

Basic Knots

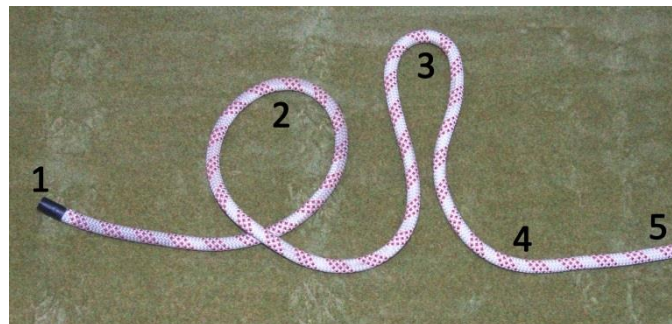


Being able to securely tie objects together can actually be quite important. From fastening down equipment to setting up an abseil anchor, knowing a few different knots is always handy for anyone engaged in tactical based activities.

When I was younger, my knowledge of knots was pretty awful. I would always use the same double knot for tying everything which wasn't always the most secure or easiest to undo after being put under stress. As time passed, I began to learn a few more basic knots that would be suitable for a number of different tasks. In this article, I am going to discuss some of the more common types of knot and explain when they might be useful and how to tie them.

Parts of a Rope

Certain terminology is used to describe the different parts of a rope. When learning to tie knots, it is helpful to be familiar with these names to make following instruction easier.

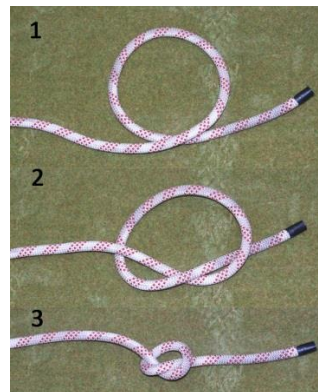


1. Working end (The end that is held and makes the knot)
2. Loop
3. Bight (A length of rope doubled up and held together)
4. Standing part (The surplus rope)
5. Standing end (The end opposite the working end)

Overhand Knot



Possibly one of the first knots anybody learns as a child and is one of the easiest to tie. On its own, the basic overhand knot isn't very secure and will work loose. However, the overhand knot does form the start of other knots such as the reef and fisherman's knot. In climbing, a double overhand knot is sometimes used as a 'stopper' knot after a figure of eight has been tied. The overhand knot is created by making a loop in the rope **(1)** and bringing the working end through the loop **(2)** and then pulled tight **(3)**.



Tying the overhand knot

Overhand Loop



This non-tightening loop is useful for securing objects to pegs or stakes. Tying the loop follows the same principle as the basic overhand knot, but this time a bight of rope is taken to form the knot instead of a single length. Once the knot is tied, a loop will protrude from beyond it.



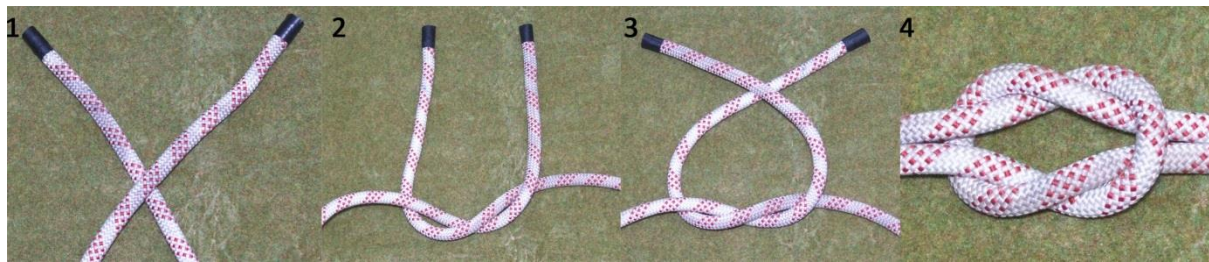
Tying the overhand loop

Reef Knot



Well known by any first aider, the reef knot will lay flat against the skin once tied and is reasonably easy to undo – even after the knot has been pulled tight. The reef knot is started by tying a basic overhand knot, and then a second overhand knot is tied but in reverse order. Remember the saying

'left over right and under, then right over left and under'. I have found that the reef knot can slip undone over a period of time.



Tying a reef knot

Figure of Eight Knot



This is a trusted knot that is used when rock climbing because it is secure and easy to untie. The figure of eight knot can be tied into a section of rope **(1)** and the working end fed around an anchor point and returned to the knot **(2)**. The working end is then re-tied back into the knot whilst following its original line **(3)**. Once the working end has been double fed back into the figure of eight, the knot is then pulled tight. For extra security, a 'stopper knot can be tied into the remaining short (working) end just in case it pulls back through the knot.



