



Shop Vac

Hook: Scud/pupa hook sizes 16-20 (Dai-Riki #135)

Bead: Gold, 3/32-inch

Thread: Black 8/0 or 70 Denier

Rib: Copy Ultra Wire, small

Body: 6 to 8 Pheasant Tail fibers

Wingbud: White Zelon

Adhesive: Head cement or Sally Hansen Hard-As-Nails

Tools: Plunger-style hackle pliers

Tying Instructions:

1. Slip a gold 3/32 bead onto your hook, small hole first. Secure the assembly in your vice and make sure the bead is all the way up against the hook eye.
2. Start your thread on the hook shank at the back end of the bead and take a few wraps rearward before snipping off the tag.
3. Take a 6-8 inch length of copper ultra wire (this will make multiple flies) and secure the wire to the near side of the hook and take thread wraps rearward binding down the wire well into the hook bend. Return your thread back up the shank so it rests at about the hook point.
4. Strip 6-8 natural pheasant tail fibers free from the stem. Snip the curly bits off and reorient the fibers so you're holding onto the tips with your left hand. Snip the brittle tips off square. Lay the fibers on top of the hook shank and start taking thread wraps to secure them. Wrap back to the same spot in the hook bend as you did before.
5. Grab the pheasant tail fibers and begin making touching wraps up the hook shank to form the body. Wrap behind your tying thread as you go, this will help ensure the fibers stay together as you wrap. When you reach the bead, secure the pheasant tail with a few tight turns of tying thread and snip the excess off close.
6. Get hold of the copper wire and begin making open spiral counter wraps over the pheasant tail to add segmentation and increase the fly's durability.

7. When you reach your tying thread go around the copper wire to reverse the direction of your thread wraps so you're counter wrapping to tighten and bind down the wire. After a few wraps, once again use the wire to reverse your thread wraps back to normal. After a few wraps helicopter the wire off close.
8. Take an inch long segment of white zelon and center it right at the back edge of the bead. Take 2-3 thread wraps over top to secure it. Pull both ends of the segment back and take thread wraps to bind the material down so it projects rearward.
9. Do a 5-6 turn whip finish, try to keep the thread band narrow. Then snip or cut your tying thread free.
10. Snip the wing bud to be about half-way down the body. A drop of head cement applied to the thread wraps will keep everything in place.

Notes:

The Shop Vac was the creation of famed West Yellowstone fly-shop owner Craig Mathews. That attribution is very common, but it's not entirely accurate. In fact, the Shop Vac was first tied by Rowan Nyman, one of Mathews's partners at Blue Ribbon Flies. (Nyman now works at Firehole Ranch) Either way, the Shop Vac is a great searching pattern that imitates any number of emerging aquatic insects. Use it as a dropper below a hopper or other dry fly, or try drifting it close to the bottom. It even produces on still waters, fished buzzer-style on a drift or with short strips.

You can tie the shop vac in smaller sizes but a size 16 alone is great fly to have in your arsenal of flies.