



# Nine Nice Knots You Need to Know

Okay, it's actually six knots, one sling, one lashing and one handy tip, but who can resist the aliteration? The knots are no big secret. You'll find them in many publications and you may know them already. However, if it's been awhile since you've used them, you'll find this to be a timely refresher. If you don't already know how to tie these knots, the key is to practice, practice, practice until tying them becomes intuitive.

We've included a lashing and a sling that we believe would be useful both around camp and in a survival situation. The Tripod lashing can be used for cooking, hanging a lantern or as a support. The Barrel sling can be made with wire and used over a fire for heating water. Also, we've included a simple, field expedient way to attach cord to material that does not have grommets. This is useful for securing line to a plastic tarp, tube tent or an emergency blanket to construct an improvised shelter.

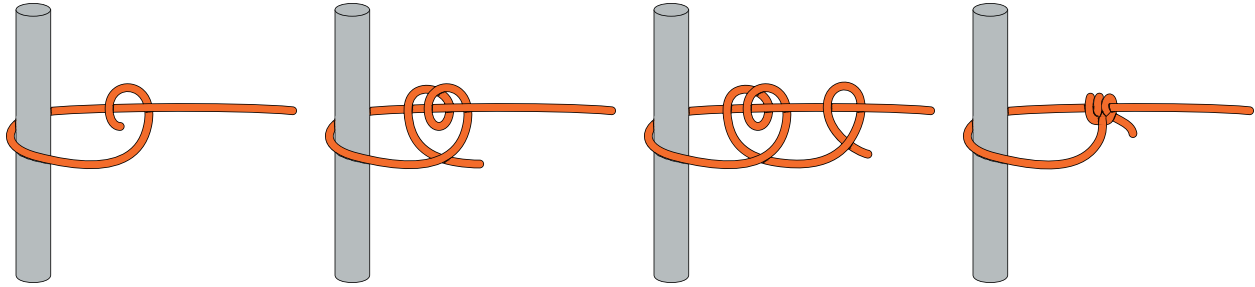
## ***Two Half Hitches***

Alas, a simple, practical knot that can be learned in minutes and will provide years of benefits. Strong, easily tied and jam-free, this will likely be your go-to knot most of the time. Use this knot to attach a line perpendicular to an anchor point such as a post, ring, tree, etc. Two Half Hitches hold under tension and will work loose if slack. It's easy to tie – just make sure that each half hitch turns in the same direction. For extra security, place a stop knot on the tag end of the line.



### ***The Tautline Hitch***

This knot is immensely useful when setting up a tent or shelter or any line that requires adjustable length and tension. When not under a load, the knot slips along the standing part of the line allowing you to remove the slack, but when placed under a load, it locks in place. This knot is a good choice for tent and shelter guy lines, securing line to ground stakes or to make an adjustable hanging loop for camp gear.

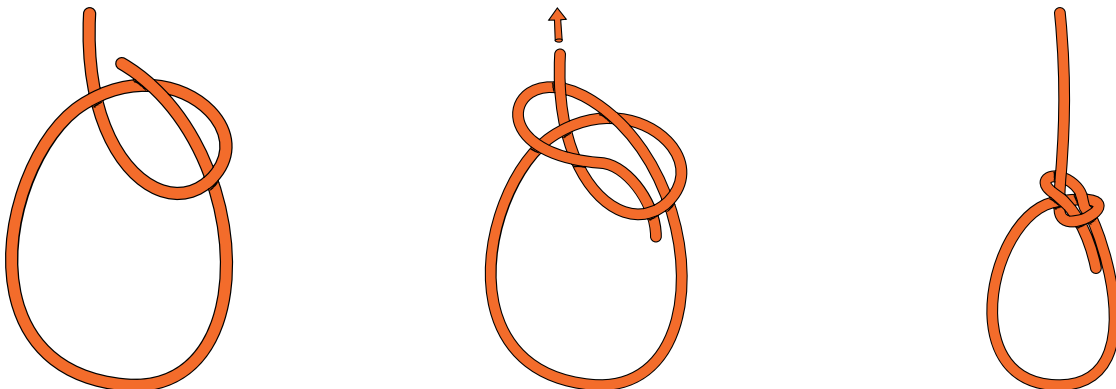


### ***The Bowline***

You may remember a scene in the movie *Jaws* where Sheriff Brody is being taught to tie a knot by Quint. “The little brown eel swims out of the hole...” and just as he does it, Quint’s fishing reel loudly whines as the shark spools off line. The knot that Brody was learning was a Bowline.

