

Training others

This sheet provides practical ideas to help teach other volunteers and young people how to tie simple knots. Training might take place informally on camp, or more formally as part of a skills workshop or training course.

Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Name at least 3 parts of a rope
2. Tie at least 4 simple knots.

Equipment

- At least one 5m length of rope per person
- Solid structures to tie knots on
- Diagrams of step by step knot tying
- Items required for training activities.

01

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Lesson 1: Parts of the rope (15 minutes)

Introduce...

What? Names of the shapes of rope needed to tie a knot.

How? Ask the group what parts they know already to gauge current knowledge.

Demonstrate...

What? Working end, bight, loop, standing end, standing parts and why we create these shapes for knots.

How? Lay out a coloured rope in a large space, ensuring that the whole group can see. Make a large loop and bight in the rope. Then stand next to the bight and loop and make a knot using that shape with a smaller piece of rope, laying it above the relevant part of the big rope.

Explain...

What? What each part of the rope is.

How? Working your way from one end to the other, use questions to elicit answers which lead to what you are doing. For example: 'I'm working with this end of the rope, therefore it's the ...?'
(A: working end)

Apply...

What? Consolidate learning names of parts of the rope.

How? Ask pairs of participants to use a length of rope to create the shapes shown in the demonstration. Each pair should form a different part of the rope and be able to identify it.

Summarise...

What? This section checks understanding of the skills covered.

How? This competition for two or more teams encourages peer to peer feedback. Using a long piece of rope, each team must try to create as many shapes as they can in that length. All teams move to another rope and use cards or paper to indicate the shapes they can see. All teams evaluate their original rope and give the team a score out of 10.

Lesson 2: The clove hitch (15-25 minutes)

Introduce...

What? The clove hitch and why it is used.

How? Explain that each knot has a different use, but that most knots are variations on the same few shapes. Give examples of situations when a clove hitch is used and what materials or equipment it can be tied to (wooden poles, metal karabiners and so on).

Demonstrate...

What? How to tie a clove hitch to a wooden pole.

How? Slowly demonstrate one way of tying this hitch to the pole. Do this in a series of clear steps, using one of two methods – either round by round on the pole or by using loops, then sliding it onto the end of the pole. Repeat the demonstration at least once, showing the shape of the knot at each stage. Keep the knot flat and the hands open so that what you are doing can be seen clearly.

Explain...

What? The shapes created, relating these back to lesson 1, providing easy ways to remember each step.

How? During one or two of the demonstrations (but not all), describe what your hands are doing and give hints and tips to help participants remember how to tie it. For example, when tying the clove hitch using the round and round method, the rope crosses itself to look like the letter 'N'. Also explain how to check the knot is a clove hitch and not another type of knot.

Apply...

What? Consolidate learning how to tie this knot.

How? Using different materials to hitch to, ask participants to tie the clove hitch in pairs, so they can check each other's work. At this point, you may wish to return to the demonstration stage to show participants how to tie the knot using a different method (for example, making two loops and sliding them onto the end of a pole, which is the quickest way to tie a clove hitch).

Summarise...

What? This section checks understanding of the skill covered.

How? Run a relay race with small teams of three or four. Each team has to collect the step-by-step knot tying cards and put them in the correct order. The winners are the first team to do this correctly.

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Lesson 3: Figure of eight knot (15 minutes)

Following a similar structure to the previous lesson, teach the group to tie a figure of eight knot. A common method of teaching this knot is to:

1. 'Make a face' (by creating a loop in the rope)
2. 'Strangle it' (by wrapping the working end around the base of the loop)
3. 'Bop him in the nose' (by pushing the working end back through the loop).

Lesson 4: Reef knot (15 minutes)

Again, use a similar structure as the previous lesson to teach the group to tie a reef knot. A common method of teaching this knot is to:

1. Cross the left side over the right side
2. Tuck it under
3. Pass the right side over the left side
4. Tuck it under.

Note: It can be useful to point out that it's the same end of rope that does all the moving – it just changes sides halfway through the knot. You could also show a granny knot as an example of doing it wrong.

03

Lesson 5: Round turn and two half hitches (15 minutes)

Use a similar structure as the previous lesson to teach the group to tie a round turn and two half hitches. Point out that this is a composite knot, meaning it can be

broken down into simple sections – hence the name of the knot.

Taking it further...

Create lessons to demonstrate and learn how to tie the following knots:

- Timber hitch
- Highwayman's hitch
- Sheepshank
- Bowline
- Sheet bend

Groups could then build knot boards showing how to tie each knot. Alternatively, put these knots into practice by using them as part of a larger pioneering project (see the factsheets on pioneering and tying lashings).