

CHARLIE'S FLY BOX, INC.



Arvada, Colorado
(303) 403-8880



Elk Hair Caddis



Fly Patterns brought to you by Charlie's FlyBox

© All images, slogans and content are strictly copyrighted and may not be used or copied without permission.

Charlie Craven and Charlie's FlyBox, Inc.

[print this page](#)

step: 1

Pattern Description

The Elk Hair Caddis brings us into the world of dry flies. Dries are more proportion dependent than nymphs as the proportions affect the way the fly sits on the water. The body taper and diameter, the hackle size and density and the length and density of the wing are all things to keep in mind. Make the body no thicker than one-third the gap width, and tapered from back to front. Hackle that is too large or dense makes the fly appear bigger than it really is. Hackle serves two functions on this fly; flotation and the appearance of legs. Caddis have only six legs so it doesn't take many turns to fulfill this requirement. More importantly, hackle serves as outriggers to support the fly on the water's surface. Six to eight evenly spaced (palmered) turns of hackle create more than enough surface area while still letting the body shape and color show through. I size the hackle (over the dubbed body) so it is equal to one to one and a half gap widths. If it is too large the fly looks bigger, too short and the fly may float on its side. Flies intended for

Materials Needed:

Hook: TMC 100SPBL #10-18
Thread: 6/0 Tan Rib: Extra Fine
Copper Wire Body: Superfine
Dubbing, Color of Choice Hackle:
Brown Rooster Neck Wing: Elk
Hair, Cow or Bull

calm, flat water over selective fish suffice with less hair than the same size fly meant for heavy pocket water. For heavier water I use as much hair as I can securely attach to the hook (be sure to thoroughly clean all the under fur and short hairs out of the clump before stacking it). As a rule of thumb, the right amount of hair when compressed will be equal to the diameter of the body. There is some room for interpretation in regard to the length of the wing. Anywhere between one and one and a quarter shank lengths seems about right to me. If I make the wing any longer the fly appears too big. I fish the Elk Hair Caddis a few different ways. Dead drifting under bank side vegetation can have great results, and I have found that skittering the fly a bit brings out the predators. It seems as though trout can't resist a bug that is trying to get away and this skittering really rings the dinner bell. One reason caddis are such a staple menu item during the summer months is that trout see so many of them. Caddis fly off to the bushes along the stream bank after hatching and live there for some time. At this point they become, essentially, a terrestrial insect. Breezes blow these bugs into the water and the trout are on the look out for them. There doesn't have to be an actual hatch in progress to clean up with a caddis. This pattern also has a wide "foot print" on the water. It creates a larger dimple in the surface film that seems to make it more apparent to the fish, so even when they're not looking, the caddis really stands out. For flat water, I often omit the hackle and wire rib on this fly so it will ride lower on the water and create a more realistic silhouette. The Elk Hair Caddis was invented by the legendary Montana guide and fly tier, Al Troth.

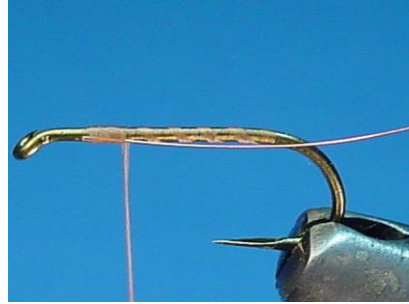
step: 2

Attach the thread about two eye lengths back from the eye and wrap a thread base on the shank back to the bend. Spiral wrap the thread back to the front.



step: 3

Tie in an eight-inch length of extra fine copper wire at the rear edge of the index point and wrap the thread back over it to the bend. Keep the wire along the near side of the shank.



step: 4

Apply a thin, even layer of Superfine dubbing to the thread. Start wrapping the dubbing at the bend of the hook and work forward forming a single dubbing layer on the shank up to the index point.



step: 5

Wrap the dubbing back over the front half of the first layer to the midpoint on the shank.



step: 6

Change directions and wrap the dubbing forward to the index point again forming a nicely tapered body as pictured.



step: 7

Select a brown rooster neck feather that has a barb length equal to one and a half hook gaps. Prepare the feather by stripping its base of fibers for about two eye lengths. Tie the hackle feather in by its butt end at the front edge of the body with the inside of the feather toward the body of the fly.



step: 8

Grasp the tip of the hackle feather with your hackle pliers and palmer it back to the bend with six or seven evenly spaced turns.



step: 9

Once at the bend, wrap the wire rib over the tip of the hackle feather one time and release the pliers from the feather. Continue spiraling the wire forward through the hackle, taking care not to bind down any fibers as you go.



step: 10

Tie the wire off with the thread at the front of the body. Snap the wire to the rear of the hook to break off the excess and then snap the remaining tip of the hackle feather forward to break it off as well.



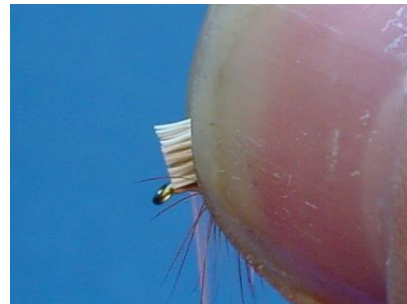
step: 11

Cut, clean and stack a medium sized clump of elk hair. Be sure to get ALL the underfur out of the clump and that the stacking perfectly evens the tips of the hair. Measure the hair so it reaches to the rear edge of the bend of the hook.



step: 12

Cut the butt ends off the hair at the point where the hair is equal to the length of the hook, from the rear edge of the hook eye to the rear edge of the bend. Place the hair on top of the hook with the butt ends at the back edge of the eye. Your thread should be hanging from the shank one-eye length back from the eye.



step: 13

Make four or five tight turns of thread to compress and tie down the hair. I try to make a narrow band of thread extending from one eye length back from the eye to two eye lengths back from the eye. Be sure that the hair is tied down tightly and is completely compressed under the thread by letting go of the wing and pulling on the thread; if the wing moves, it's not tight enough.



step: 14

Once the wing is secured to the hook, whip finish the thread on top of the band of thread and clip. Run a thin bead of head cement around the thread band but be careful not to get any on the hair wing or butts.