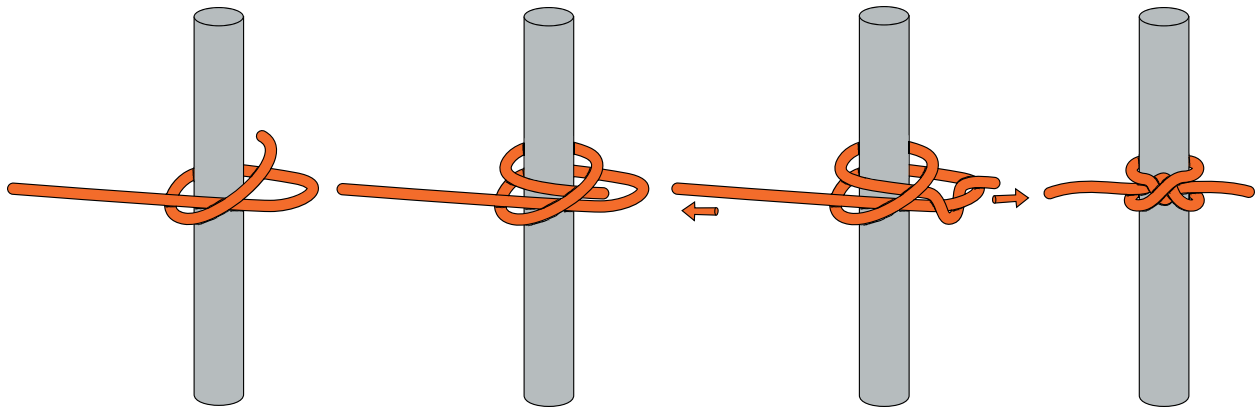
The Bowline is by far one of the best-known and oft used knots. It has been used for centuries and is very familiar to sailors, climbers and other outdoor enthusiasts. Used to form a fixed loop at the end of a line, the Bowline can be tied with one hand, does not jam and is reasonably secure. Don’t get too carried away though, the Bowline has been known to work loose when not under tension and may reduce the breaking strength of the cord by as much as 40%. None the less, it is an important knot to know and is useful for tasks ranging from building snares (form the main loop by threading the standing line through the knot loop) to hanging bear bags to rigging rope for emergency rescues. The knot is made more secure by leaving the tag end long and adding a stopper knot or two half hitches.

Many people learned to tie it by remembering the rabbit story. The rabbit comes out of the hole (the tag end through the loop), goes around the tree (around the standing part of the rope) and goes back down the hole (down through the loop).



