

## Lure Making Part 2



Now the glue is dried yes, it should be dry by now), you can give the lure test swim. Be aware that if it's finely balanced, adding the hooks might change its buoyancy or motion – so don't be too worried yet on the fine movement. The main thing is to check the tow point and bib. Usually tweaking the tow point will even the movement, but if you want it to run deeper or different motion, you may need to trim the bib, move the tow point, trim the body, replace the bib with a bigger one, or move the bib altogether. Usually though, tweaking the tow point will solve the problem – you can always change the bigger items on your next lure (imagine if all lures were deep divers, then you wouldn't walk-the-dog with surface lures). If the lure just floats sideways and gets dragged across the water, it could be the tow point is too high or behind the centre of buoyancy – the one above had to be moved down in front of the bib.

Generally speaking, if the lure pulls to the left on the retrieve, and you want it to come right, turn the tow point with pliers to the right. As you get closer (eg only a metre or less sideways movement), use much smaller changes. If the lure appears to roll over during the retrieve irrespective of the recovery speed, it may be the tow point is not vertical through the resistance of the lure in the water, and twisting the tow point clockwise or anticlockwise may be required. Looking at the lure and the tow point usually gives a good indication when you look at it, particularly looking at the bib and body (especially the tail). For long tow points, you can also bend them up and down to change how deep the lure dives, but be aware that doing this too much may fatigue the wire, and also casting the lure into snags or rocks, or pulling it from snags or big fish may bend it out of alignment again. I like to push mine in as deep as possible, but being cognisant of the need to tune it (making sure it is vertical when gluing reduces the problem).

If you are happy with the lure, it's time to move to the painting. Think about where you will put the lure when it's drying. I usually use paper clips opened up to hang the lures but the hook ring, hanging it on string or wire where it won't blow into anything. An undercoat is useful both to seal the lure and its glue, but also to provide a good base for the paint. If not too concerned, some cheap spray paint can also be used (the club still has some paints for the project). If you used clear plastic for the bib, consider if you want this painted, or to leave it clear.



Clockwise from centre: Balsa lure with tiger stripes, red and blue lure with panted eyes, balsa minnow with undercoat, gills painted on and clear bib ready for gluing, blue and silver paint comparisons, mesh scales on silver body and blue back, and two lures with paperclip hangers. Last lure (10 o'clock) shows the modified tow point in front of the bib.

While this is drying, think about how you want to layer the paint. If you want gold, silver, white or black scales, think about the colour to outline them. Usually I apply the main body (e.g. outline between the scales and the underbelly) first, followed by the back and shoulders, then the flanks, followed by the gills and other hotspots, and the eyes.

If getting fancy, you may want to sand the undercoat to give a finer finish. Personally, I'm happy with the coarse look, like what scales and scars give a regular fish.

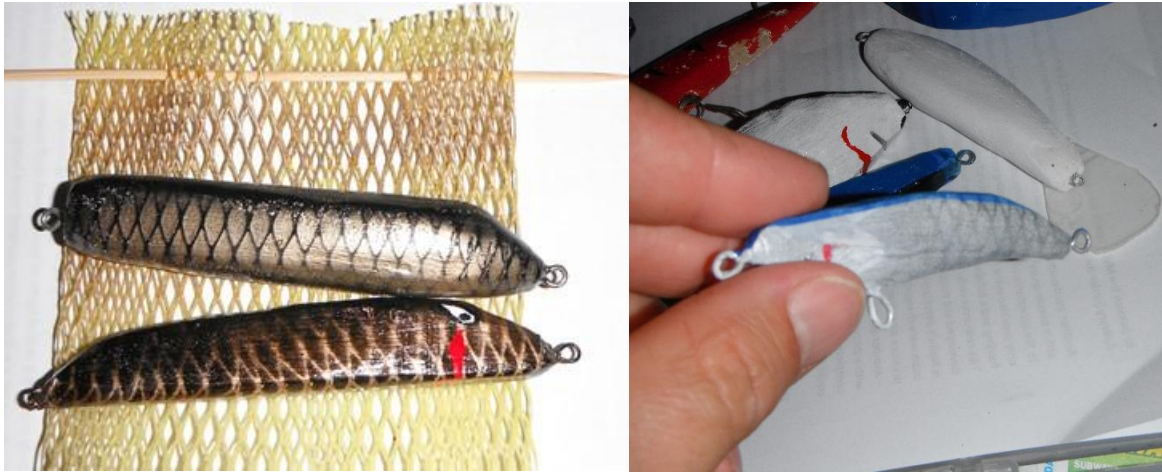
The flanks can be plain, a coat of paint (e.g. metallic), have glitter applied, have reflective tapes applied, paint some stripes or Vs, or even use a permanent marker (e.g. black or metallic) for some fine lines. If using a marker, you may need to use a clear enamel to seal it in – depending on how long you plan to use the lure.



