

CDC "One Feather" Emerger



Hook Size: 10 to 20

Style / Make: Mustad 94842 dry fly hook or similar

1. Thread: 8/0, 70 denier in a color to match the body feather - either gray, olive, yellow or brown
2. Tail: Tip of the CDC feather
3. Body: Twisted "rope" of CDC
4. Wing: Loop of CDC with the fibers trimmed to a point equal to the hook's bend
5. Head: Thread head finished with two whip finishes or a series of half-hitches

Tying Procedure

1. Stroke the fibers towards the tip of the feather so they all align. Lay down a foundation of tying thread and tie the CDC feather to the hook shank right above the hook barb. The tips of the feather should extend back about the width of the hook's gape, forming an short, sparse tail. If the tail is too full, trim a few fibers out.
2. Advance the thread back to the hook eye. Hold the CDC feather straight up and twist it into a rope. This becomes the body of the fly. Don't twist too tightly, you don't want to break the CDC stem.
3. Wrap a slim body up to the eye of the hook. The body will taper slightly. This is a natural and aesthetically very pleasing shape that is a result of ever more fibers being trapped into the rope or "yarn" of the twisted CDC feather. If you want to make a more durable fly you can tie in a length of heavy tying thread, such as a piece of 3/0 black, and counter-rib the CDC

- feather. The teeth of a trout, or the tips of your forceps, will likely cut both the thread and CDC eventually, so I always think of this as a one or two fish fly. They are so easy to make that I seldom care if I go through six or seven in a day's fishing. I'm happy to tie six more flies if it means I catch 12 more fish!
4. Tie off the CDC on the side of the hook closest to you - this is the left side of the hook looking towards the tail from the eye. Now take the CDC feather and form a short loop with the tag end coming down on the right side of the hook (opposite you if your right handed). Tie off the feather. Form a neat thread head and use a series of half-hitches or two whip finishes. Putting head cement on this fly isn't a good idea as the cement may get wicked into the feather, destroying its natural floating ability and incredibly delicate motion.
 5. Pull the long barbs of the CDC plume up and away from the fly. Trim them with a blunt cut to they stop just short of the end of the tail, just above the back of the bend of the hook. If you are tying this fly in a size 12 or 10 you may need to use a second CDC feather to form this wing loop. Some CDC is long enough to tie this fly all the way to a size 10, but many of the feathers will yield size 18, 16 and 14 with much better results.
 6. The finished fly is airy, light and translucent. It is impressionistic of many aquatic insects. This CDC fly fishes on the surface (don't use a paste or liquid floatant - just dry the fly on an amadou patch from time to time). It also fishes well just under the surface film as an emerging nymph just trying to break through the meniscus. This is also a great fly to fish like you would a soft hackle - try hanging this off the bend of a heavy nymph and dead drifting it through deep slow pools for lethargic winter trout!

Betty Pahl (tying information courtesy "Fly Fishing Ohio")