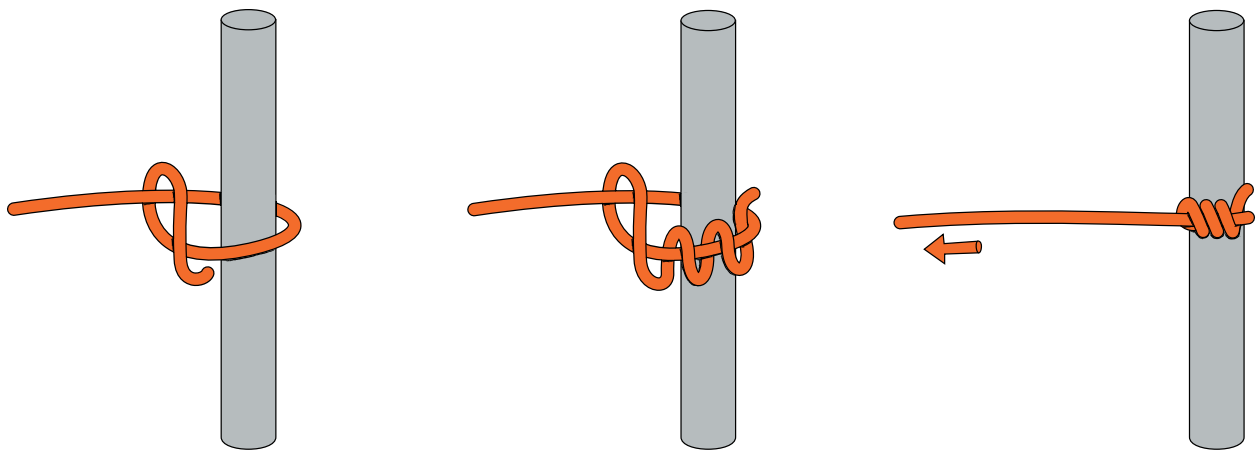
### *The Constrictor Knot*

The Constrictor is a binding knot similar to the Clove hitch but more robust. It is a very dependable way to attach a line to a cylindrical object. In fact, it is so strong that frequently the only way to remove it is to cut the line. Due to its strong bite, the constrictor knot is often compared to a hose clamp. It can be used to cinch gear bags, fashion hangers for tools, secure string whipping on rope and start or complete many lashings.



### *The Timber Hitch*

This is a simple, easy to remember knot that is useful for temporarily attaching a line to a tree, post or pole for dragging, raising or lowering. It holds tight only under tension and does not jam. Pay careful attention to the diagram when first learning the knot, as it's easy to form the loop and twists improperly. Use at least three twists, and add more if the object is large or heavy. This knot can be used to secure one end of a shelter's ridgeline to a tree, and a Truck-er's hitch can be used to remove slack and create tension on the other end of the line.

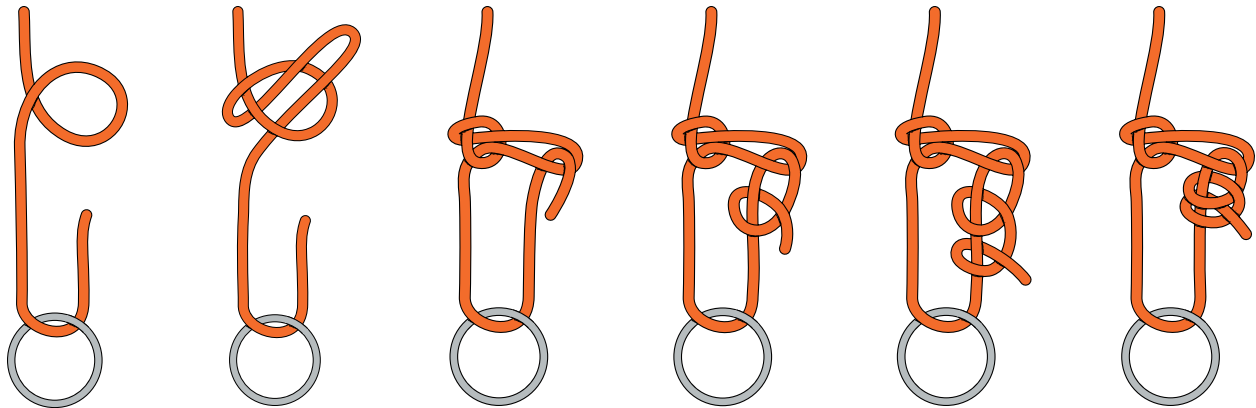


### *The Trucker's Hitch*

This is truly a knot to impress your friends and relatives. With it you can apply tremendous leverage on the rope or cord, completely removing all slack. The knot works in the same way a pulley works. The loop in the standing part of the cord acts as the pulley allowing the operator to increase tension until the cord is tight.