Glitter, metallic belly, and stripes (left) and making use of ester egg wrappers (these leech colour with glue, so be careful).

If you want to paint a scaly appearance, metal fine diamond mesh, the plastic fine bottle mesh from duty free (usually yellow from Sydney) or the onion bag mesh can be used to screen the lure. I usually pin the lure in the mesh both to avoid overstretching the mesh, and also to let the paint dry

before moving the mesh. Depending on your mesh, a short angled spray might be better, or a perpendicular spray will be better. Don't spray too much or the paint may leech under the mesh.



Plastic mesh can be used to create a scaled effect.



Reflective body material for fly tying can be used to emulate scales, from most fly tying stockists. Shown on the left here is a range of colours of reflective scale tape (about 1cm in width), sold by the length at Tackleworld Fyshwick. On the right is some hobby car material.

The back and shoulders can be a contrasting colour. Black is a common colour. You don't have to paint this, but you may notice many fish have darker shoulders. Watch how far down the head you paint – you may not want a dark nose. Many lures have vertical vees painted down to give the tiger look.

After this dries you may want to add some features such as ref fins. Common hotspots are the gills and often a red spot for the anal fin – remembering many fish come from underneath. Red spots can also help it look like a wounded fish – so don't worry if it doesn't swim or look exactly like the healthy fish – call it character to look like the wounded fish. Swimming off-course just might make it harder to get into tight snags for the strike zone, or less usable for trolling.

Eyes can be painted on – often black dots on white circles or ovals, sometimes with a black outline. Stick-one fish eyes can also be used, as can the plastic dolly eyes (which also add a little rattle). If

painting them on, the end of old drill bits or other small cylinders can be used to give even-sized circular pupils. These can also be used to add dots to the body (e.g. for brown trout dots).



**Just some of the options for eyes.**

Other bling includes feathers (particularly on the tail hook), lead strips for weight if you want to tune your lure for suspending or sinking rates, and rattles. The split rings and hooks already add a small amount of rattling to your lure. Some plastic and glass rattles are available already made for soft plastics or flies. These can be easier than making your own as they avoid the problem of rust or balls sticking together. If using the ice cream stick bib, you can go for the ultimate .22 Magnum and try some small ball bearings or fine pebbles in a .22 short case as a rattle. But these pre-built rattles are a bit smaller.



**Alluring items. Old nails and drill bits can be used for eyes. Glass and plastic rattles on the left. Split rings are in the top right, and some treble hooks on lower right.**

Positioning of these rattles needs to consider the impact on strength on the body, and how much that part of the body moves relative to the head to impact the speed of the rattle. Consider with

your glass- or plastic-cased rattle if you want to use a semi-flexible glue (minor sound dampening but some cushioning) or a rigid glue (better acoustic coupling to the lure's body).

You may want to put an acrylic or clear enamel to protect your lure and add some gloss.

It's a good time now to attach your hooks. A multitude of hooks are available in single, double, and treble varieties. Some lures also can use the Kevlar line to attach single hook, but usually split rings are used (double hooks can be attached straight to anchor eyes). If you want to reduce snagging, think about if you want to use single or double hooks, with them facing up to enable them to bounce over logs and rocks. Hooks and split rings should consider the target fish – not only for size, but also for strength. Most wooden lures are buoyant enough not to be greatly affected by their weight. Hook size is usually also limited to avoid tangling the hooks in each other or the towing line (well, not most of the time). Most split rings usually run almost twice around (like your key ring), but some heavy duty ones go around a third time. Putting too small a split ring on a hook eye and the anchor may cause it to spread open too far and leave an air gap in the split ring. Split ring pliers are invaluable, not only for building your lure, but also for maintaining lures as you need to replace trebles. They save your nails, and avoid trying to use a knife blade or screwdriver. Cheap ones can be found for around \$10, and usually some with wire or braid cutters, and pliers – all you need for fine tuning your lures.

Once complete, it is worth giving the lure a final tune in the water (be careful not to lose it first cast!), in case the tow point has been bent or the hooks have changed the action. If doing a batch, I often give a little tick on the back of the bib once it's ready to go (we did live a bit of distance from the water). You may want to leave a note with your lure of its depth and speed to assist with selection for your next trip or to help choose what goes on your rod for the next cast.

Good luck, go fish!



**An old mop handle, with double hooks rigged to avoid seaweed snags**