

## **Rope, Knots, Hitches, Splices, Lines**

By Richard Sorokin

Something used to pull something; hold something together; keep things in place- these needs have been around forever. Man first used strips of animal skins to meet these needs. But animal skins rot and are not often strong enough for many jobs. Vegetable fibers were better. Manila hemp from banana trees was best for hundreds of years. The great days of the sailing ships were possible only because of Manila hemp. It is only in the last few years that synthetic ropes have replaced the natural fibers. Plastic, nylon and Dacron ropes are preferred today. They don't rot. Each type has its use. Plastic lines are cheap and will fit many needs but it will not stretch and will part suddenly. Nylon line will stretch and is great for anchor lines and dock lines where sudden stress can be cushioned by the stretching of the nylon line. Dacron line is usually braided and is very strong. Lines that require handling such as sheet lines and halyards are safer on the hands if they are made of braided Dacron.

No matter what type of rope you use, you still have to know how to make the knots, hitches and splices.

If you had to join two ropes together you could come up with a type of knot that could work. Would you want to bet your life on your invention? Could you easily untie it so you could use the rope again?

The advantage of knowing how to tie knots is that you can bet your life on them and they can be untied easily.

Also remember, knots are based on friction. Plastics have less surface friction and require more surface friction to hold.

Working with boats requires a basic knowledge of certain knots that are always used.

Square knot; connects two ropes of the same size together.

Sheet bend connects two ropes of different size together. This was used to tie the ends of sails [sheets] to the spars.

Bowline, this makes a loop in a rope that will not slip. It was used to tie the bow strings to a bow.

Figure eight or the stevedores knot are good for the ends of ropes and act as stopper through a pulley.

Clove hitch and double half hitch are a must.

There are many more knots but the above will do for most needs. Practice, know your knots. On day they may save your life.