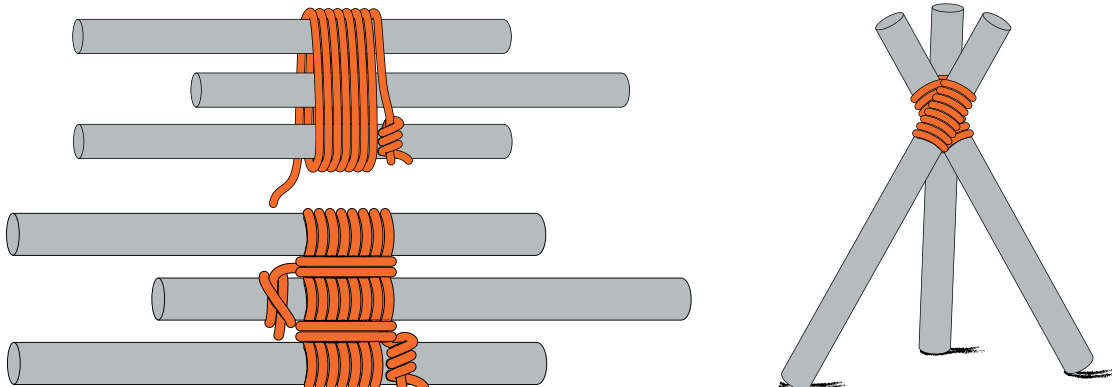
This knot will secure large loads tightly to a truck, trailer or roof rack and smaller loads to a pack frame. It is also a great way to finish a ridgeline for a shelter. The Trucker's Hitch can be used to cinch down and bind tents, ground cloths, sleeping bags, pads or anything else that is rolled up and tightly bound.

When you form the loop in the standing part of the rope, make sure there is adequate distance between it and the anchor point. Many ropes have a high stretch ratio (Mil-Spec 550 cord is 30%), and it is easy to apply enough leverage that you stretch the rope all the way back to the anchor point, especially over longer runs.



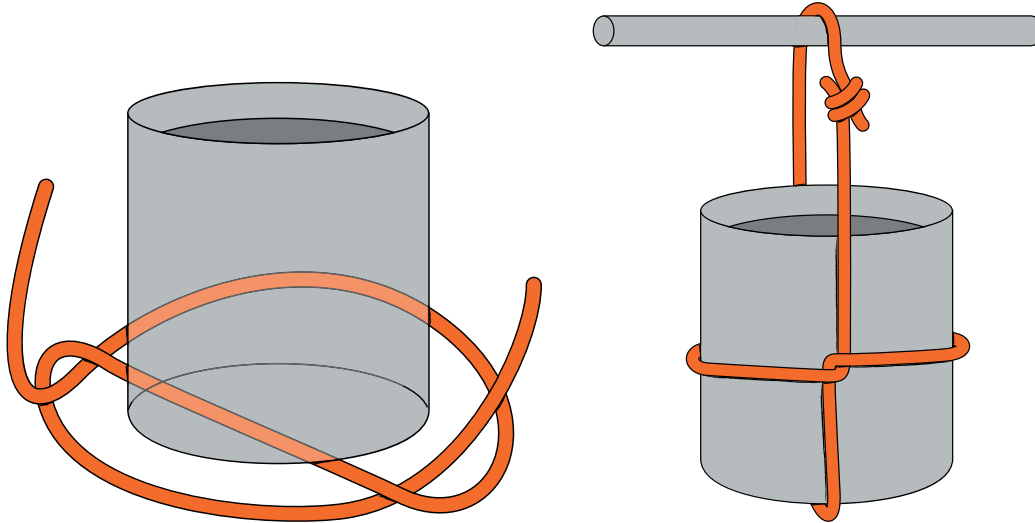
### *Tripod Lashing*

This lashing provides a simple and easy way to improvise a tripod with three tree limbs. Lay out the spars (limbs) as indicated. Begin the lash with a Timber or Clove Hitch, make six to eight turns around all three spars and finish-up with two binding turns between each spar. Complete with a Clove hitch on the center bar. The resulting tripod can be used for suspending cooking pots over a fire, making a shelter, hanging a lantern and dozens of other uses.



### *The Barrel Sling*

Here's an easy way to suspend a can to collect water or, if you use wire, for cooking and boiling. It's easy to see the advantages of knowing this sling if you find yourself in a survival situation and have to improvise with available materials.



### *Securing a Line to Non-Grommeted Material*

A common question that arises is “How do you attach rope to a sheet of plastic when improvising a shelter?” And the answer couldn't be simpler. Just place a small smooth rock, a hunk of mud, sand or moss, or anything else that's convenient on the material, gather the material around the object-forming a pocket and tie your rope around the neck of the pocket using a clove hitch or two half hitches. This is the best way to secure rope to plastic sheeting, emergency blankets and other materials that do not have grommets.

