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How to tie sailing knots.pdf

Reliable bend used to join two ropes of roughly similar size. Secure loop in the middle of a length of rope. Excellent knot to attach an anchor line to an anchor. Makes reliable bulky stopper knot in the end of a rope. Reasonably secure loop in a rope's end - and easy to undo. Bowline relative, but a double loop in the middle of a rope. Secure hitch originally used to join buntlines to square sails. Secure rope join, readily untied even after a heavy load. Securely attaches three-strand rope to anchor chain Attaches rope to cleat. Often used for Dock Lines. Attaches rope to cleat - used for halyards, clotheslines, etc. Temporary hold, e.g., stage scenery or mooring buoy Tie the Constrictor knot using the twisting method. Makes a reliable, moderately large, stopper knot. Stopper knot suitable for slippery rope like Dyneema Secure loop in the end of 3 or 4-strand rope. Non-binding, quick and convenient stopper knot. Compact knot to join halyard to a shackle at top of a sail. Weights end of a rope to make it carry further when thrown. Very secure slide and grip knot that may grip on tapered pole. Simple strong way to secure a tow line to a bollard An adjustable loop tied using a Rolling Hitch Easy attachment to a mooring pole or to make rope fence. Takes a mooring line's load during transfer to the Bitts Popular slide and grip knot, may fail with modern ropes. Excellent way of securing a rope to a post or ring. Bowline encircles the standing end to create a noose. Neat method of creating a soft shackle in hollow-braid rope. Edwards style shackle made out of hollow-braid rope. Intermediate size stopper using one more turn than the figure 8. Valuable knot usually used for securing loads or tarpaulins. Joins two ropes and avoids the risk of jamming.These animated knots are primarily for boaters, but many are useful for anyone who uses rope and values safety.SelectionThe selection of knots is based on many years of sailing combined with feedback and advice from several helpful captains. The knots are arranged in alphabetical order.Boating Knot CharacteristicsRope used in boating is durable and expensive and is often handling heavy loads, e.g., when berthing, mooring, towing another vessel, preparing for a storm, or managing sails. The emphasis, therefore, is on safety, reliability, and convenience. In contrast to the fishing knots, value is also placed on being able to use the rope repeatedly and untie each knot without difficulty.In many knots there is Standing End - which takes the strain, and a Tail - the loose end in your hand. On large ships a shore line is initially tightened with a winch. The tail is then properly called a Bitter End as it is transferred to the Bitts. To do this, a second rope is tied to the shore line with a Rat-Tailed Stopper or a Rolling Hitch to take the strain temporarily.Mooring lines on large ships are nearly always made of a high-modulus polyethylene (HMPE) such as Vectran® or Dyneema®. These ropes float and their minimal elasticity reduces risk of injury due to "snap-back" in the event of a breakage. Each line serves a specific purpose. On large vessels two lines often run in parallel ("doubled up") for safety. The following diagram shows a typical arrangement:A. Bow Line B. Forward Bow Spring C. Forward Breast Line D. After Bow Spring E. Forward Quarter Spring F. Quarter Breast Line G. After Quarter Spring H. Stern LineOn yachts mooring lines are more likely to be made of nylon, or polyester (Dacron® or Terylene®). By contrast with mooring a large vessel, distances are usually small and movements due to waves and tide are proportionately greater. Moreover, because far fewer lines are used, it is critical to understand their purpose:Breast Lines prevent rotation and should run roughly at 90o to the dock. To gain length, they should be led from the farthest part of the boat: the bow itself (or the outer hull of a catamaran) and from the far quarter of the stern.Spring Lines prevent fore and aft movement and should run nearly parallel to the dock and may cross each other to obtain an optimal lie.Direction: The Bow Spring may be led forwards and the Stern Spring aft, but MUST lead in opposite directions.1. Bow Breast Line 2. Bow Spring Line 3. Stern Spring Line 4. Stern Breast LineWhen two lines run to the same Bollard, especially when they are from different ships, the second line should be threaded up through the eye-splice of the first. This is called Dipping the Loop and allows either line to be released with out tangling. Once you cut a piece of rope off the spool at the chandlery and bring it aboard your boat and give it a job to do, it becomes a line you have put to work. Whatever job it is performing—whether it becomes a jib sheet, a fender whip or a dockline—there is an ideal knot, hitch or bend for its given task.Types of knots fall into three general categories. The first are those tied on the end of a line and are commonly called "knots," such as the howline knot and the stopper knot. The second category is those used to join two lines together. They may have "bend" in their name, as in a sheet bend, because to bend, in sailor talk, means to join. The last group is those which secure a line to a cleat, piling or stanchion, and they are known as "hitches."If you didn't learn knots when you were young, you can still master them quickly. The key is to learn what a given knot should look like when completed, then practice tying it until you can do it with your eyes closed. When studying knots, it helps to know some terms. The ends of a line are referred to as either "working" or "standing." The working end is free, while the standing end is secured to something. A loop formed in a line is known as a bight.BowlineThe most useful knot aboard a sailboat is the bowline. It forms a fixed noose at the end of a line that cannot run or slip and is commonly used, for example, to secure sheets to the clew of a headsail. Two