

# Knot



# News

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## A (very) rough Square-Knot Belt Tutorial - Part 1

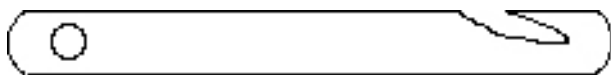
by Vince Brennan

The original (and much better) version of this article can be viewed on-line at: [www.oldmusicproject.com/frayedknot/](http://www.oldmusicproject.com/frayedknot/). It is reprinted here by kind permission.

### The Belly Hook

It's called the belly hook because when you're working in a standing position its line goes around your waist and it sits in front of your belly. The belly hook can be any number of differing shapes, sizes and made of almost any stiff material. Its purpose is to hold the standing or filler lines in tension when square knotting so as to give you a firm base to make the square knot and keep them all the same size. You could do the same thing with your toes (New Guinea natives making sennit routinely sit cross legged and use the big toe for the same purpose) or by sitting on the line, or wrapping it around your belt buckle, or... imagination!

One of the main components of a neat job is the tension applied to the filler lines as this controls the neatness of the knot. To hold the filler lines you'd need a third hand and that is really what the hook is: a third hand.



The simplest of all is formed by cutting off the head of an old standard toothbrush, putting a notch in the shaft (at the end where you cut the head off) which is large enough to accept three or four lines but which narrows down to a point. Then just take the line into the notch and make a

turn to hold it. The disadvantage is that this hook will handle at most two sets of fillers.

More elaborate (but only marginally) is my hook set up which is made of a  $\frac{3}{4}$ " wide piece of bamboo (actually one leg of a toast puller) with a four or five inch piece of round chop stick lashed and glued to it about 1" from the end, forming a cross shape.



The best way to put line(s) onto the hook is just like making turns on a cleat, without the locking turn: lead the line from the gripe, under the right arm, around the front of the upright, over and behind the left arm, around the front again and over and under the right arm, back around the left, with the second time going behind the upright as shown. Holding your lines flat on the first pass will give you an easier working surface and the lines will lock themselves in quite securely.



## Making the Belt

I use an old rocking chair arm as a stanchion, to which I have attached an old rocking chair for stability. To the arm I have lashed a 1 1/2" square piece of wood and to that I have lashed two upright large baking skewers. Another skewer skewered beneath those lashings allows me to have a clamp for work in progress. (Fig. 0)



0

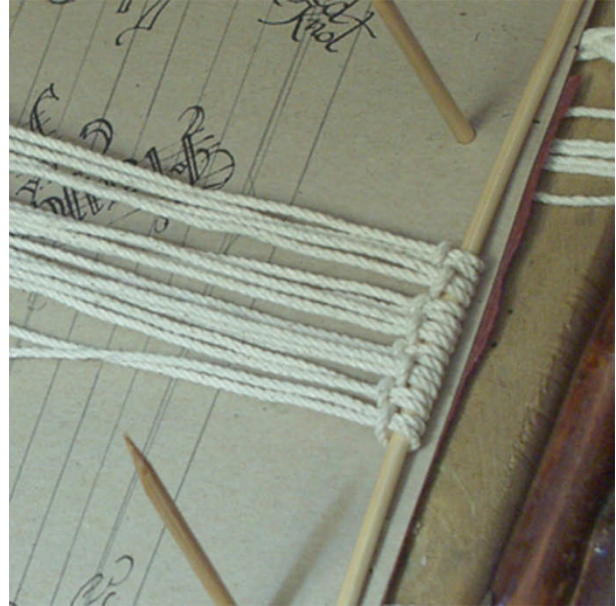
To begin a belt, one would Lark's Head the number of lines to be used around the fixed end of the buckle, being sure that the tongue is in the proper position and that the Lark's Heads are all facing up. Here I have done this direct to a skewer, since this is only a demonstration belt and have lashed that on top of a piece of cardboard to provide a focal plane as well as a bit of contrast for the pictures. (Fig. 1)



1

Tips: #24 line is used for this project, for which 16 lines gives approx 1 3/8" width belt. Smaller line will permit more sets across for the same width. 1 1/2" is about max normal width.

