Knots of Fun!

Knot-Tying Games and Activities for More Fun with the Junior Camper Badge
The way you get good at knot-tying is to practice tying knots! You can play games to help you learn which knots to use, and you can play games to see how well you know how to tie certain knots. Playing knot-tying games is more fun than practicing all by yourself. If you’re planning a trip to camp, knot-tying games and challenges are a perfect activity!

![Figure Eight Knot]

**Bean Game**

After you have taught the square knot you give everyone one dried bean (or other token.) They then go in pairs and see who can tie the knot the fastest. The fastest one gets the other one's bean which now means they have two. Girls with two beans find each other and repeat tying the knot. The one who ties it the fastest gets the beans and therefore now has 4 beans. She goes to find another person with four beans and so on. For the girls who lose they just go and get another bean from the pot and start out again so no one really loses and everyone gets lots of practice with this one knot.

**Big Beetle***

Thanks very much to Ruth Mott, who posted this cool game to the Guiding Mailing List!

Each beetle needs:

- 8 short pieces of rope (string)
- 1 beetle head (cardboard with hole for attaching to body)
- 2 antennae - 2 pieces of wire in a loop
- 2 eyes - 2 large circles

Players need:

- A bucket (for the “beetle’s” body)
- Large dice
Volunteer Learning and Development

- Tape and glue
- Long piece of rope
- Short rope

Provide all items for each patrol. Each girl throws a dice in turn. A 6 must be thrown first to get the body (the bucket). Then when a 5 is thrown, the head is attached with a reef** knot. Then when a 4 is thrown, the legs are attached with reef knots. At the 3, the tail is attached, which is a short piece of rope tied in a reef knot. When the next player rolls a 2, the antennae are stuck to head with tape. When a 1 is thrown, glue the eyes into place. When the beetle is complete, a long rope is tied around the neck with a bowline and the beetle is dragged across the finishing line some distance away.

*In the UK, a “Beetle” is a game like our “Cootie” – you throw a die or spin a spinner and the number you get determines which piece of the “beetle” you get to add.

** What Guides in the UK call a reef knot, Girl Scouts in the US call a square knot!

**Chocolate Bar Game**

*Play this game after you've taught the girls a specific knot, for example, the sheepshank.*

Equipment needed: apron, placemat, knife and fork, oven mitts and wrapped (many times with newspaper over and over again) a chocolate bar, and one dice.

Game: Put all the equipment in the centre of a circle. The girls are sitting around the equipment in a circle. The dice is passed around and everyone has a turn at throwing a 1. When you throw a 1 you get the rope and start tying the knot, meanwhile, the others are still throwing the dice. If you tie the knot successfully before someone else throws a 1 then you get to put on the oven mitts, your apron, put the chocolate bar on the placemat pick up the knife and fork and try to get into the chocolate bar. However once someone else has successfully tied the knot you have to hand over the equipment and become part of the circle again.

Once the chocolate bar is opened, make the girls share it!
Quick Draw Knotting

**Equipment:** two ropes for each player; cards with knot uses (for example, knot used to repair a broken shoelace; hitch used to put up a clothesline, etc.)

**To play:** The players are seated in a circle, their ropes in front of them and their hands behind their backs. The game leader is in the middle with the cards. She reads one knot-use card slowly and clearly twice, then says “go.” Everyone ties what she believes is the correct knot and stands up when she is finished. The winner is the first who correctly ties the knot. If the same few win consistently, make them knot checkers (or teachers!)

Joining Ropes Relay

**Equipment:** the same number of same-length ropes for each patrol or team.

**To play:** Each patrol or team must make one long rope from all their short ones, by joining them together alternately with a square (reef) knot, sheet bend, and fisherman’s knot. When they have all been joined correctly, lay the rope in a straight line and everyone balance along it (ie: walk on the rope without falling off.) OR, tie the ends together to make a ring; everyone sit down inside the ring and pull it up to waist height, Make sure the rope is taught, then everyone lean back slowly (no hands!) to see if the knots hold.

**Speed round version:** Each girl in the patrol/team has a length of rope. The girls line up shoulder to shoulder, with the Patrol Leader or team captain (or designates player) being “first.” At the command “go”, the Patrol Leader ties the end of her rope to one end of the rope held by the girl to her left; that girl ties her free rope end to one end of the rope held by the girl to her left, and so on down the line; the last girl takes her free rope end and circles up to the patrol leader/captain and ties it to her free rope end, making a circle. First one to finish with correct knots is the winner (or girls may play to beat their own team’s best time.)

