, SCPL, 6:30 PM– 8:30 PM

February 10th, ENCTU Membership meeting, SCPL 7:00 PM– 9:00 PM Bring gear and demonstrate your fly tying tips and tricks.

February 27th, ENCTU Board meeting SCPL, 6:30 Pm– 8:30PM.

March 10th, ENCTU Annual Banquet and Awards Ceremony at the Charleston Elks Lodge. This is always a good time and many prizes and sponsors are lined up. Other prizes and guided trips are in the works so please plan on attending.



"How are you catching all the fish when it's so cold out?"

"You have to keep the worms warm."

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