

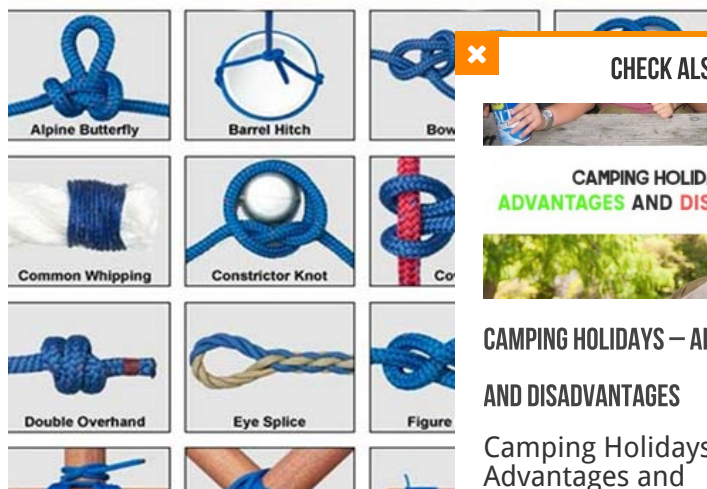
24 SCOUTING KNOTS TO KNOW

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Use your ← → (arrow) keys to browse

◀ Prev 1 of 2 Next ▶

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A knot is a method of fastening or securing linear material such as rope by tying or interweaving. It may consist of a length of one or several segments of rope, string, webbing, twine, strap, or even chain interwoven such that the line can bind to itself or to some other object. Knots have been the subject of interest for their ancient origins, their common uses, and the area of mathematics known as knot theory.

There is a large variety of knots, each with properties that make it suitable for a range of tasks. Some knots are used to attach the rope to other objects such as another rope, cleat, ring, or stake. Some knots are used to bind or constrict objects. Decorative knots usually bind to themselves to produce attractive patterns.

While some people can look at diagrams or photos and tie the illustrated knots, others learn best by watching how a knot is tied. Knot tying skills are often transmitted by sailors, scouts, climbers, cavers, arborists, rescue professionals, fishermen, linemen and surgeons.

Truckers in need of securing a load may use a trucker's hitch, gaining mechanical advantage. Knots can save a spelunker from finding himself buried under rock. Many knots can also be used as makeshift tools, for example, the bowline can be used as a rescue loop, and the munter hitch can be used as a belay. The diamond hitch was widely used to tie packages on to donkeys and mules.

In hazardous environments such as mountains, knots are very important. In the event of someone falling into a ravine or a similar terrain feature, with the correct equipment and knowledge of knots a rappel system can be set up to lower a rescuer down to a casualty and set up a hauling system to allow a third individual to pull both the rescuer and the casualty out of the ravine.

Further application of knots includes developing a high line, which is basically equivalent to a zip line. Using the high line supplies, injured people, or those lacking training in rappelling and rock climbing can be moved across a river or a large crevice or ravine. Note the systems mentioned typically require carabineers and the use of multiple appropriate knots.

These knots include the bowline, double figure eight, munter hitch, munter mule, prusik, autoblock, and clove hitch. Thus any individual who goes into a mountainous environment should have basic knowledge of knots and knot systems to increase safety and the ability to undertake activities such as rappelling.

Page 1 of 2 – See the knots