

Knot Relay

Preparation: Take some cheap plywood and cut it into 3' x 2' sections. Then take some rope and cut it into 4' pieces. Drill two holes in each piece of plywood that are just large enough for the ropes to fit through. Put a piece of rope through each hole and tie a not in the end to it won't pull through. Have enough wood pieces with rope to accommodate several patrols.

Rules: Have the patrols lined up behind one line. Have the knot tying stuff on another line. On the signal to start, the first girl runs to her patrol's wood and ties the knot called out by the leader. You will need to have people to inspect the knot for correctness before the girl is allowed to leave. Once she has correctly tied it, she then unties it, and races back to sit at the end of her line. The next girl then runs and ties the same knot.

Variation: The order of the knots can be stated ahead of time or everyone ties the same knot, etc.

Another Knot Relay

I have had surprising success with running a simple relay game after the teaching session, and explaining beforehand what will happen.

The game simply involves each member of the team running across the hall, where they are told a knot to tie, and they must tie that before returning to their team and the next person running up to do their knot. Each player will be given a knot in a predetermined sequence and the sequence will be the same for all teams. Therefore the Scouts know that if they do not pay attention during the learning phase of the meeting they will let their team down during the game phase. This is often sufficient incentive for them to make every effort to learn. You will need to decide in advance how to handle a competitor who, after making several attempts, still fails to tie the required knot. One possibility is for the next person in the team to come up (after the previous has been there for a set period of time), then the next person must tie the knot that the previous person failed at and one more person must come up at the end of the race so that the required number of knots get tied.

While this game may not seem very exciting, in my experience simple games often succeed the best.

Bowline/Sheet-bend Draw

Have the troop divide into pairs. Each pair lines up across from each other. Each Scout is given a piece of rope long enough to tie around her waist and leave a couple of extra feet. These ropes should be on the ground by the scout's feet.

At the GO signal, each scout picks up her rope and ties a bowline around her waist. Then she joins the rope with her partner's rope using a sheet-bend. They then back up until the ropes become taught, lean back and hold their hands in the air.

As a Patrol competition, the first patrol to have all of their pairs done, wins. As an individual competition, each team competes independently. Check the knots, if they are wrong, have them start over, with time running.

Knot Relay

(timed variation)

Have the patrols line up behind a starting line. A leader stands opposite each patrol and has one or two ropes, and a pole (if desired).

At the GO signal, each patrol sends one scout forward. The leader gives them a randomly selected knot. The scout then must successfully tie that knot before returning to their patrol. When each scout returns to the patrol, the next scout is sent forward.

Have each leader count the number of knots successfully tied. Keep moving until the game period has nearly expired. The patrol with the most successfully tied knots wins.

By running this relay for a fixed time, there is no need to adjust for different sized groups. Each scout should get the opportunity to tie 2 or 3 different knots (at least).

In this game, the leaders should be willing to help scouts who have problems with specific knots.

Distance Clove Hitch

Using a very long rope and either a tree or a pole, the object of this game is to tie a clove hitch around the tree (pole) without getting near the tree. Draw a circle around the object that the knot is to be tied to and tell the girls that they must not go inside that circle. The knot can be tied, but only through the cooperation and teamwork of the two girls. (Hint: One girl is a runner and the other stands in one spot.)

The leaders will have as much fun with this game as the girls will. It's not anywhere as easy as it sounds!

Blind Woman's Knot

The girls are blindfolded. The leader passes down the line, holding a piece of cord knotted in one of the familiar knots. Each girl may finger it for ten seconds to discover which knot it is. The girls are then provided with a cord. At the word "Go" each blind player makes the knot she considers the right one. The quickest (if correct) wins.

Knotting Circle

Players in circle, one ties a knot in a bit of rope and drops it at the feet of one of another group, who must name the knot correctly and say if it is tied right before person who has tied the knot can run around the circle. Whichever wins ties the next knot, and so on.

Knotting Baseball

Same teams as baseball, but no bat or ball. Pitcher and batter each have a piece of rope. Pitcher calls name of knot and throws her rope to anyone in the field. If batter reaches first with knot tied correctly, she is safe. If knot tied (correctly) by fielder, reaches first before batter, she is out. If batter cannot tie knot called, she is out. If fielder cannot tie knot called, batting side scores one run whatever else happens. Fielders can then return ropes to second, third or home to "force" base runners. Make sure pitcher throws rope to all fielders and not too frequently to first base.

