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Super Glue Splice Leader Attachment.

The logic:

We fish almost exclusively with leaders well over the length of the rod, which is to say frequently anything from 14' to 20' depending on the circumstances. These leaders may seem dreadfully long but they provide amazing drifts on dry flies: The leaders are designed to collapse just enough to provide slack and allow the angler to make powerful and accurate casts without having to worry about presentation of the fly. That is the leader's job. But although most people worry about casting such leaders on a short line that isn't really the problem, the problem is that the leader butt is coming inside the rod guides on a regular basis and having a huge fat knot or loop at the joint leads to any amount of trouble. Making it difficult to "cast" the leader out at the start and risking snapping fish off when landing them if the knot jams at that point.

The solution is to have a totally seamless joint which is where the super glue system comes in. To be honest it has become a little trickier as some fly lines have such fine and loosely woven cores that attachment of the leader in this manner is a bit of a struggle. However the joint need not be that tough, we are fishing 6X to 8X tippet most of the time and the joint is generally considerably stronger than the tippet so break-offs are not really a problem.

The trick:



The real trick to this system was shown to be by Mark Yelland, a regular member of the South African National Fly Fishing Team. What he told me was so obvious that I had to wonder why I hadn't thought of it before. To insert the butt of the leader you use a sewing machine needle, not an ordinary needle. The thing is, sewing machine needles have the eye at the point end and that makes things a whole lot easier.

The method:

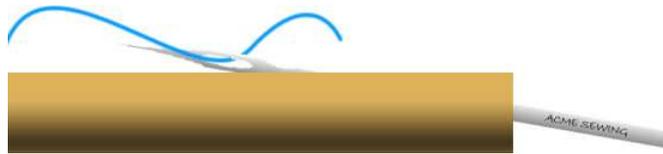
Insert the sewing machine needle from the point of the fly line up into the core about as far as you can get it, that is usually a couple of centimeters.



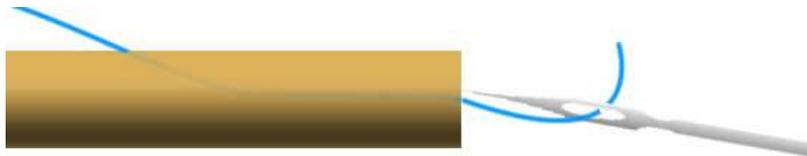
Then push the point of the needle out of the side of the line.



Insert the tippet section of a standard tapered leader into the eye of the needle.



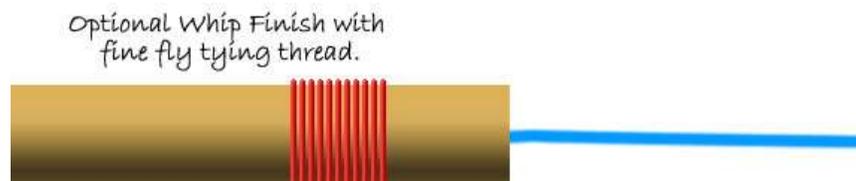
Then pull the leader out through the fly line, you will notice that it gets harder and harder to pull as the taper gets thicker and wedges into the inside of the core.



You should rough up the last couple of centimeters of the butt section of the leader to improve the adhesion and when it is almost all the way through the fly line put a drop of cyanoacrylate glue on the butt of the leader and pull home. If you fail to pull it all the way inside the line before the glue takes hold simply cut it off with a razor blade.



With lines that have poor cores we have found that the addition of a small whip finish of fly tying thread around the fly line to “clamp” the leader inside can help.



The joint is amazingly smooth and will afford you easy line handling on stream with minimum fuss. Compared to knots, nail knots, loops and the like there is simply no comparison and once you have used this joint you are unlikely to go back to any other system for your stream fishing at least.

It can be a bit of a fiddle with light lines but it is well worth the effort and you won't look back once you have tried it.

Simple Stream Leader Formula:

The simple leader formula that I use for virtually all of my stream fishing:

Butt: A standard continuous taper leader with an X rating at the tip two sizes thicker than the tippet that I am expecting to use. (That is a 4X leader if I plan to fish 6X)

Compound tippet:

2 to 3 ft of 5X copolymer tippet (leave it like this for nymph fishing)

2 to 3ft of 6X copolymer tippet. (Leave it like this for general dry fly fishing)

2 to 3 ft of 7X copolymer tippet. (Add this for fine and far off days with tiny flies and favourable breezes).

Adjustments:

Personally I don't believe in the magic formula, the size and aerodynamics of the fly, the wind strength and direction change throughout the day and I adjust the leader accordingly.

If it collapses too much, remove some of the 5X in the middle.

If it casts out straight and drag sets in early increase the 5X in the middle.

If it is unstable at the point, cut back the final tippet lengths..

Be prepared to fiddle with the leader until it works for you on the day. Most of the dry flies I use are small, for larger patterns, size 14 and larger you can cut the leader back more and fish only 6X tippets anyway..

I hope that helps you, have fun experimenting, if you simply can't cast a leader this long either get some casting instruction or use a shorter leader but you will be harming your effectiveness if you take the latter option.