bowlines can also be used to connect two lines. The great advantage of a bowline is that no matter how tight it becomes after being loaded for a while, it can always be easily untied.The well-known ditty for tying a bowline runs as follows: "The rabbit comes out of the hole, goes around back of the tree, and then jumps back into the hole." The "rabbit" is the working end of the line; the "hole" and "tree" are formed in the standing end. To finish the knot properly, give a hard pull on the tree and the rabbit's ears at the same time, so the shape of the knot is not deformed. To untie a bowline, turn the knot over and break its back by bending it downward.Form a closed loop in the line, with the working end passing over the standing end. Pass the working end through the loop, around behind the standing end, then back into the loop. Give a hard pull to close the knot up tight. To untie a bowline, turn the knot over and break its back by bending it downward.Stopper KnotTo keep a line from pulling through a block or rope clutch, a knot should be tied in the end of it. The most secure knot for doing this is the double overhand stopper knot, known as the stopper knot for short. Unlike a simple overhand knot or a figure eight knot, this knot does not come loose easily.The easiest way to tie a true stopper knot is by using your hand as a form. Just loop the end of the line twice around the palm of your hand, tuck the working end under the two loops, and then pull the loops off your hand. Once you try it, you'll never use a figure eight again.Working back to front, pass the working end twice around the palm of your open hand. After you've got two full wraps, pass the working end under the wraps on your palm away from your thumb. Then use the end to pull the knot tight as it slips off your hand.Clove HitchThis is a handy knot because it can be tied very quickly. On sailboats, its usual use is for securing fender whips to a lifeline, stanchion base or toerail. It can be easily adjusted to raise or lower a fender as needed. The clove hitch can also be used to temporarily secure a dock line to a piling, but be aware that the hitch can unexpectedly work free as the boat moves around at the dock.Take one full turn around the object the line is being secured to. Then pass the line over itself as you take another turn. Finish the knot by tucking the working end under itself and pull tight.Sheet BendMany sailors use a square knot when tying two lines together, but these often come loose when not under load. The sheet bend is more secure, is easy to untie and works much better when two lines of unequal diameter need to be tied together. As you can see in the illustration, its final form is only slightly different from a square knot, though it is tied quite differently.Form a bight in the end of one line. Pass the end of the other line through the bight from beneath and around behind both parts of the first line. Finish the knot by passing the working end of the second line under itself, then pull the knot tight.Two Half HitchesThis knot has a self-explanatory name: one half hitch, followed by another half hitch. It is easy to tie and forms a running noose that can be made larger or smaller. This is the perfect hitch to use to tie a line tightly around an object. Combined with a round turn, it is an excellent way to secure a dock line to a piling. Tying two half hitches on top of a clove hitch is also the best way to keep a fender whip from slipping.Pass the line twice around the object it is being secured to. Then tie one hitch on top of the turns by passing the working end of the line behind the standing end and pulling it through. Repeat to tie the second hitch. You can tie two half hitches without taking turns first, but they are less secure this way.Rolling HitchThe rolling hitch comes to the rescue when riding turns jam a line on a winch drum. This hitch is designed not to slip. Use an extra line to tie a rolling hitch on the standing portion of a jammed line, shift the load to the extra line and you can free the jammed line. The rolling hitch will also keep any line secured to a vertical cylindrical object, such as a stanchion, from slipping. It can also be used to form an adjustable noose that doesn't slip under load, which is handy when securing tie-downs for an awning on deck. The Boy Scouts use the same knot to tension lines secured to tent pegs, only they call it a taut line hitch.Wrap a line twice around another fixed line or post. Take a third turn by passing the working end of the first line over its standing end and then around the second line above the first two turns. Pull on the standing part of the first line and the hitch will not slip down the second line.Cleat HitchWalk down a dock in any marina and you will see many dock lines improperly secured to cleats. A proper cleat hitch is easy to tie, very effective and it can be released under load without worrying about losing a finger in the process. Any time you make off a line on a cleat, on a dock or on deck, this is the knot to use.As you gain experience, you will begin to recognize families of knots that are related. For example, two half hitches and the cleat hitch are really clove hitches: the former is tied on the standing end of a line, while the latter is bent around the horns of a cleat. As you practice tying these seven essential knots, you will immediately recognize the look and shape of the knot when made correctly, and more importantly, will recognize when you have tied it incorrectly.Take one full turn around the base of the cleat, leading the line so that its standing part runs clear of the cleat. Then take a figure-eight turn around first one horn of the cleat, then the other. On the final turn pass the line under itself and pull it tight.Want to learn more about knot tying? Check out The Pocket-Sized Guide, The Above and Beyond Guide or online at Animated Knots by GrogIllustrations by Dick Everitt

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