Black Knots

All players have a piece of rope. Assign a specific knot. Shut out lights for a specified time and see how adept group is in the darkness. Vary knots called and time lights are out.

NOTE: This game, as well as the others require good teaching and lots of practice beforehand!!!

Get Knotting

Each patrol needs string and a die. Each number on the die represents a knot example:

1. reef
2. round turn and two half hitches
3. double overhand
4. half bow
5. clove hitch
6. sheetbend

The guides throw the die and then all race to tie the relevant knot.

Sent to my by: Barbara Dalton, South Australia

Knots

I've used two games for knots that work well. The first one is for learning the knots: instead of using rope, use Twizzlers or licorice whips or other "whip" candy. When the girl gets the knot right, she can eat it. Now, you have to be careful with this one - - don't use a "whip" that's really soft or sticky, especially in hot weather. The Twizzlers are just right, they don't stick to themselves and they don't melt readily - - and more girls like the flavor than do licorice.

The other game is for drill, after you've learned the knot - - a relay race. You have two "judges" with short lengths of rope. The girl runs up to the judge, ties the knot, and if it's right she runs back to the back of the line and the next girl runs up. If it's not right, she tries again. If it's not right in three tries, she can run back to her team and get help, and then she can come try again.

Sent to me by: Barbara Dalton, South Australia

Knots For Camp Hats

Another one I saw somewhere was where you take the knot-tying instructions and photocopy them in miniature and have the girls cover them with clear Mac-Tac and put them on their camp hats with miniature knots so that they will always have the instructions with them when they camp.

Sent to me by: Barbara Dalton, South Australia

The Bean Game

After you have taught the reef knot (square knot) you give everyone one bean. They then go in pairs and see who can tie the knot the fastest. The fastest one gets the other ones bean which now means they have two.....so they have to find another person who has two beans.....and the one who ties it the fastest gets the beans and therefore now has 4 beans.....so she has to find someone with four and so on.....now for the poor girls who loose they just go and get another bean from the pot and start out again so no one really looses and they get lots of practice with this one knot.

Sent to me by: Barbara Dalton, South Australia

Another Knot Relay

Equipment: Several pieces of string and a timber rod per Patrol

Arrangement: Patrols in teams at one end of the hall. String etc. on chair at other end.

Each Patrol member runs up and ties a knot in the string. Points are scored as follows.

First Patrol finished: 3 points

Second finished: 2 points

Third finished: 1 point

Reef knot: 1 point

Clove hitch: 2 points

Sheetbend, bowline: 3 points

Others: at the leader's discretion

Note: the knots must be correct!

Sent to me by: Barbara Dalton, South Australia

Clove Hitch Relay

Patrols go in relay formation. Using a long rope, each girl ties a clove hitch around her ankle and when all are roped try to beat the others to the other end of the room.

Submitted by: Windy Baker, Ontario, Canada

Bowline Game

Materials:

- a fork for everyone
- place mat
- napkin
- apron
- oven mitts
- knife
- wrapped chocolate bar in many layers of newspaper
- 2 dice and a rope

Numbers of girls: 8 - 10

Method:

Girls are in a circle sitting on the floor with the equipment in the center. The object of the game is to pass the dice around and the first person to roll doubles gets the rope from the leader, ties the required knot (Bowline) and it is checked by the leader to make sure it is right, then she puts on the apron, oven mitts, places the napkin under her chin, on the place mat she must pick up the knife and using her own fork tries to get into the present.

BUT....at the same time the dice are still going around and as soon as someone else rolls doubles they tie the knot and if it is correct the first person must take off the stuff and go back into the circle and so on. Great fun. Make sure you take two chocolate bars because they will want to do it again, but twice is enough and the chocolate should be shared.

Submitted by: Wendy Baker, Ontario, Canada

Knot Riddles and Games

Make up cards that say:

1. I am the king of knots because - if I am used correctly - I never slip, and I am put to use in a variety of rescue operations.
2. I am sometimes known as the Weavers' knot. I am used by sailors in rigging the ship. I join two ropes different thickness.
3. I must be female, because I love tying up loose ends! I hate to see rope ends fray so I sit very snugly and hold them firmly- and, My don't they look neat when I'm used?
4. I am constantly used. I'm used to tie the ends of bandages in First Aide, because I lie flat, and don't hurt, I don't slip or slide, and I can be undone easily, I'm square, but I'm very popular!

