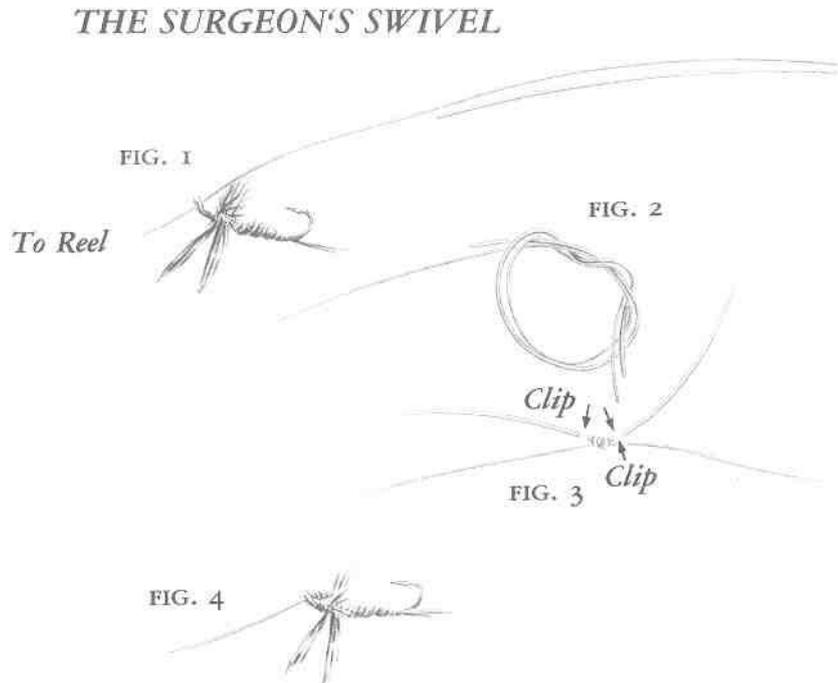


The Surgeon's Swivel Knot

From "Fishing Dry Flies for Trout on Rivers and Streams" by Art Lee, Atheneum/Macmillan Publishers, New York, 1982. Page 244.



Fishing Skaters has a way of producing truly astounding results. Apparently fishless stretches literally come alive with ruffled trout competing to catch up with the flies. Sometimes trout push big wakes several times chasing Skaters before finally grabbing on, but even when a fish ultimately refuses to return to the maddening offering, the spirit of the chase is frequently found to have been sufficient to rekindle its desire for a more conventional pattern.

"Won't fine leader tippetts needed on many streams twist hopelessly as you try to cast big Skaters?" an experienced angler might legitimately ask. If it weren't for the knot shown in the accompanying illustration, the answer would have to be affirmative. By adapting the handy surgeon's knot, however, a large fly remains free to spin independent of the tippet, thus making it impossible for the tippet to twist no matter how minute its diameter.

Here's how to tie this useful knot:

1. Pass the fine tippet through the hook eye from left to right, so the head of the fly faces the leader butt (Fig. 1). Release the fly and permit it to hang on the tippet (Fig. 1).

2. Now cut a section of tippet material three or four inches long and several sizes heavier than the tippet attached to the leader you're using (Fig. 1). (For a size 10 fly and a 7X tippet, for instance, you'll want a short section of 2X or 3X material.)
3. Connect the short section of heavy material to the end of the fine tippet by means of a surgeon's knot (Fig. 2).
4. Clip excess material close to the body of the surgeon's knot, leaving only your tippet intact (Fig. 3). This requires clipping the three tabs, as shown in Fig. 3. (Note: It is important that the excess material be clipped extremely close to the body of the knot in order to prevent jagged ends from catching the hook eye or forward portions of the fly while casting.)
5. Now slide the fly back down the tippet, so the knot rests gently against the rear of the hook eye (Fig. 4). Check that the body of the knot is larger than the diameter of the hook eye, so it can't sneak through when fishing.
6. Grasp the fly in one hand, the leader in the other, and try revolving the fly. If the knot is properly tied and situated, the fly should revolve freely while the tippet remains stationary.