Clean your hands often, especially when using white material, and clean your area often as well. Dust gets into the lay of the lines and dirty is quite apparent on these belts.



2

(Fig. 2) Shows the Lark's Heading of the lines onto the skewer preparatory to the starting of the belt. For a Lark's Head direct to the belt buckle attachment, measure out EIGHT times the desired length and then "middle" the line into the Lark's Head. For a belt where you will be attaching a buckle at a later time, measure FOUR times the length of the belt for each line. Allow some extra for the work of attaching to the buckle (about half a yard) and start your work FROM the allowance point. It's MUCH better to waste some material than to come up short!



3



(Fig. 3) To start the belt, take ALL the lines in your RIGHT hand and drop the FIRST on the LEFT, then hold the next two and drop the FOURTH and FIFTH, drop the next two and so on, until you reach the other side.

Terminology: Of any given set of four lines, the OUTBOARD two are the *working lines* while the INBOARD pair is the *filler* or *standing lines*.

Smooth all the lines from the gripe toward your belly and make them all up, as flat as possible, on your belly hook., just like you were tying up to a pier. You want to get an equal tension on all lines.

Right. Now, there are those who say the only way to make a square knot is to take the two lines and do the "Right-Over-Left" method, but I use the "Loop-and-Pull" method, which is much faster. Also, I don't get so confused by all those "lefts", "rights", "unders" and all that lot. (For picture clarity I am only showing ONE set of filler cords!)



4

(Fig. 4) Take the line FOUR and make a loop UNDER lines TWO and THREE as shown. Push the standing parts of line Four up around lines Two and Three and pull them through the bight you formed with the LEFT hand.

This should look like (Fig. 5). If you don't get this part right, just stop and work at it until you do...



5

(Fig. 6) Now, take line ONE and pull it THROUGH the double bight formed when you completed the step above. Pull it completely through this time.



6

(Fig. 7) Shows what you now should have after going through the previous gyrations.



7

(Fig. 8) SNUG up the top part of the knot to the Lark's Head, then...



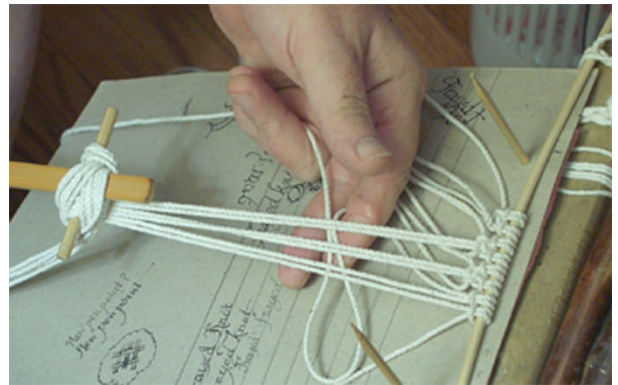
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(Fig. 9) SNUG up the bottom part and you've got the first of many, many knots required to build the belt.



9

Tip: No need to REEEEEELY tighten the knots up, just get 'em nice and snug. If you DO over tighten you'll have uneven rows and sloppy-looking knots.



10

(Fig. 10) When you reach the third set, reverse the direction of the initial loop and you'll have a symmetrical set of knots.





11

(Fig. 11) Shows the first row of square knots with two facing to port and two facing to starboard; note how the knots are formed: to either side of the filler cords there is one loop facing UP and one loop facing DOWN. The UP loop determines the orientation of the knot, so an UP loop to the RIGHT is "facing" STARBOARD and an UP loop to the LEFT is "facing" PORT.



13

(Fig. 13) That's it for the basic belt. Just keep on knotting in rows, remember to do the pattern.

When you get to the end of however long you want the belt to be, knot 4 across, knot 3 across, knot 2 across and knot the center one for a point. Then do a double row of half hitches on the point to end it off. It will wind up looking like this.



12

(Fig. 12) The next row is made by dropping lines one, two and three, picking up four or five, dropping six and seven, picking up eight and nine, etc., until you have 3 pairs of standing parts. Start the knot row as described previously, but reverse direction at the second set. Again, this gives you a "common theme" for the belt of 2L/R, 1L2R, 2L/2R and so on.



