

Marlinespike Seamanship

By Ted Walsh

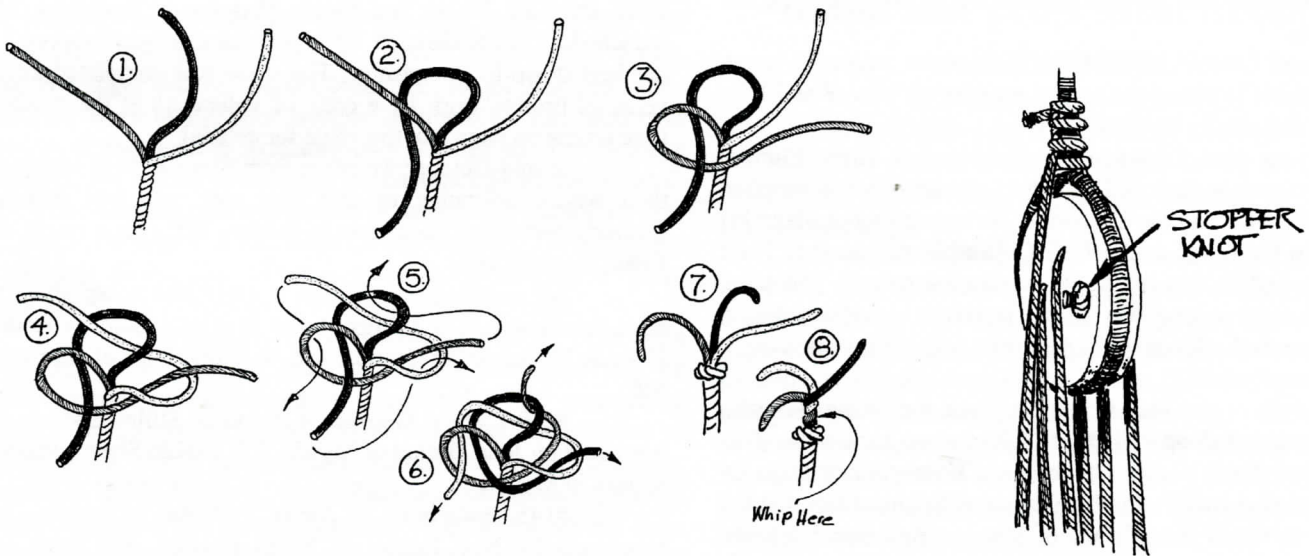
Stopper knots

There are many kinds of stopper knots and there are many places on a Friendship Sloop where a stopper knot may be appropriate. The function of these knots is to keep the end of a line from running through a block, a cleat, lizard, or fairlead; in essence stopping the line just before the bitter end.

One obvious example of a stopper knot is a simple figure-eight knot in the end of the main sheet so that it can't run through the blocks and end up over the side. The figure-eight is easy to tie and just as easy to remove, but it also has limitations. It is large, and in the event that it does its job and stops the bitter end of a line running free, the load will be carried almost entirely by the first bite in the knot. It functions very well on the end of a main sheet, but is clumsy on the end of a deadeye lanyard for example.

Here are two more elegant stopper knots; the classic Mathew Walker knot and the three-strand star knot.

The Mathew Walker is the most common knot of choice for a deadeye lanyard. Relatively easy to tie, it spreads the load of the end of the lanyard across the whole crown of the knot.



The three-strand star knot is an easier version of the classic five-strand star knot. It is more decorative than the Mathew Walker knot and might be used for the stopper knot on a rope becket. While it is a more decorative knot, it, like the Mathew Walker, spreads the load evenly over the whole crown of the knot. It is most appropriate for a line that will have a lot of load placed on it because it has a larger crown than the Mathew Walker.

