

Six Knots

Practical skills

What each knot is for, and — as importantly — what it must not be used for.

A knot has a job. Using one outside its job is how knots fail.

Knot	Use it for	Not for
Bowline	A fixed loop that will not slip	Loads that shake it loose
Figure-eight	A stopper, and climbing tie-in	Joining two ropes
Clove hitch	Quick tie to a post	Anything critical alone
Taut-line hitch	An adjustable guy line	Heavy loads
Sheet bend	Joining two ropes of different size	Ropes under shock load
Two half hitches	Securing to a ring or rail	Slippery synthetic rope

Every knot weakens a rope by 20–50%. Dress it — lay the turns flat — before loading it.