

Flingtime - Essential Knots (Rev 20130121)

<http://books-for-sail.com/seamanship-and-boatcraft/19-nautical-knots-the-important-ones-to-know>

Nautical knots are deeply embedded in maritime lore. You can buy books on the subject thick enough to choke elephants – nautical knots of baffling complexity, dazzling decorative splendour and, unfortunately, many of dubious usefulness. For the student knoter (if there is such a creature) it can all be rather intimidating. But once you get involved knot tying can become addictive.

The good news for the beginner is that there are only about ten knots that are really important, with the others being consigned to the second division of those that would only be useful very occasionally.

Terminology...

- **Knots** is a word often used as a general term but more specifically knots are used to tie a line around something, like the string around a parcel or a sail tie around the mainsail.
- **Bends** are primarily intended for tying two ropes together.
- **Hitches** are used to tie ropes to other objects, such as rails and mooring rings.

Whatever the knot, it must satisfy two important qualities: it must be secure when tied and it must be capable of being untied – even after pulled very tight under load. **Knots that jam have no place on a boat.**

Bowline

[used for attaching sheets to sails and almost everything else needing a good knot...]

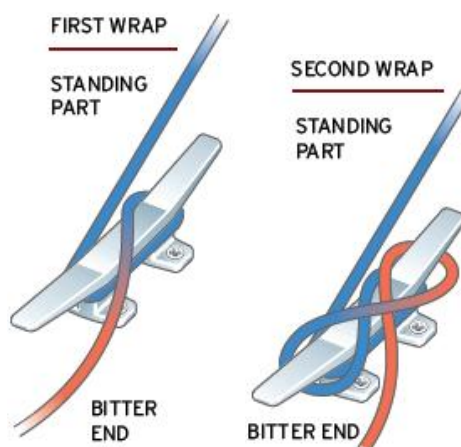
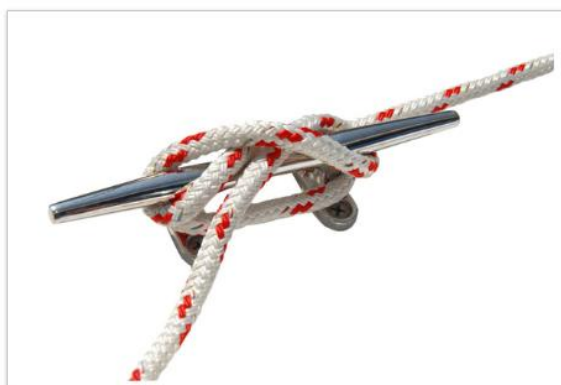
Pronounced 'bow-lin' with the 'bow' as in bow and arrow. This is the king of knots with more applications than can be listed here. It's most common purpose is to form loops. The tying sequence is often (and rather nauseatingly) described as 'the rabbit (meaning the tag end) comes out its hole, goes round the tree and back down the hole'. Although not difficult to tie, it's very easy to get it wrong so it must look like the drawing here.



Cleat Hitch

<http://www.boat-us.com/magazine/2012/august/Tying-It-All-Together.asp>

use for mooring lines or rafting up]



Many working lines on a boat are secured on a horn or T cleat with this hitch. You will also use it to tie mooring lines to dock cleats. Sometimes when tying a cleat hitch, there will already be load on the standing part of the line. The job of the hitch is to transfer that load from your hand to the cleat.

- Take a full turn around the base of the cleat so that the working part (in your hand) has passed under both horns. If you expect a lot of load on the line and the cleat is big enough, **add another half-turn (or more) on the base for good measure.**
- Wrap the working end up and diagonally across the top of the cleat and under the opposite horn.
- Bring the end back diagonally across the first wrap (making an "X" over the center of the cleat). You can visualize steps 2 and 3 as making a figure eight around the cleat.
- Repeat 2, but this time, tuck the working part under itself to make the hitch

Round turn and two half hitches:

[use for hanging fenders and for deck cover ties]

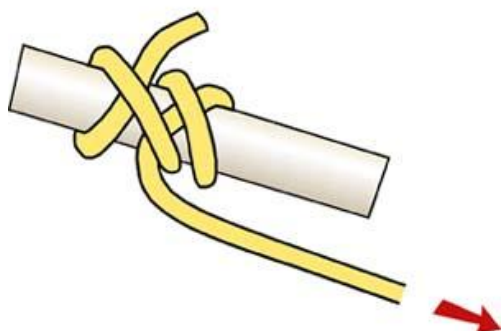
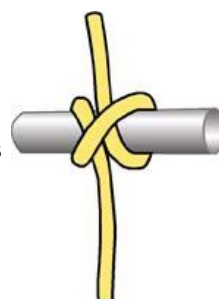
Much safer than a clove hitch this is one of the best ways (the other notable one being a bowline) of tying a dinghy painter to a mooring ring. Note that the tag end forms a clove hitch around the standing part.



