

Fun with Ropes

by Ian Mitchell

Ropes and knots can be your best friends when camping or hiking. Whether building gadgets, securing tarps or used for just hanging things around camp, the proper use of ropes and knots can have applications for the outdoors that boggle the mind.

Knot work for Venturers can be seen as being as exciting as watching paint dry. So to add a bit of flavor and fun, try these exercises. They will not only promote rope and knot competencies but will do so in a fun and challenging way.

Perhaps, once mastered, your Venturers can put on a rope and knot night for the troop.

Short Rope Stunts

Here are three challenges to try. They will require knowing how to tie a bowline, reef knot and sheepshank.

#1 – Two Venturers, with bowlines tied around their waists, try to untie an overhand knot without using their hands.

#2 – Two Venturers try to make a reef knot without letting go of the ends of the rope.

#3 – Two Venturers compete to tie a sheepshank in opposite ends of one rope while preventing the other from doing so.

Rope Work with an Added Twist

Here is a problem that will require thought as well as knowing how to use ropes and knots.

Equipment:

- two long pieces of light (sisal) twine (at least eight times the width of the stream)
- heavier rope (at least four times the width of the stream)
- small weighted plastic bottle with handle
- tent mallet.

Problem: There is a fairly wide stream that you must get a light line over and back again so that a heavier rope can be drawn across for use in crossing the stream. You can mark a stream on the floor with tape (one piece for each river bank) and use a coat rack as the overhanging branch on the other side (see diagram).

Solution: Weight the middle of the sisal twine and throw it over the branch (coat rack) so that it hangs in a wide “V” (see diagram). Tie the mallet onto the second piece of twine and throw it through the “V”. Slowly pull the mallet back, drawing the first

piece of twine back with it. Disengage the mallet and tie the heavier rope to the original, retrieved twine. Now, using the twine, pull the rope over the branch.

A team of three works best, but it can be done with two.

A Lashing Challenge

Here is a fun way to practice lashing. Be sure the lashings are done correctly as the fun of firing the spool can soon overshadow the real intent of the exercise.

Activity: Begin by assembling two tripod type structures as per diagram #1. Broomsticks, hockey stick shafts or large bamboo can be used. Assemble the firing mechanism as per diagram #2 using elastic bands and thread spools on each one. Place the tripods about 10 metres apart and stretch the line between the two (don't forget to thread the third spool onto the line before threading it though the two firing mechanisms).

The object is now to see how many times the spool can be knocked back and forth without it stopping (instantly being returned).

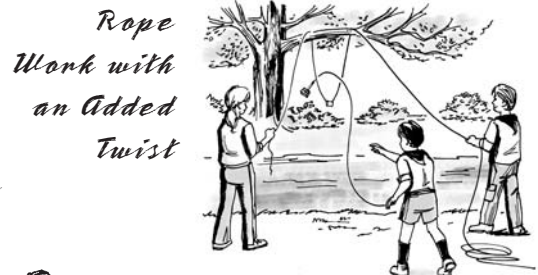
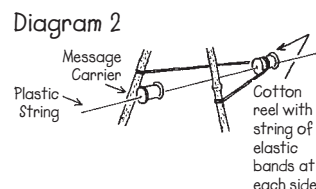
Caution: those handling the firing mechanism should wear gloves. X

– Ian Mitchell is all tied up as Director of Scouts, Venturers and Rovers.



Your Venturers will love being roped into these activities!

A Lashing Challenge



Caution:

Those handling the firing mechanism should wear gloves.