

## *Tying Knots*

A basic knowledge of how to tie a few knots is an essential outdoor skill. All knots have a free or working end and a standing or stationary end. To practice knot tying, you will need a 3 foot length of rope. Cotton clothes-line rope works very well. You should secure the ends by binding it with string or tape.

**Square knot** – One of the easiest of basic knots, the square knot is useful in joining two ropes of the same thickness together, may help in tying a bandage or sling, is handy in tying items to your belt or backpack, and can be used to tie a bandana around your neck.

- Start by tying an overhand knot (like you would begin tying your shoes).
- The rope that is on top stays on top and makes the second part of the knot by tying another overhand knot.
- Pull the ends tightly to finish and secure the knot.



**Clove Hitch** – This knot is used to secure a rope to a post or tree. It is very handy in creating a dunk line or clothes line between two trees; and when secured at each end, it will not slip.

- Begin by passing the short end of your rope behind a tree or post.
- Bring the short end around to the front of the tree and form an “X”, with the short end being on top and becoming the ‘working’ end. Hold this ‘X’ with your thumb and fingers.
- Pass the short end around the tree again, wrapping it below the first pass. Your fingers will show you where the rope will go next.
- Push the working rope end under the ‘X’ and pull the ends tight. Your knot should look like an X.
- You may now fasten the long (or standing) end to an opposite tree or post for a strong dunk or clothes line.
- To remove this knot, pull on the X.



**Bowline** – This knot makes a loop that will not alter in size. It can be used as a safety line for lifesaving or may be useful for hanging items in your campsite. Note: the standing end of the rope is usually attached to something before this knot is made. Often called the land of sixes or the rabbit in the hole.

- Begin by forming a 6 with the working end of the rope (the bowl of the 6 becomes your small loop). Remember, when you write a six on paper, the pencil mark goes over the down stroke. The same happens here – pass the working end over the standing end creating a small loop.
- The working end then passes from the bottom of this loop up toward the standing end. This larger loop size is based on how you will use your bowline.
- Pass the working end behind and around the standing end, re-entering the small loop from the top.
- Pinch the two pieces of rope that have passed into the loop with one hand while holding the standing end with the other hand.
- Pull apart with both hands to tighten the knot.



**Taut-Line Hitch Reversed (3 wraps)** – This knot is used to create a loop that adjusts, or ‘slips’. It is useful for shelter or tent pitching.



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- Create a loop with the working end of your rope, crossing over the standing end.
- Loop the working end completely around the standing end for total of two passes. You will end up with your working rope emerging from the loop.
- Pass the working end **over** the bottom part of its original loop.
- Pass the working end **under** the standing end and tuck it back into itself, forming a third wrap in the opposite direction outside the original loop.
- You will end up with a total of three wraps with both ends on the same side of the original loop. The knot will slip back and forth.
- To release this knot, just pull the slipping part out.