**Hide-And-Go-Seek version:** You will need a different color yarn or cord for each team. Cut a two to three foot long length of yarn or cord in the appropriate color for each girl in the patrol/team. While the girls are doing other activities, one leader hides the yarn/cord in the meeting room, another room, or outdoors. To start the game, each patrol/team is given its color to look for, and a gathering place (a
certain tree or chair or an X on the ground, etc.) At “go,” each patrol member searches for her color yarn or cord; when she finds a piece of yarn or cord in her team color, she takes it to her team’s gathering place and waits there. As each new person arrives at the gathering place, they add on their rope, using the assigned knot. The first team to find all their “ropes” and tie them together using the correct knot or knots, wins.

**Hanging Up the Washing**

**Equipment:** one long rope and a section of newspaper for each patrol or team; two clothes pins per person; two chairs for each patrol/team.

**To play:** The patrols or teams are in relay formation. At the opposite end of the room, two chairs are place for each patrol, about three yards apart. On “go,” the first girl in each patrol takes the rope, runs to her patrol’s chairs, and attaches one end of the rope to one chair with a clove hitch. She runs back, touches the next girl, who attaches the other end of the rope to the other chair using a round turn and two half hitches. The third girl tears the shape of a recognizable piece of clothing from the newspaper, runs up and clothes-pins it to the line. The game continues with paper clothes being clothes-pinned until each patrol has the same number of items. (Which will be determined by the number of players. **Round two** is the clean-up round: the relay is done in reverse order, taking down the clothes, untying the knots, and gathering the rope.

![Clove Hitch](image)

**Knotcrafter’s Challenge:**

**“Shipwrecked Families”**

*To play this outdoor Wide Game from the Girl Guides of Canada, you will need space for several “islands” and a way to mark their boundaries.*
Each patrol of 5 to 9 girls is a family that has been shipwrecked and is now on a desert island making a temporary home. Between them they have to deal with the following, using the correct knot(s) in each case:

1. Improvise a flag staff and put up a flag to attract the attention of rescuers.
2. Put up a line for the family wash.
3. Collect fire wood and rope it together.
4. Tie up the “boat”.
5. Tie up the dog, making him a safe collar and lead [leash.]
7. Make a neat parcel [package] of the scattered belongings of each member of the family.
8. Join fishing lines.

The patrol leader [team leader] should be left to plan exactly what each member of the patrol is to do, but a certain amount of gear must be provided: rope or cord; branches, dowels or logs; a stuffed animal [dog]; something to represent the boat or raft; bandanas; nylon line (fishing line); old socks, t-shirt, shorts, towel, etc., for the “belongings” in #7.

When all the tasks are done and the knots checked, the family can be “rescued” and rewarded with a treat [snack.]

**Answers (knots):**
1) Sheer (or shear) lashing; 2) Clove hitch; 3) Timber hitch or pole hitch; 4) Round turn and two half hitches; 5) Round turn and two half hitches; 6) square knots; 7) Packer’s knot and half hitches; 8) Fisherman’s knot.

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**Knot Riddles and Game**

*Wendy Baker*

*Girl Guides of Canada Volunteer*

Make up cards that say:
1. I am the queen of knots because - if I am used correctly - I never slip, and I am put to use in a variety of rescue operations.

2. I am sometimes known as the Weavers' knot. I am used by sailors in rigging the ship. I join two ropes different thicknesses.

3. I must be female, because I love tying up loose ends! I hate to see rope ends fray so I sit very snugly and hold them firmly - and, My don't they look neat when I'm used?

4. I am constantly used. I'm used to tie the ends of bandages in First Aide, because I lie flat, and don not hurt, I don't slip or slide, and I can be undone easily, I'm swear, but I'm very popular!


Have the girls do it as a relay where the 4 cards are on a chair at the end of the room with a rope. I have 4 different coloured cards and a set of 2 for two teams. They must one at a time run to the chair, pick up blue, green, yellow, orange card in order I tell them and tie the knot that is described the leaders stay near the chairs to make sure the knot it right.

Rescue Barbie

Wendy Baker
Girl Guides of Canada Volunteer

Ask the girls to bring in a doll or a small stuffed animal.

