Bush Knots

The Truckie's Hitch

This knot is useful for tying down loose freight or firewood on trailers or roof racks, or for securing heavy objects in the rear of wagons or utes. We've also used the truckie's hitch for closing camper trailer lids that have broken locks or hinges.

The truckie's hitch is a very useful knot, because it can be tightened easily without much strength being needed. Its common usage is in tying down truck freight.

To apply a truckie's hitch to any load you'll need secure tie points on both sides of the load. Most truck bodies have tie rails that run along the coamings on both sides. Roof rack rails do the same job, as do tie-down rings or rails in ute and wagon bodies.

Step one is to secure the rope to the vehicle on one side of the load that's being tied down. There are various knots that are suitable for this, such as a clove or rolling hitch or, better, a bowline.

With one end of the rope secure you throw the free end over the load. The truckie's hitch will be applied to the free end of the rope, so go around to the other side of the load.

Run the slack rope you've thrown over the load through the other securing point. In figure one it's a cleat on the side of a ute body. You then grab a handful of rope that you've passed through the securing point and lift it as shown in figure two. Move your right hand to your right, so that the lifted section of rope crosses loosely over the section that's running down to the cleat, as shown in figure three.

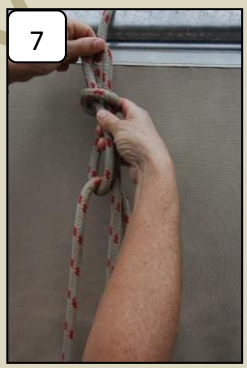
With your left had grab a handful of the rope that's running across the load and down to the cleat and pull it towards you and up, as shown in figure four. (You'll need to let some slack rope run through your right hand and through the securing point to achieve this.)

Form a loop with the rope that's in your left hand and pass it across to your right, as shown in figure five.

Reach up the descending rope with your left hand and pinch a loop in the rope. Twist the loop, corkscrew fashion, as shown in figure six.

Push the rope loop that's in your right hand through the loop in your left hand, as shown in figure seven.

You can then pull down on the rope that's in your right hand and the knot will tighten.



The action is the same as if you had a block and tackle on the rope. When the rope is tensioned sufficiently, the free end of the rope can be tied off to the securing point, or to another location.

Common Problems

Be careful how much tension you put on this knot, as it is very powerful. We've seen a vehicle door handle ripped off by over-zealous application of truckie's hitch power.
Unsuitable securing knots to the vehicle tie downs can loosen, letting the truckie's hitch come undone.

But by far the most common problem is failing to put a double twist in the top loop – the one your left hand makes. A single twist isn't secure and the loop is likely to come undone as you apply downward pressure when tightening the knot. It gives everyone a laugh to see you fall flat on your bum, however.

Variations

If you want massive power in the truckie's hitch you can double it up, putting your first one high up in the rope and laying a second one between the first knot and the securing point. Truckies do this when they're tying down heavy freight.

Another option is putting two loops in series, in the descending section of rope, with your left hand and feeding the right hand loop through both of them. This is a more secure way of locking the right hand loop into the rope, but shouldn't be necessary for most 4x4 applications of the truckie's hitch.

Another way of ensuring the right-hand loop doesn't pull out of the left-hand one is to slide a piece of wood through the end of the right hand loop, before tightening the knot.

The Bowline

The bowline is the sailor's most-used knot. It's the most secure way to put a loop in the end of a rope and it won't slip or jam under load. Because a bowline can be undone after being put under strain it's an ideal knot for a towrope.

There are several different ways to form a bowline, but this method is one of the easiest. Sailors in the windjammer days used to practice tying a bowline one-handed while in the water; so that if they fell overboard and were lucky enough to find the trailing rope that was left there for the purpose of rescue, they could tie a bowline in it with one hand, while hanging onto the rope with the other.

A far less demanding knot-tying method is suggested here.

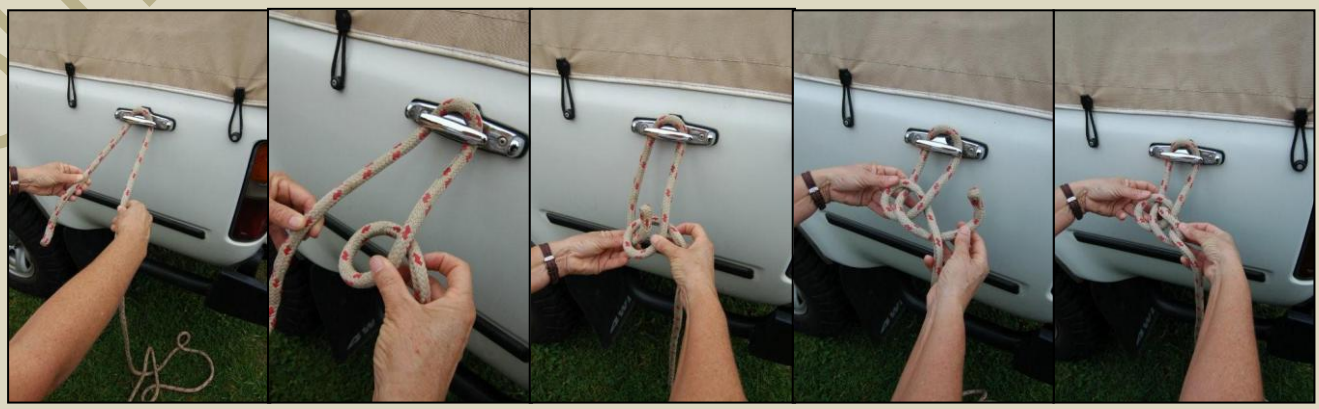


Fig 1 Fig 2 Fig 3 Fig 4 Fig 5

Feed one end of the rope through the attachment point on the vehicle - Fig 1 - and, with your right hand, twist a loop in it. The lay of the loop must be as shown in Fig 2.

Take the free end of the rope and pass it upwards through the loop, as shown in Fig 3.

Pass the end of the rope under the main length, as shown in Fig 4, then push it back through the loop, as shown in Fig 5. Then pull the free end tight through the loop, as shown in Fig 6.

The finished knot should look like the one shown in Fig 7.

Fig 6

Fig 7

There's a rhyme to make the sequence easier, once you've laid the loop in the rope:

"The rabbit comes out of the hole, around the tree trunk and back into the hole."