



## THE CANADIAN TUBE FLY COMPANY

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# Hook Hang Down (HHD) Using Tube Flies

*Stuart Anderson*

Tube flies are prone to one weakness; if a pattern is not well thought out and balanced, the extra weigh of the hook will pull down the back of the fly making your pattern sink with the butt of the fly going down like a World War two freighter. Hook Hang Down (HHD) is a major issue to many tube fly fishermen. Many believe that certain fish “hit” a fly in different ways. With the hook hanging down, the chance that the fish will strike the actual pattern and miss the hook is a great possibility. Many experts and novices believe that steelhead attack a fly from the side, others believe that they hit from behind. There are even some that believe a Pacific and Atlantic salmon take the hook in very different ways. This debate (I'm sure will go on for many years to come) as with most, everyone has their own opinion. All the debate and disagreements aside, it is a fact that HHD is a problem whether the fish you are targeting are striking from the rear or side.

Juri Shumakov was the first to truly address this problem outright. His Long Range, and Skittle Tubes used a design that revolutionized tube tying. He used the metal part of his tube design as the actual body of his fly. The rear of the fly had three deep grooves etched into them to take weight away from the rear of the pattern. He then went one step further and began tying on the liner tube instead of directly on the metal tube. Of course the most basic indicator of weather or not an idea is good is by how many people have “borrowed” some of these ideas. Juri invented the first Hybrid Tube Fly that has been adapted, modified, and even copied by individuals and companies.

There are three major ways that hook hang down can be addressed.....

*Adjust the weight of your hook*

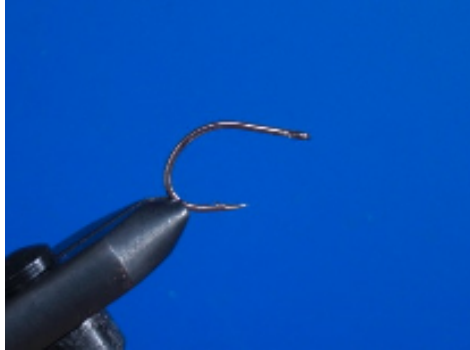
With the countless selection of hooks on the market today, it really becomes a personal choice about which one would suite your needs best. Often, the size of the hook is dictated by the size of fish you are after. As we all know, wire gauge dramatically can change the weight of a hook, even if they are the same size.



Daiichi 1650



Daiichi 2451



Partridge Nordic Tube Fly Hook

*Add weight to the head of your fly*

Cone heads are becoming very popular amongst steelheaders both on the West Coast and on the Great Lakes. Though some think that adding a cone can make a tube unsightly, they not only can balance out your fly, they can also add more weight in general for fishing in deeper and faster waters. Of course you may end up with the problem that is age old to fly fishermen. The extra weight can make it feel like you are casting a small cannonball.





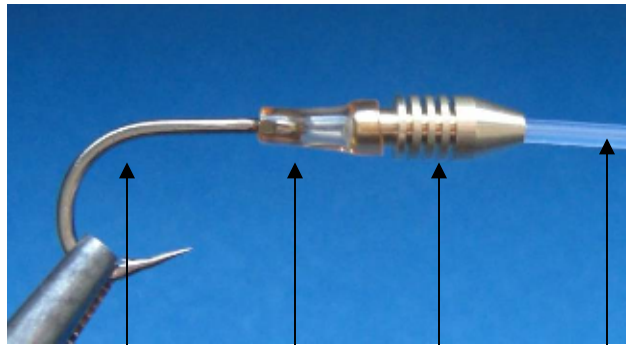
*Consider the design of the tube you are using*

Tube fly design is consistently evolving, and improving. Though standard plastic and metal tubes that are linear in shape still have their place, newer designs either specifically add weight towards the front of the tube or remove weight from the rear of the tube. Shumakov was the first and there has been many designs that have taken Juris' original idea and extended it. Of course all real applications need to be tested and then retested again, the better the balance of the fly, the fewer hook ups you will miss. Ideally, a fly that sinks equally (rear sinks at the same speed as the front) both in a current and in still water is the main objective.