Clove hitch

[use for 'intermediate' dinghy securing for multiple attachments, if looped through it can be pulled to let go the dinghy]

Commonly used for securing fender lanyards to guardwires and any similar undemanding applications. Again the hitch should look exactly as shown here, with both ends of the rope emerging from opposite sides. If it doesn't you have probably tied a 'cow hitch' which is nothing like as secure.



Rolling hitch:

A close relative of the clove hitch. An extra locking turn inside the knot helps prevent the hitch from sliding along whatever it's secured to. Invaluable for temporarily taking the load of, say, a genoa sheet while you sort out those infuriating riding turns on a winch.

[use attaching #2 anchor to its bridle]

The **classic use** of a rolling hitch is to take the load off a sheet when a **riding turn** (avoid these !) has been wound on to a winch, this is something that all sailors should have practiced at some time.

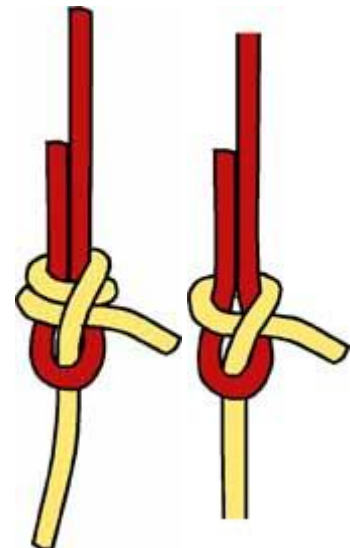


You will almost certainly find that the normal rolling hitch where the rope is passed twice round the loaded rope does not work. It is normally necessary to pass the rope around the loaded one 4 or 5 times to achieve sufficient grip.

To use this technique there needs to be another winch (or block and tackle) that is available to use to pull back on the rolling hitch with sufficient force to release the load on the riding turn.

Sheet bend:

Used to tie two ropes together. A variation is the 'double sheet bend' (left) which is less likely to shake loose.



Reef knot

[use for reefing ties] around the boom and through the eyes along the sail, especially for heavy weather reefing]

'Right over left and under, left over right and under' goes the saying and describes the tying procedure well. If it doesn't look flat like the drawing, you've tied a 'granny knot' which is vastly inferior.

Icicle Hitch

See the Drogue document for more details.

It is similar to a Rolling Hitch with multiple turns for slippery ropes and is used for attaching the drogue bridle arm



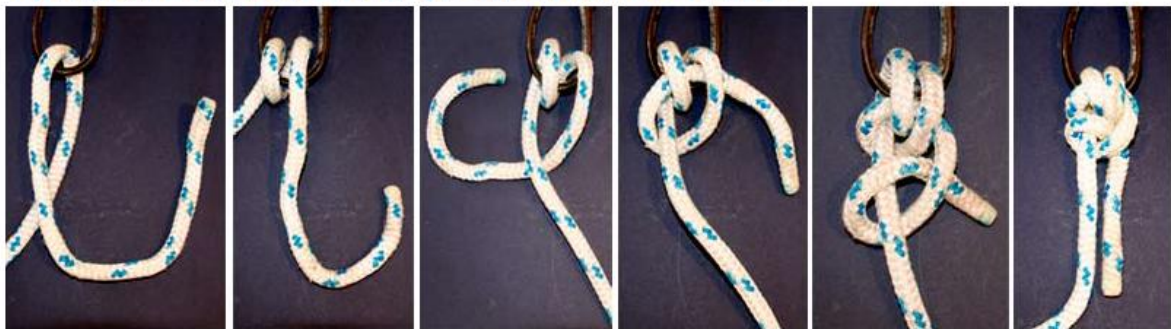
Figure of eight

[use to stop ropes leaving blocks (standard practice), and to prevent slippery knots from untying ...]

Not a lot of use on powerboats but this useful 'stopper knot' is the one that prevents your halyards disappearing up inside your mast. Never, ever, use a simple 'overhand knot' that will jam solid in an instant.



Tying an Anchor Bend (Fisherman's Bend).



[use for rope to shackle or ring]