

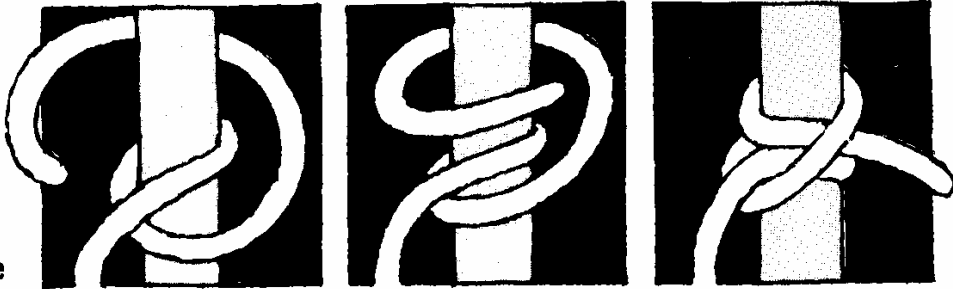
KNOTS

Why know them? – SAFETY!

The following Knots are the basics to know on the water. Knowing them in a pinch could save your life, or the life of someone else. They can also prevent property damage as they are used to properly secure the SRU to the dock and for towing. The only way to get to know them is **PRACTICE!**

The Clove Hitch

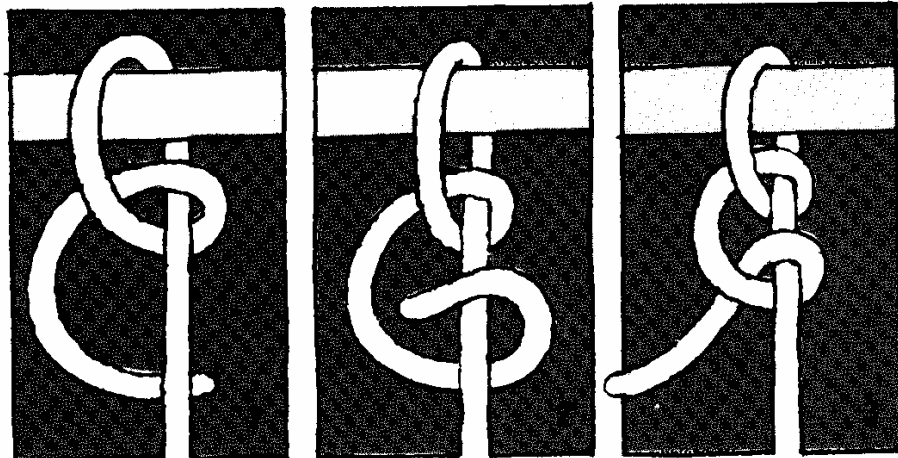
My favorite nearly-all-purpose hitch. Simple to tie, simple to untie, and won't jam under strain. There are better hitches if you're especially concerned about security, and if you're attaching a rope to a square shape—like a piece of lumber—the clove is not appropriate, but for your run-of-the-mill,



tie-this-thing-to-that-post kind of problem, the clove is your best choice.

The Two Half Hitches

The only other contender for the title of All-Purpose Hitch. More common than the clove, probably because it seems easier to tie (although it really isn't). Nevertheless, on shapes and in places where the clove won't go, two half hitches is probably the best choice, both for simplicity and security.



The slipped variation is particularly important, since this knot can often be tough to untie without it.

NOTE:

The Two Half Hitches, shown above, is **BEST** used with a FULL round turn combined with the two half hitches. The knot pictured above is NOT a full round turn.

The Sheet Bend



Doubled Variation



This is the knot that you thought the square was—a strong, simple, honest, easy-to-tie connection. One that you can trust. In the same way that the clove and bowline are, the sheet bend is

an all-star knot, the basic of its category. The doubled variation is a bit more secure. I'd use it if something important was on the line.

The Square Knot



Originally this was known as the reef knot, used on board ship to secure the furled-in sails, not a particularly critical application. Somewhere along the way, though, it picked up a reputation for reliability that it most certainly doesn't deserve. As mentioned in the introduction, it is a rather unstable knot, capable of capsizing if bumped or jiggled in the wrong way, particularly if tied in dissimilar materials.

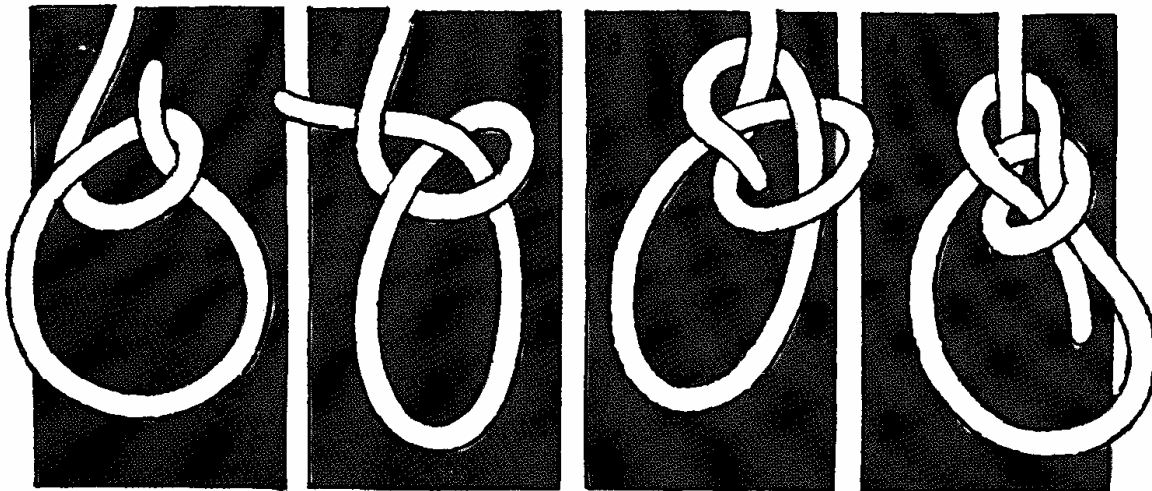
Offsetting these qualities is the fact that you already know how to tie it. As a result, I include it here for all the lightweight applications, bundle and parcel wrapping for example.

The surgeon's variation, incidentally, is the one to use when there's no one around to lend a third hand when you've got the knot half-tied on top of some box.

The Surgeon's Variation



The Bowline



If you were marooned on a desert island and could only take one knot with you, this would be the one. Properly tied in ordinary rope, there is little danger of the bowline slipping before the breaking point of the rope itself is reached—a comforting thought if you should ever have to tie a rope around your waist. And nearly as important, the bowline is easy to untie, even after having been dunked in water and put under load. Like most knots, the bowline's origins were on board the full-rigged sailing ships where it was used almost to the exclusion of all other loop knots, and where it was said that "... the devil himself would make a good sailor, if he could only tie a bowline and look aloft."

If you should ever have to deal with particularly thick or stiff materials—a rolled-up bedspread for example, or anything cable-like, one of the best ways to join them is with two interlocking bowlines.

