

Reverse Jam Hitch

by Wayne Luallen

This approach to placement of the conventional Jam Hitch gives the same result as the standard approach to “tying on the thread,” but from the opposite direction. It is most useful on flies that require initial thread winds to begin from the bend and proceed toward the hook eye. With the conventional Jam Hitch the thread is wound from the direction of the hook eye toward the bend. To have thread end up back toward the eye the thread must be wound back over itself. That may not be a concern on larger flies, but with small flies it certainly can be with an end result of a fly far too thick to represent the small diameter of tiny naturals.

Though the instructions may appear at first complicated, given a minimal amount of practice, soon the fly tier will find it simple and surprisingly useful.

It is assumed the tier is right handed. For left hand tiers, the approach is simply reversed.

1. To begin the Reverse Jam Hitch, the bobbin holder should be directly above the hook shank in the right hand and the waste end of the thread in the left hand beneath the hook.
2. Reach the waste end of thread underneath, around and over the top of the hook toward the direction of the hook eye. Slide the loop of thread that now encircles the hook to a proper position for the given fly.
3. While still holding the waste end in the left hand, wind the bobbin holder around the hook shank toward the hook eye 3-4 winds. These winds will be in front of the single wind made by the waste end.
4. Hold the bobbin holder firmly below the hook (or slightly toward you,) but not so loose or tight that when the waste end is released the winds come free.
5. Lay, or as I often describe it, “throw” the waste end of thread over the top of the thread coming from the bobbin holder. Now grasp it again with the left hand, and make two winds over the waste end releasing the end only briefly when the right hand crosses over.
6. With the bobbin holder still in the right hand and in a position over the hook, with the left hand firmly pull the waste end toward the hook eye. This smooths and tightens the thread.
7. Continue winding the thread toward the hook eye over the waste end a few more winds to be sure the Reverse Jam Hitch is absolutely secure before trimming the waste end off.

Footnote: For you bibliophiles you may find it interesting to learn that Lee Wulff referred to the step of tying on the thread with different a term. "...My first step is to pick up the hook and start the *dinging* with a piece of thread long enough to tie the fly" (Lee Wulff, "The Wulff Fly Patterns," Roundtable, January/February, 1979)

(Revised September 2004)