

THE BENCH CLOTH

By: Tom Deschaine



Each of us (tiers) have a table, bench or designated area where we practice our craft. I prefer to keep my area clean, neat and organized. The tools and materials for each fly are brought out on a need-to-tie basis, then returned to their storage containers after the completion of the tying session.

I've never liked 'material' collectors or 'trim bags'. They're always in the way. The bench cloth is more convenient for me. I just throw my scrap materials and trimmings onto one corner of the cloth and shake it out every so often.

For me, the most important function of the bench cloth is 'contrast.' If I'm tying a fly that is basically white in color I like a black background. A black fly, I like a white background, etc. I keep them in several basic colors; black, white, yellow, tan, gray and brown. A simple item of material, yet as invaluable to me as any other tool in my arsenal of tying paraphernalia.



Other than putting on a button, sewing is a skill that I never mastered. So, my wonderful bride of 40+ years (and my best friend) is my seamstress. The material is nothing more than simple cotton fabric. One color on one side and another color on the other side. My wife places a 'batting' in between the two layers and sews them together. The batting she used is by "Pellon". It's a 100 % fusible polyester fleece. What does fusible mean? Once it's sewn in, you just iron it and the batting sticks to the fabric. It can be machine washed and dried

without damage to the bench cloth.

I've been using my bench cloths for over 20 years now. It provides a great background for my tying and my photographic work. Give it a try.

See you on the water.....

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