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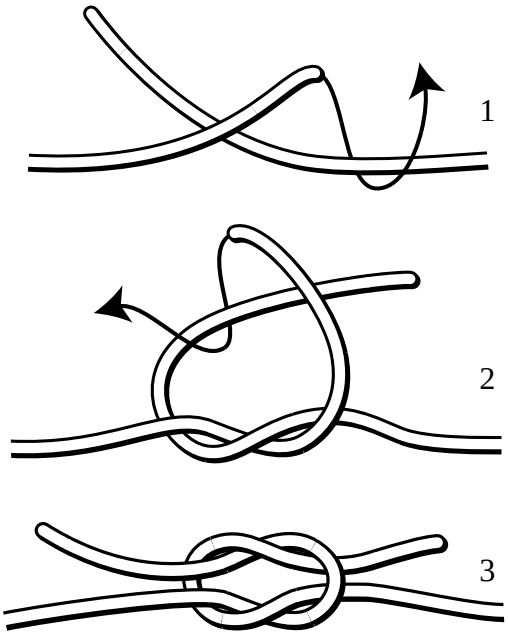
The Six Boy Scout Knots

by John Geffre

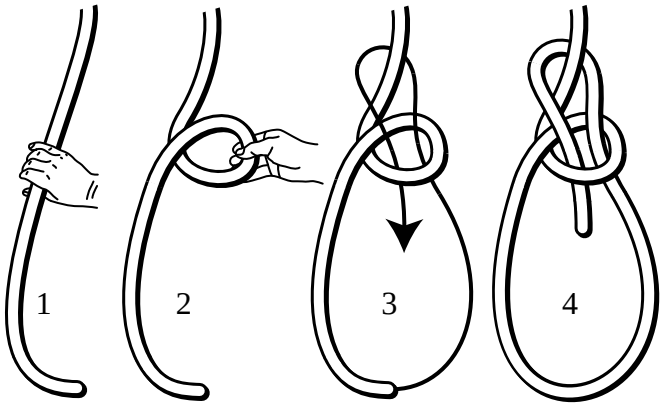
Square Knot

The square knot is used as a binding knot for such things as clamping a pad on a wound, tying a gathering rope on the male end of an extension cord, or as a shoestring knot. The bowknot we all use to tie our shoes with is really just a double slipped square knot. The books say not to use the square knot to tie two ropes together because it can untie itself under the right conditions but I have used a single slipped square knot to tie two ropes together for years without a problem yet.

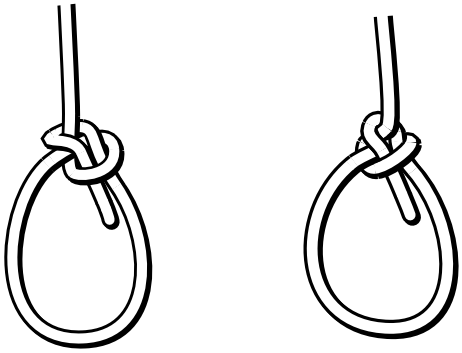


Bowline

The bowline is used to make a non-slip loop on the end of a rope. It is called the king of knots and it is so dependable that it can be used for rescue work.



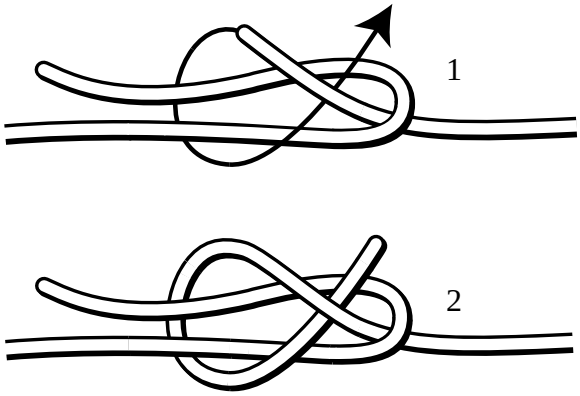
After the bowline has been formed, you must tighten it correctly like this.



Tightened correctly Tightened incorrectly

Sheet Bend

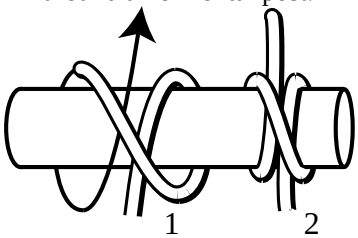
The sheet bend is the knot you are “supposed” to use to tie two ropes together. You can tie on to a sheet or blanket with it if you fold the corner of the sheet into a point and substitute it for the left rope below.

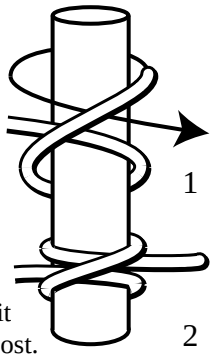


Clove Hitch

The clove hitch is known in the oilfield around here as a claw hitch. It is the best knot to use with stiff large diameter rope because it never makes a sharp bend. It is also used to start and finish lashings. A lashing is a series of wraps tying two poles together.

Here is how to tie it around a horizontal post.