Pretend that Barbie has fallen over a cliff and you have to rescue her. Have them do a rescue knot (Bowline) on the doll and rescue her from over the cliff. (small one under arms and long ones under legs)

I also have the actually tie a Bowline to a toy dog to demonstrate that the knot is used to tie up a dog or a boat.
HOW TO SECURE A BURGLAR WITH 8 INCHES OF CORD

“Make a slip-knot at each end of your cord. Tie the burglar’s hands behind him by passing each loop over his little fingers. Place him face downwards, and bend his knees. Pass both feet under the string, and he will be unable to get away.”


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*Knot Man Craft*

- You need 4 pieces of cord. One for the head and body, one for the arms, one for the legs and one for the lasso.
- It is good to use different colored cording for the man and the lasso the knot man is holding, but the same color will work
Version One:

1. Head = overhand loop
2. Arms = clove hitch
3. Hands = overhand knots
4. Lasso = tied in a bowline and attached to arm with a round turn
5. Hips – square knot
6. Feet = figure eight knots
Version Two:

1. Head = overhand loop
2. Arms = clove hitch
3. Hands = overhand knots
4. Rope held in hand with a sheet bend; end of rope ties in overhand knot
5. Hips – a square knot
6. Feet = overhand knots
Knot Relay

**Equipment:** One rope for each girl, about three feet long  
**Formation:** Patrols/teams in circles. Each girl is numbered

**Procedure:** Decide on a knot for each round of the game. At signal, the number one player runs around the circle and returns to her place. She must then tie the knot correctly. She passes the rope to the player on her left, who must untie the knot before starting around the circle. Each player takes a turn until the rope has come back to the number one player and she has untied the knot.

**Finish:** The first patrol to finish wins.

Cats Tails

**Equipment:** 20 - 30 pieces of heavy string, each piece six inches in length  
**Formation:** Troop divided into three or four teams

**Procedure:** Hide all but three or four pieces of string. Each team chooses a “cat”, who is given one of the extra pieces of string. At a given signal, all players except the “cats” scatter to find the hidden strings. As a girl finds one, she takes it to her “cat” and ties it with a square knot to the last piece of string the “cat” holds.

**Finish:** The team with the longest tail of strings with correctly tied knots wins.

Test of Strength

**Equipment:** One rope for each girl, about three feet long  
**Formation:** All girls in a circle

**Procedure:** Players sit in a circle holding their ropes. Each girl ties one end of her rope with a square knot to the rope of the girl on her left. When all knots are tied, lift the rope over your heads and down to the middle of your back. At a signal, lean back hard against the rope circle. (If any of the square knots isn’t tied correctly, you’ll fall over backwards). Try this game making the knots behind your back instead in front, or tie them with your eyes shut.

**Finish:** The team with the longest tail of strings with correctly tied knots wins.
Simon Says Knots:

Equipment: One rope for each girl about three feet long.

Procedure: Each player holds a rope. Every time “Simon says” to tie a certain knot, each player must do it. If the command doesn’t start with “Simon says”, players do nothing. A player misses if she ties the knot incorrectly, ties the wrong knot, or ties one at the wrong time. After three misses, a player is out.

Blindfold Test:

See how fast you can tie a certain knot when you have your eyes shut or are blindfolded.

Rings:

Equipment: One rope for each girl, about three feet long.

Formation: Patrols or teams in circles

Procedure: Each girl holds her own rope. On signal, each takes one end of it, and one end of her right hand neighbor’s rope and ties them together with a square knot, thus making a ring.

Finish: The first patrol to put the ring on the floor and step into it wins.

Clove-Hitch Race:

Equipment: One rope for each girl, about three feet long

Formation: Patrols/teams in lines. One player from each team stands about ten feet in front of her line to act as post.

Procedure: On signal, the first girl in each patrol ties a clove hitch around the arm of the post. No. 2 ties clove hitch around the leg of No. 1, etc. The patrol leader inspects the knots of another patrol when finished and reports the number of knots tied correctly.

Clothes-Line Race:

Equipment: One rope for each patrol, at least 10 feet long.
Formation: Patrols in line.

Procedure: A clothes-line is stretched loosely about ten feet in front of each line. On signal the first girl in each line runs to the line and takes up the slack with a sheepshank. Each following girl must untie and then re-tie the knot.

Finish: The first patrol to finish wins.