

## Marlinspike Seamanship

By Ted Walsh

### Coachwhipping

Let's say that you want to cover a hand-rail, stanchion, or handle with a surface that is both decorative and easier to grip than a smooth surface. The choice for a long section of covering would be coachwhipping.

While technically the knot is a form of square sennit, when you coachwhip something you are essentially creating a long extended Turk's head over a long round object. This kind of knotted covering was once used extensively to cover rope, or leather handles to add stiffness and a better grip and was a common form of handle for actual coachwhips, from which this kind of sennit takes its name.

Unlike a typical Turk's head it is tied using multiple strands, but like a regular Turk's head it can be a two, three, or even four strand knot depending on the diameter of what you are going to cover.

Before you commit to this project, here are a couple of tips:

-Use either quality marlin, twisted cotton, or hemp. Nylon tends to slip too much and if you intend to paint the coachwhipping, nylon will not hold the paint.

-Before you start, wrap the object that you are going to coachwhip with double-sided cloth friction tape; this will help hold the bundles of strands where you place them.

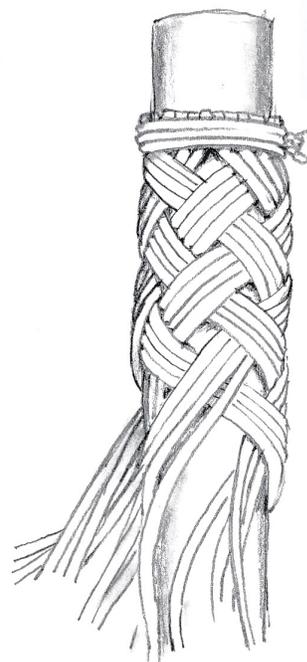
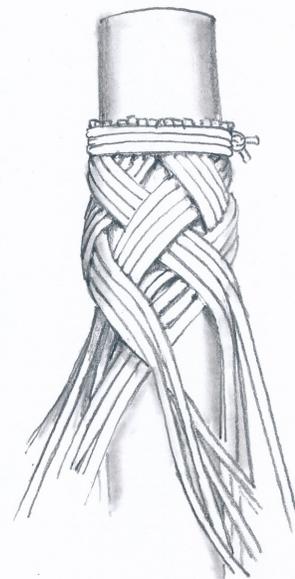
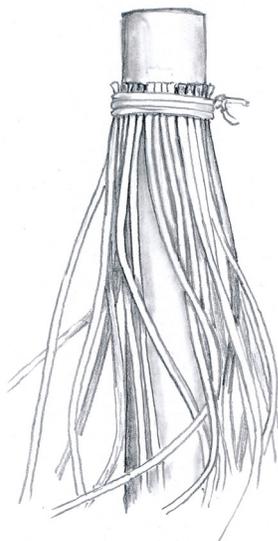
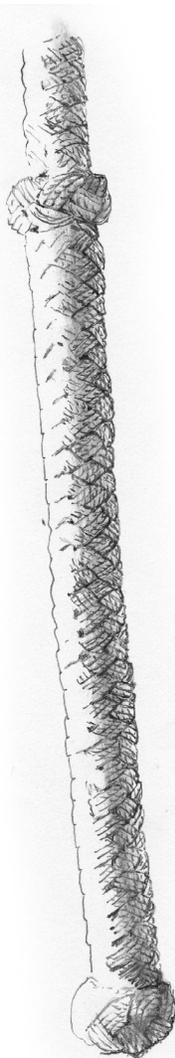
To get started, figure out the diameter of the object to be covered and the diameter of the line to be used to tie the coachwhipping. Now figure out how many sets of lines it will take to surround the object to be coachwhipped. (You need to have an even number of sets).

To figure out how long your pieces of line should be, take the length of the object to be covered and double it. This should give you some leftover, but that will make tying the end easier.

*This illustration is for eight bundles of four strands each.*

Seize or tape the groups of lines at the starting point of the coachwhipping:

The tying pattern is shown here:



When you have finished the coachwhipping, seize the ends just as you did when you started. Now cover the ends with either French spiral hitching, or as shown in the handgrip, a Turk's head at both ends.