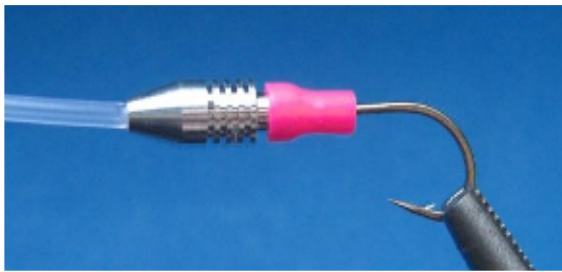
Some Hybrid Designs that keep HHD in mind.....

### *Shumakov Tubes*

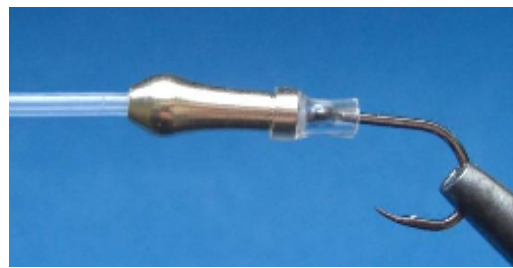
Juri Shumakov designed his line of tubes in a quest to specifically address Hook Hang Down. He was the first to develop a system of Hybrid tubes that saw the combination of a metal body with all of the tying being done on the plastic liner section of the tube. He also was the first to remove weight away from the back of the tube (where the hook attaches) in an attempt to balance the fly. The system he created is basically the blue print for all Hybrid tubes that have come since.



Hook      Junction Tube      Main Body      Inner Liner



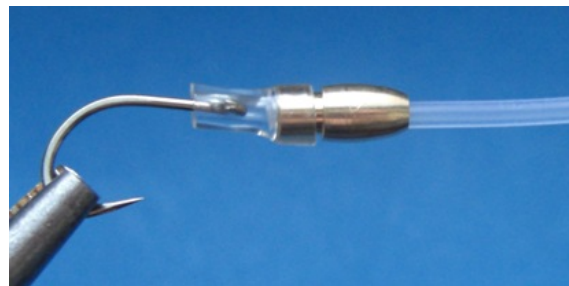
Long Range Aluminum Tube



Weight Forward Tube



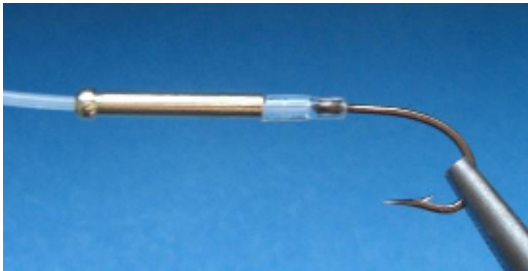
Skittle Tube



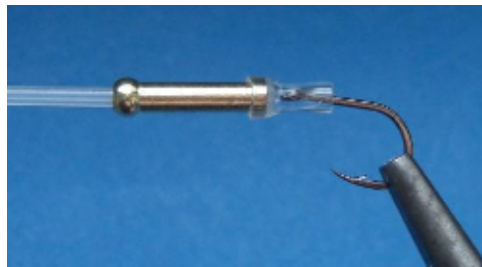
Summer Arrow Tube

## *Nubby Tubes*

Nubby tubes can also be tied on the same way as a Shumakov tube. The plastic liner is inserted into the metal tube, the back end is melted into a small lip, and then all of the tying is done on the liner tube, just in front of the Nub. Not only does the Nub add extra weight to the front of the tube, it actually serves as a foundation to boost up your hackle and wing, this gives your fly a bigger profile while in the current. Some tiers layer hackle, wing, then hackle, then more wing, in an attempt to build a foundation that will not flatten in the water. The nub almost lets you cheat this process by holding the tied material up.



Long Nubby Tube



Short Nubby Tube



The Nubb is a foundation to hold the shape of the wing



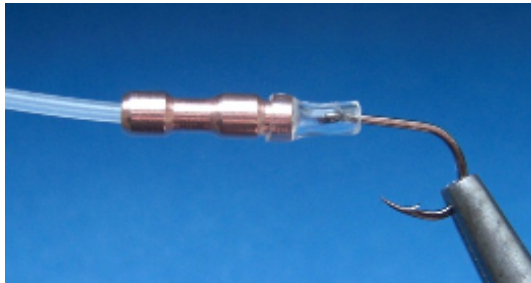
Tubes tied with all materials on the plastic liner. The Nubb helps hold up the wing and hackle in the current