Tying the figure of eight

Figure of Eight Loop



The figure of eight loop is tied using the same technique as the overhand loop – but is more trusted and easier to untie after loading. Take a doubled bight of rope and tie a figure of eight knot

reasonably close to the bend in the rope. A small loop will now protrude out from the top of the figure of eight knot and can be used for clipping into anchors.



Tying the figure of eight loop

Double Fisherman's Knot

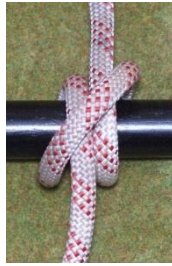


Used for tying two ropes together, the double fisherman's knot is a sturdier variant to the standard fisherman's knot. Hold two lengths of rope together with the working ends running in opposite directions **(1)**. Loop the first working end twice around the standing part of the other length of rope **(2)**. The second of these loops should overlap the first loop and cross over both lengths of rope **(3)**. The working end is then passed back through both loops **(4)**. This process is repeated for the opposite working end of the other length of rope. When tied, both ropes can be pulled together and the knots tightened creating a join between the two ropes **(5)**.

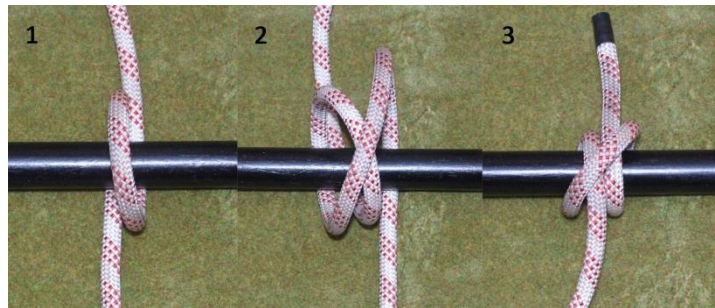


Tying the double fisherman's knot

Clove Hitch



The clove hitch is very useful for tying rope or cord to a post. The working end is looped around a post once **(1)** and then crossed over to be wrapped around the post again **(2)**. The working end is then fed back under the last turn so that it points in the opposite direction to the standing end **(3)**. An alternative is to tie the clove hitch into the bight of the rope. To do this, make a loop in the bight of the rope. Then, make a second loop of the same size next to the first. Bring the second loop in behind the first one and slip the clove hitch over the desired post and pull tight.



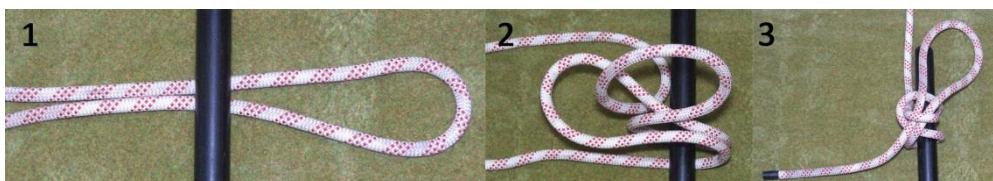
Tying a clove hitch



In bight clove hitch

Quick Release knot

This is a really handy quick to tie knot for hanging up kit to keep it off the ground. Take a bight of cord or rope and loop it around the selected branch / post. Make a second loop in the standing part and pull it through the first loop. Now make a third loop – this time in the working end and slide it through the second loop. Finally, pull on the standing part to tighten the knots grip. To release the knot, pull on the working end and it will quickly untie.

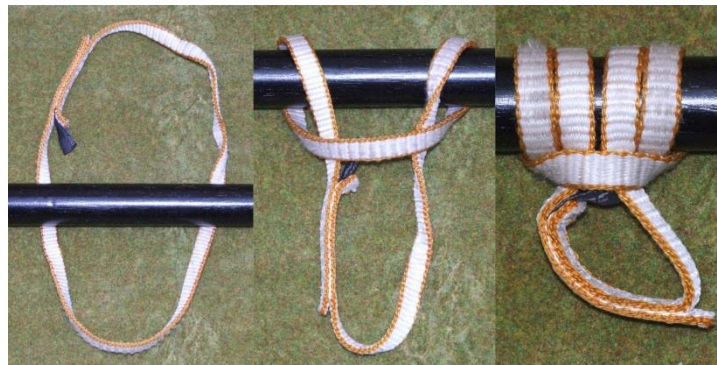


Quick release knot

Prusik Knot



This is a great quick knot for attaching cord to items of equipment such as a torch or compass to keep them secured to a lanyard. Take a bight of cord and loop it around the object. Then take the standing line (which will be doubled) and feed it through the loop. Small items will be secure with just one pass, but if further grip / friction is required, a second pass can be made with the standing line through the loop.



Tying the prusik knot