

Useful Knots for Campers

Capt. Elias Gedney
Patron, East Kingdom Guild of St Erasmus

Knots vocabulary

(- where bend is a noun and middle is a verb)

*****Bend** - a knot that is used to join two lines together

Bight - the turn part of a loop

Fuse - to partially melt the end of a synthetic line to prevent unraveling

*****Hitch** - a Knot that is used to fasten a line to an object

*****Knot** - 1) Generally: a fastening or joining of rope or other line

2) Specifically: a knot used to join ends of the same rope.

Middle - to form a loop in a line by folding a line back on itself

Standing part - the end of a line that is not involved in making a knot

Turn - where a line wraps around an object or other line 360 degrees

Whip - to bind the end of a natural line with cord to prevent unraveling

Working part - the end of a line that you are tying a knot with

Seizing – A knot used to constrict and hold two or more lines together

Slipped or Slippery – A knot that has part of the tying done on a loop to allow easy untying (the most common sort of slipped knot is the shoelace bow knot, which is actually a Slippery Reef Knot)

The Most useful knots for campers to know:

(in order of importance)

Bowline (only first because this can save your life)

Two Half Hitches

Taut Line Hitch

Fishermen's bend

Sheet bend

Figure of Eight knot

Carrick Bend

Clove Hitch

Rolling Hitch

Constrictor Knot

Whipping and fusing

Prevention of unraveling will prolong the usefulness of a line, and actually help a knot to hold faster.

Fusing:

Hold the cut end a few inches above the flame until the fibers have melted and fused together. Allow the end to cool before touching it or setting it down.

Another method of fusing, somewhat weaker, is simply to dip the end in [paint](#), and allow it to dry.

Common Whipping:



The rope should be whipped a short distance (2 or more diameters) from its end.



Lay the head of the twine along the rope, make a bight back along the rope



Begin wrapping the twine around the rope and bight of twine securely.

Wrap until the whipping is one and a half times wider than the rope is thick



Slip the working end of the twine through the bight. Carefully pull on the standing end of the twine until the bight and working end are pulled under the whipping (Note: It is normally necessary to maintain tension on the working end to prevent the bight from being dragged completely through and so destroying the whipping)



Cut the twine flush with the edges of the whipping and the rope end not less than half its width from the whipping to give the rope end a finished look

Images and description: Hervey Garrett Smith (October 1990). The Arts of the Sailor: Knotting, Splicing and Ropework. [Dover Publications](#). ISBN 0-48-626440-8.

Knots

Overhand Knot

Simple knot, often tied to temporarily prevent unraveling in a line.

Useful as a stopper (prevents a line from passing unimpeded through a hole)

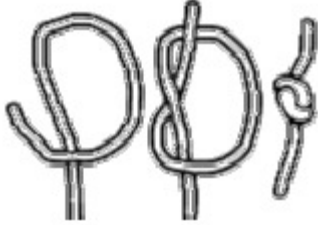
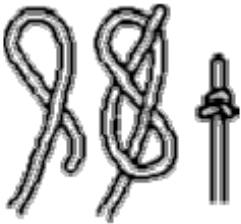


Figure of Eight knot

Much more reliable than the overhand as a stopper (prevents a line from passing unimpeded through a hole)



Reef/Square/Package knot

Common knot (every Boy Scout knows it, or should)

This is best tied where both ends are under equal and constant pressure, as in tying a package. DO NOT USE to tie lines of unequal size and type and ABSOLUTELY do not use to join two ropes together. (use a proper bend such as sheet bend)



Bowline

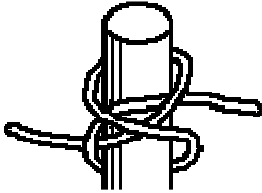
This one can save your life.

Properly ties it will make a secure loop that does not collapse or tighten so you can use this knot for Lifelines. Other knots may spill and tighten, strangling you as you are pulled to safety!



Constrictor Knot

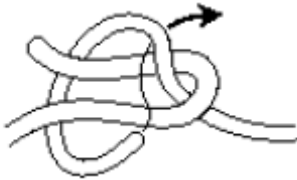
Useful knot for all sorts of situations where a temporary binding is required
Essentially, this is a Clove hitch, but the two lines pass under each other in an overhand knot.



Bends

Sheet bend

The simplest and fastest way to securely fasten two lines together

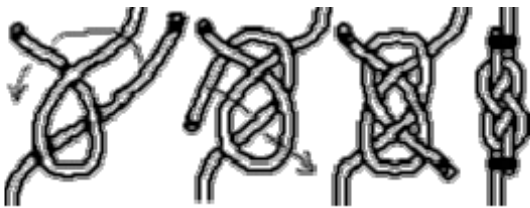


Carrick Bend

Also called the "sailors bend"

This is the most secure of the tied bends.

When you absolutely need to quickly fasten two lines together, this is the one to use.



Fishermen's bend

Also called the true lovers bend.

Simple and secure, a variant of this is often used in making adjustable beaded necklaces.



NOTE: It will eventually slip to some degree. If you are bending a couple lines that need to be in place a long time, consider a sheet bend or Carrick bend.

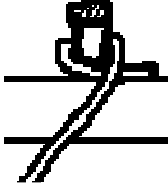
Hitches

Single Hitch

This is the most basic knot.

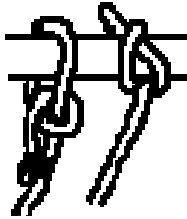
Beware, it only holds as long as there is tension!

To improve reliability, put a stopper in the end.



Half Hitch

This one is a simple variant on the single hitch.



Two Half Hitches

This is an adjustable hitch.



Taut Line Hitch

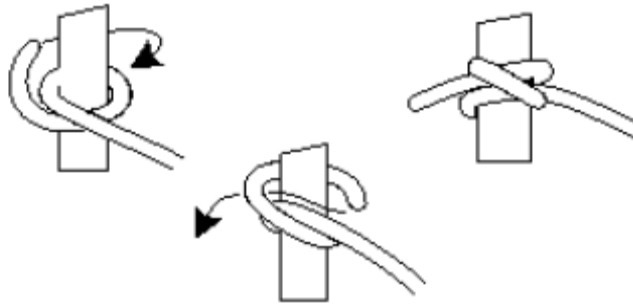
The most useful knot in tenting! This knot is the best to use for tent stakes and clotheslines, as it allows you to adjust the tightness of the line, and holds it securely.



Clove Hitch

This is a common way to tie a line to a standing pole.

To make this even more secure top it off with one or two half hitches

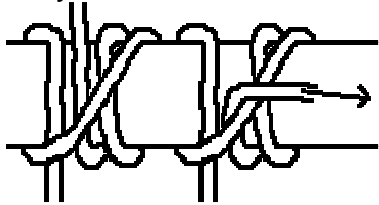


Rolling Hitch

This is very similar to a Clove hitch, but with an extra turn in the direction that the load is expected to be applied.

This prevents it from sliding down the pole.

Very useful for clotheslines!



(REMEMBER! "A good knot is one that ties easily, holds fast and then unties easily when it is no longer needed")