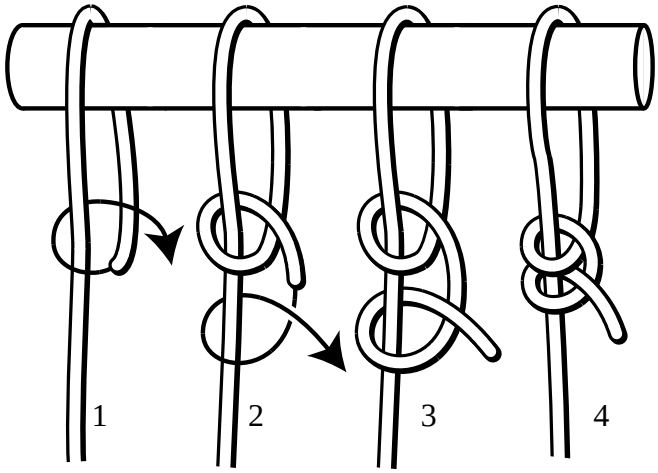




Here is how to tie it around a vertical post.

Two Half Hitches

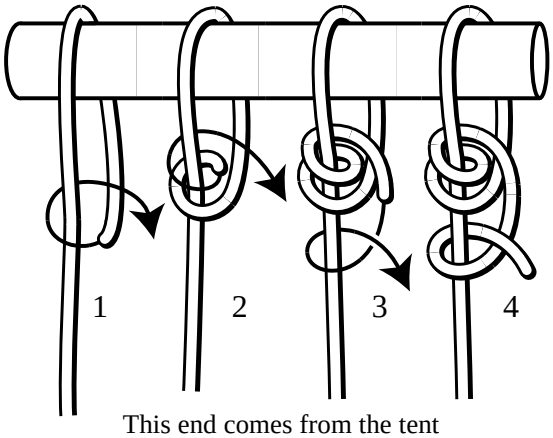
Two half hitches is my favorite knot. You can tie onto almost anything with it. In the first step, if you go around the post one and a half times instead of just one half time as shown, you will make a knot called “a round turn and two half hitches” which will grip onto the post extremely well. If you go around the post two and a half times or more, you will make a knot called “the pipe hitch” which will form a death grip on the post.



Taut-line Hitch

The taut-line hitch is my least favorite of the six boy scout knots. It is used as an adjustable knot in tent guy lines and that’s about all it is used for. This knot has to be internally tightened quite tight for it to work properly. Two half hitches works almost as well as this knot for tent guy lines and the trucker’s knot works even better.

This end goes around a tent stake or a tree



This end comes from the tent

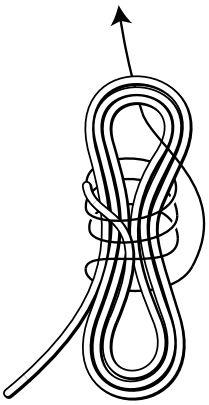
Other Useful Knots

Overhand Knot

Use this knot on both ends of your rope to keep it from unraveling and as a “stopper” knot. I have found that I like a stopper knot better than “whipping” because both can come off the end of the rope but you can retie an overhand knot quickly and without having to find some whipping material.

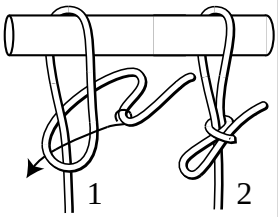
Coiling a Rope

Learn how to do this, it is important.

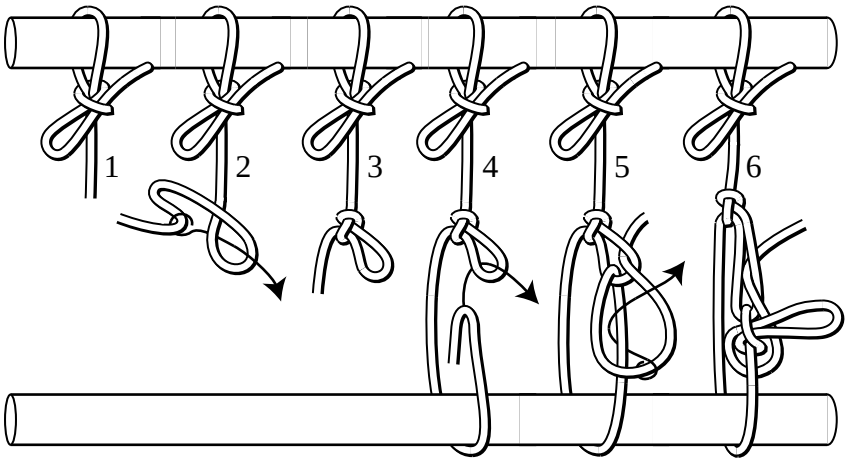


Hitching Tie

So cowboy, how do YOU tie your horse to the hitchin’ rack? Learn how to tie this knot real fast and you can tie a rope to anything in about 3 seconds and untie it in nothing flat.



The Trucker’s Knot

This is the most useful knot that I know of. Use it to make a very tight rope between two objects. The knot in step 1 can be a clove hitch, two half hitches, or my favorite the hitching tie as shown. The knot in step 3 is called the slip knot. In step 4 after you have pulled the “bight” (bight means “rope folded in half”) through the slip knot as tight as you can, pinch the crossing with your left thumb and forefinger so your right hand can tie the knot in step 5. The knot formed in step 5 is called a slippery half hitch or a slipped half hitch. By the way, a hitching tie is actually a slipped slip knot for anyone who cares about such things.

If you tie the trucker’s knot using a hitching tie as shown, the whole conglomeration can be untied with only four pulls in the right places. See if you can figure out which are the four right places.