

# Getting Tight with the Snug Hitch

by Bill Chisamore

**A**ny time I pull out a piece of rope in front of the Cubs or Scouts, I always get the same response — knots again! It's as if I'm about to torture them. Maybe for some of them it is torture. I find it amazing that so many people have trouble with knots yet can tie their shoes in total darkness. Why is this so?

First there is the desire or need to. If you can't affix your shoes to your feet, you can't walk in them. Second, practice is essential. I guarantee, if you tie the same knot (any knot) at least once a day for years, you'll be able to tie that knot in the dark.

You will notice that most people who work with cordage over a period of time will really only repeatedly use ten to twelve knots. This is true, in spite of the fact that there are thousands of knots to choose from. Not only could you not remember all those thousands of knots, but the knots focus on the work that is specific to them. If you don't need to know how to tie a horse or a boat, then you don't need to know that knot. Pick the most useful knots to you, and then through repetition, learn to tie them without thought. This is true of any skill.

For the next year we will focus on one knot each issue and illustrate how to tie it. Some will be picked for their practicality; some are traditional; some for their ease of tying; and some just for fun.

## The Snug Hitch

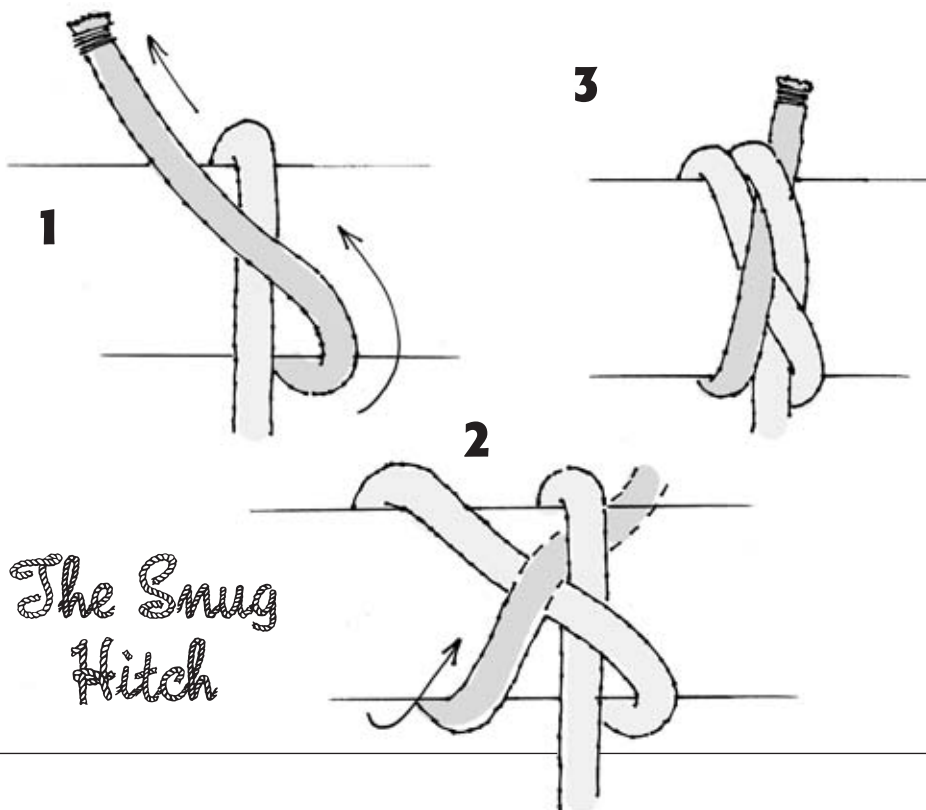
The first knot is called the snug hitch. This knot is a variation of the clove hitch knot. I find this knot easier to tie and easier to teach than the clove hitch. It binds better (which means it bites better onto itself and doesn't slip) and holds fast. It's also easier to untie, even after it has been under stress. Many times I've substituted the snug hitch for the more common clove hitch. This knot is useful for attaching cordage to a spar, pole or ring.

- Step 1 Put a turn with the working end of the rope around a spar, ring or rope, and then lay it diagonally over itself.
- Step 2: Put a second turn with the working end around the item you're working on. Now put the working end over the second round turn and under the first round turn.
- Step 3: Squeeze the turns together and pull the knot tight. X

## Welcome to *Knot Again*

[Editor's note]

**T**his new regular column is the result of frequent requests from *Leader* readers. Knots can be a mystery to many — I know they are to me. I'm just lucky to have a husband who is a master of using the right knot in the right place. Our newest author, Bill Chisamore, was a Scouter with the 78<sup>th</sup> Ottawa Troop, works at the National Office Scout Shop, and is passionate about knots. Having helped out previously with "knotty" questions, he was an obvious choice for this column. I hope you enjoy it.



## Did You Know?

- ☞ The term cordage is the generic name used to refer to rope, cord, string, twine and line.
- ☞ The term "working end" means the end of the rope you are moving.
- ☞ Web Link: Get Knotted — An animated knot web site for Scouts.

<http://www.42brghntn.mistral.co.uk/knots/42ktmenu.html>