14

(Fig. 14) First row completed.

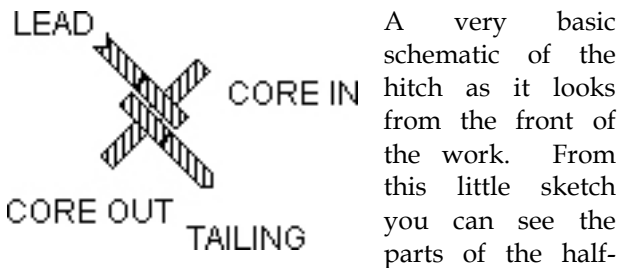




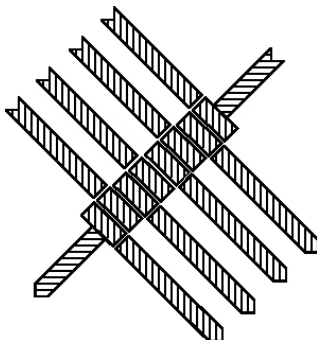
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(Fig.15) Second row completed.

Basically you will be making a simple overhand hitch around a "core" line and you'll note that each set of two hitches forms a Clove Hitch.



A very basic schematic of the hitch as it looks from the front of the work. From this little sketch you can see the parts of the half-hitches: two half-hitches around a core and the remainder of the line from the hitches is the tailing. The "lead" comes UNDER the core and around and over the top, then goes behind the core ABOVE the lead and comes out underneath. When you do two of these in a row you wind up with a clove hitch with the crossing part underneath the core and the turns showing in front of the work.



Once the lines have been trimmed you can varnish the back of the belt or use methacrylate (SPARINGLY!) on the back of the tip to keep it from coming apart. (Fig. 16)



16

Note that methacrylate, even the "clear" type, as well as varnish and most other glues/finishes will change the color of the material, so do it only on the back of the tip and then only just enough to hold it. (Fig. 17)



17

Cleaning: Hand wash in cold water, a light scrub brush is just fine but try not to attack the belt too harshly! Rinse in 10% solution of white vinegar and water and hang out on a line to dry IN THE SHADE! NO CLOTHES DRYERS! NO FABRIC CONDITIONERS! Otherwise the lines will begin to "fluff up" and you'll have a fuzz-ball instead of a belt.

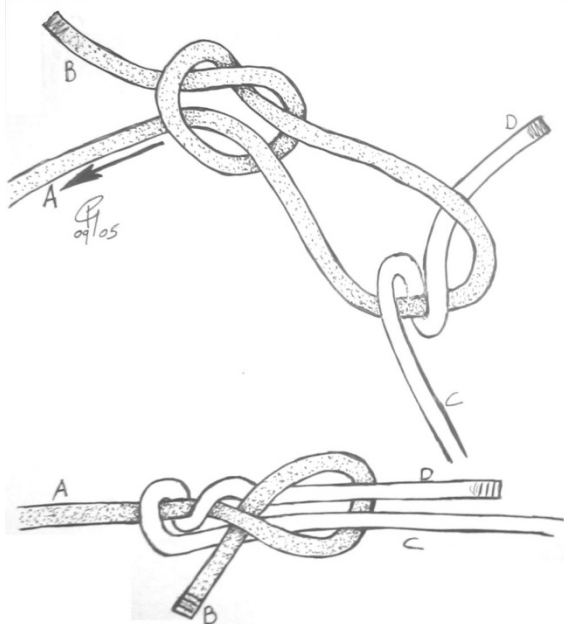
## Knot Thought 001

Pieter van de Griend

The Bowline [2, #1010] and the Boas Bowline [3] are obtainable from a Noose [2, #43] or a Slip Knot [2, #44] respectively: thread their loops with the working wend and spill the structure. The hassle in spilling the starting knot probably prevented this (Boas) Bowline tying method from becoming immensely popular [2, #1014].