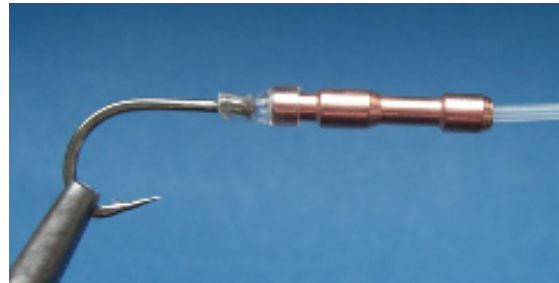
Tubes tied with the Nubbs Exposed. Everything is tied on the metal tube

### *Barbell Tubes*

This tube was developed in response to many Hybrid tubes not being as heavy as some tiers would like. With extra weight at the front of the tube and a recessed back end to accept Junction Tube, these tubes do come out fairly balanced when the tying is done on the plastic liner.



Short Barbell Tube



Long Barbell Tube

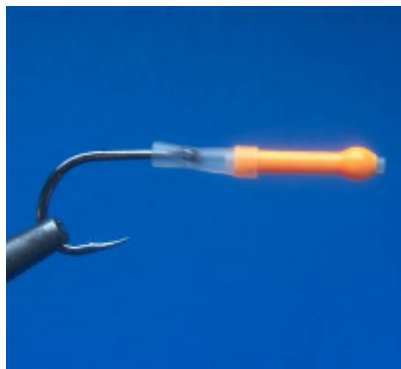


Tube tied with the head painted and exposed. Everything is tied on the metal.

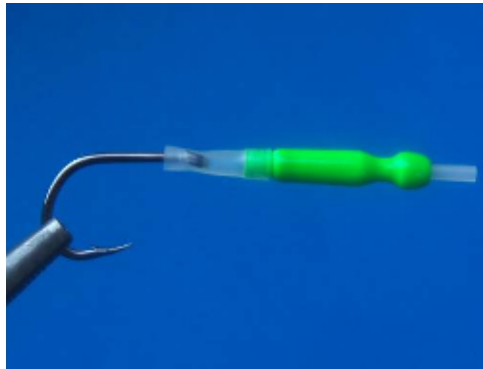
## *Eumer Tubes*

Eumer, a company from Finland, has a line of Hybrid tubes that are also extensions of Juri Shumakovs idea of incorporating metal and plastic tubes and tying the materials on the plastic liner tube, in front of the main metal body.

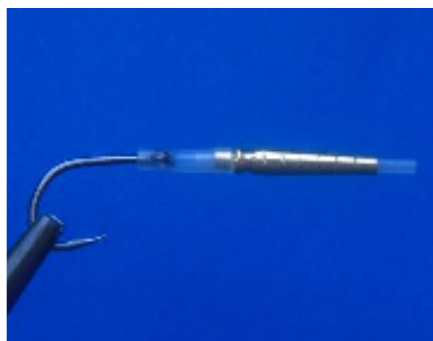
Eumer, a company from Finland, has a line of Hybrid tubes that are also extensions of Juri Shumakovs idea of incorporating metal and plastic tubes and tying the materials on the plastic liner tube, in front of the main metal body. Eumer has four designs that address Hook Hang Down to varying degrees. Both ball heads and cone head tubes have weight added to the front of the fly. They can either be tied on as a Hybrid tube, with the tying being done in front of the metal tube onto the plastic liner. They can also be used as a standard metal tube where all the tying is done on the metal and the front ball or cone is left exposed. The teardrop tube is Eumers most balanced fly. It begins small at the back and gradually gets bigger adding more weight to the front of the fly, balancing the fly nicely. The crayfish tube has an interesting design, though HHD is a huge issue with the style.



Ball Head Tube



Cone Head Tube



Crayfish Tube



Teardrop Tube

It is not to say that you will be skunked with an unbalanced tube, we have had many fishing trips for steelhead, salmon (both freshwater and salt), and trout that see action on completely unbalanced flies. I am convinced that the more aggressive (and usually larger) the fish, the less HHD is an issue. This may have more to do with bigger and aggressive

fish having bigger mouths and “wider” takes, than it does with the convergent point of their takes. At the very least HHD is something that should always be in the back of your mind when dreaming up new patterns.

*Stuart Anderson,*  
*January 2009*

