

Directions for Knots: Reef, Bowline, and the Figure Eight

Materials

Two ropes, each with a blue end and a red end (try masking tape around the ends and coloring them with markers, or using red and blue electrical tape around the ends.)

Reef Knot (square knot)

1. Hold the red end of the rope in your left hand and the blue end in your right.
2. Cross the red end over the blue end to create a loop.
3. Pass the red end under the blue end and up through the loop.
4. Pull, but not too tight (leave a small loop at the base of your knot).
5. Hold the red end in your right hand and the blue end in your left.
6. Cross the red end over and under the blue end and up through the loop (here, you are repeating steps 2 and 3)
7. Pull Tight!

Bowline

The bowline knot (pronounced “bow-lin”) is a loop knot, which means that it is tied around an object or tied when a temporary loop is needed. On *USS Constitution*, sailors used bowlines to haul heavy loads onto the ship.

1. Hold the blue end of the rope in your left hand and the red end in your right.
2. Cross the red end over the blue end to make a loop.
3. Tuck the red end up and through the loop (pull, but not too tight!).
4. Keep the blue end of the rope in your left hand and the red in your right.
5. Pass the red end behind and around the blue end.
6. Tuck the red end down into the original loop that you made.
7. Pull tight!

Figure Eight

The figure eight knot is called a “stopper knot,” which means it prevents the end of a rope from being pulled through a hole. Sailors used this knot to make sure that the sails and flags stayed in place.

1. Hold the blue end of the rope in your left hand and the red in your right
2. Cross the red end over the blue end to create a loop.
3. Pass the red end under the blue end and up through the loop.
4. With the red end of the rope in your right hand, repeat steps 2 and 3 (over and under the blue).
5. Pull tight!