

GET KNOTTED

Knot-tying is still an essential camping skill. Giles Babbidge reveals how master five of his favourites

The humble knot is a beautiful thing. Practical and effective, even the simplest of methods can save the day - which is why it's worth knowing how to tie a few, just in case.

There are, quite literally, thousands of knots available to help us in every conceivable situation where a practical solution to fastening our kit is required. Hitches, bindings, stoppers, bends, plaits - you name it, there's a multitude of variations to fit the bill.

In my experience, though, it's a small selection of these which I find myself turning to time and time again. Below are five of my favourites (partly because they're so simple, yet ever so effective) - ideal for everything from fastening your tent down to securing accessories to your rucksack. (By the way, I'll refer to 'cord' throughout, but these work with everything from string to rope).

2 COW HITCH (ALSO KNOWN AS THE LARK'S HEAD)

Not the most secure of knots, it is nonetheless ideal as a quick, temporary method of tethering - perfect if you take your dog out and about on your camping trips.

1. Form a loop in your cord and pass this underneath the fixture you wish to tether to (e.g. a ring, another looped cord etc).
2. Next, pass the remainder of the cord up through the loop and pull to tighten.



Cow Hitch, loose



Cow Hitch, tightened



Cow Hitch, in use

4 SLIP KNOT (ALSO KNOWN AS A NOOSE OR RUNNING KNOT)

My all-time favourite knot, as it offers a convenient, dependable way of securing a cord - with the added benefit of a quick release feature built in.

1. Make a loop at the end of your cord and pass the short end around the back, making a loop.
2. Next, pass the short end through the loop that you have just created.
3. Pull the short end to tighten.



Slip Knot, loose



Slip Knot, tightened

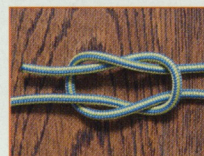


Slip Knot, in use

1 REEF KNOT (ALSO KNOWN AS THE SQUARE KNOT)

Beloved by the Scouts, this is perhaps one of the simplest and best-known knots around. Great for creating a continuous loop out of a single length of cord, it is also handy for joining two lengths together.

1. With one end of the cord in each hand, pass the left over the right and under, as you would when tying a shoe lace.
2. Now pass the right over the left and under in the same way.
3. Pull each end in opposite directions to tighten.



Reef knot, loose



Reef knot, tightened

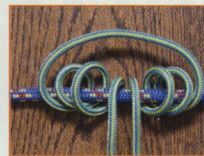


Reef knot, in use

3 PRUSIK KNOT

Named after the Austrian mountaineer, Dr Carl Prusik, this one is great for attaching lightweight items (eg head torch, accessory pouch etc) to a ridge line. It slides easily along the main cord when tension is removed, offering great flexibility for positioning.

1. Pinch the middle of your cord to create a loop and position it on top of the main line.
3. Pass the remainder of your cord under the main line and up through the loop. Repeat several times, with each turn sitting inside the previous (i.e. towards the centre of the knot).
3. Pull down to tighten.



Prusik Knot, loose



Prusik Knot, tightened



Prusik Knot, in use

5 CLOVE HITCH

There are quite a few versions of the Clove Hitch; this is its simplest form, ideal for securing one end of a small- or medium diameter cord to tent poles etc.

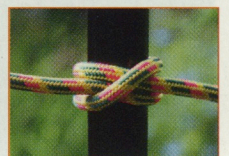
1. Loop your cord anticlockwise around your desired anchor point, bringing the short end up and over the top of the loop, to create an 'x'.
2. Next, pass the end back under the anchor point, and up under the uppermost section of cord.
3. Pull both ends in opposite directions to tighten.



Clove Hitch, loose



Clove Hitch, tightened



Clove Hitch, in use