Playing around with the loop-threading idea, try a twist rather than a straight-through threading. An interesting knotted structure emerges, which I have not yet spotted in the knotting literature. Packed in the way shown below the lead is neatly transitioned into the structure, much like in Harry Asher's Simple Simon Series [1, pp53-54]. Though it also bears aspects of Clifford Ashley's hawser bend [2, #1450].

The figure below illustrates how spilling a Noose leads to the non-Boas variant of this Knot Thought. The resulting structure allows an excellent loop knot, but exhibits treacherous bend properties.



## References

- 1 H. Asher, *The Alternative Knot Book*, Nautical Books, London, ISBN 0-7136-5950-5, 1989.
- 2 C.W. Ashley, *The Ashley Book of Knots*, Doubleday inc., New York, 1944.
- 3 F. Boas, *The Eskimo of Baffin Land and Hudson Bay*, from notes collected by Capt. G. Comer, Capt. J.S. Mutch and Rev. E.J. Peck, Part I, plates I-IV, New York 1901. Reprinted New York 1975.

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Stiphout August 2005.

## Turk's Head Bracelet

by Patrick Ducey

Occasionally I spy a bracelet that someone is wearing that is not metal jewelry. Elephant hair, leather, and those popular Lance Armstrong bands are the most common. In the past I have also seen a Turk's Head here or there. I have never seen a Turk's Head of more than three leads as a bracelet, other than the ones I tied myself. The three lead Turk's Head is enough of a challenge and they don't want to muck up a good thing by trying to expand it into five, or more, leads. So I am now offering a tool for those who want to tie large Turk's Heads.

I have designed a tool that ties several different bracelets. It uses a 10" long piece of three inch PVC pipe, which is available in most any hardware store. Once you have taped the paper template to the pipe, drill each of the doughnuts with a drill bit the same size as some small nails. Stuff some newspaper into the tube to hold the nails and you are ready to go. If you don't have access to PVC, you can cut a 2 liter soda bottle and, with some tape, make a tube with an 11" circumference to use as a mandrel, but it will not be as sturdy as PVC.

I generally start where there is a color change on the template. The color of each line is only to make it easier to follow the pattern. Follow the guide for the over and under pattern when you cross a line you have already laid down. When you have completed the knot, remove the nails and slide off the bracelet. I usually double or triple the plies before I tighten it onto a wrist. To finish I use Super Glue on cotton cord and a soldering iron to melt nylon. When tightening, always leave enough room to get two fingers between the knot and the wrist. Add more for growing children.

The over-one, under-one pattern is how the knot is usually tied in hand. If I want to add a little gee-whiz to the knot, I take another piece of string and follow the original knot but use an over-two under-two pattern. Then I remove the original knot and I have a bracelet that has an uncommon pattern. Using this tool, you can skip the middle step and go straight to a knot that would be unlikely to be copied.

I have posted a few other bracelets at [www.KHWW.com](http://www.KHWW.com). They all use 3" PVC as a mandrel. If you have any questions about this, or any of my templates, feel free to contact me via email or use the website forum. I keep an eye on the KHWW forum and the IGKT forum.

## **Blockade Knots**

by Geoffrey Budworth

The basic blockade knot (1, 2) is illustrated by Graumont & Hensel in their *Encyclopedia of Knots and Fancy Ropework* (1939) and described by them as "... to join the bights of two... lines to the bights of two... other lines." As they also write of "blockading" the bights of ropes together, the inference can be drawn that they use the word "blockade" merely to mean "interlock".

G. & H. feature several other such knots of 3, 4 and 6 strands with variations called "crossed", "hitched", "reversed crown" and "spider" blockade knots.

One assumes this arrangement of slings would have been used for cargo-handling. Indeed there is an instance recorded here in the UK in the early 70's (as reported in *Knotting Matters* #6, page 6) of it being employed to load and unload sacks of powdered and granular materials from ship to shore, and vice versa.

Remarkably, in the cloisters of a certain Cistercian abbey (no details available) there stands a stone column in the form of a 4-strand Blockade Knot (3). I understand, furthermore, that columns like this one can be found in a number of abbeys, particularly in Bohemia. A masterpiece of the stonemason's art - but does anyone know what it symbolizes?