Answers: 1. Bowline, 2 Sheet bend 3. Whipping (Frapping) 4. Reef (Square)

Have the girls do it as a relay where the 4 cards are on a chair at the end of the room with a rope. I have 4 different colored cards and a set of 2 for two teams. They must one at a time run to the chair, pick up blue, green, yellow, orange card in order I tell them and tie the knot that is described the leaders stay near the chairs to make sure they tie the knot correctly.

Submitted by: Wendy Baker, Ontario, Canada

Big Beetle

Thanks very much to Ruth Mott, who posted this cool game to the Guiding Mailing List!

Each beetle needs:

- 8 short pieces of rope (string)
- 1 beetle head (cardboard with hole for attaching to body)
- 2 antennae - 2 pieces of wire in a loop
- 2 eyes - 2 large circles

Players need:

- A bucket
- Large dice
- Tape and glue
- Long piece of rope
- Short rope

Provide all items for each patrol. Each girl throws a dice in turn. A 6 must be thrown first to get the body (the bucket). Then when a 5 is thrown, the head is attached with a reef (square) knot. Then when a 4 is thrown, the legs are attached with reef knots. At the 3, the tail is attached, which is a short piece of rope tied in a reef knot. When the next player rolls a 2, the antennae are stuck to head with tape. When a 1 is thrown, glue the eyes into place. When the beetle is complete, a long rope is tied around the neck with a bowline and the beetle is dragged across the finishing line some distance away.

Human Cat's Cradle

Although this is not truly a knot game, it is a lot of fun! You'll need a large rope and ten people. First, have two girls with a smaller rope do the steps in the cat's cradle, and then mimic using the large rope and lots of girls as the "fingers". See how far through the string game you can get!

Save Yourself!

Give the girls the following situation: You have fallen over a cliff and your rescuers are here with a long rope. They throw it to you, but they can't come down and get you! Tie a bowline so that you can be rescued.

The Chocolate Bar Game

Play this game after you've taught the girls a specific knot, for example, the sheepshank.

Equipment needed: apron, placemat, knife and fork, oven mitts and wrapped (many times with newspaper over and over again) a chocolate bar, and one dice.

Game: Put all the equipment in the center of a circle. The girls are sitting around the equipment in a circle. The dice is passed around and everyone has a turn at throwing a 1. When you throw a 1 you get the rope and start tying the knot, meanwhile, the others are still throwing the dice. If you tie the knot successfully before someone else throws a 1 then you get to put on the oven mitts, your apron, put the chocolate bar on the placemat pick up the knife and fork and try to get into the chocolate bar. However once someone else has successfully tied the knot you have to hand over the equipment and become part of the circle again.

Once the chocolate bar is opened, make the girls share it!

Tie Up The Dog

This game is good for teaching uses for the bowline. Have the girls bring in their stuffed animal dogs. Set the girls up into relay race teams, with the stuffed toys at one end of the room sitting on a chair (one chair of toys per team) and the girls at the other end. Each girl in turn has to run down to the chair, tie their dog to the chair with a bowline and go back to the end of their line. When everyone in your line is sitting down and all the dogs are tied to your chair you win!

The Rope Pyramid

You need a pyramid shaped board with a tag for each scout. Any scout can challenge a scout on the line above her and if they tie all the eight knots correctly, first, the tags were switched. You can only challenge once a week. The top three can be challenged by anyone. The top three get to be so good that they can usually tie the knots behind their back.

Knots Galore

Give the team captains a 24-inch length of rope. At the signal, the captains tie a knot in one end of the rope, the second player ties one near the first, and so on down the line. There should be one knot for each player on the team. After all the knots are tied and the number checked, it goes down the line again with each player untying a knot. First team to finish wins.

Rope Throw Rescue

Each team has a coil of rope. Adults representing drowning victims are in the water. Each girl in turn throws the rope to the drowning person who grabs it and then lets it go. The player recoils the rope and hands it to the next player. Repeat until all team members have cast successfully. Can be played on land, too.

Save My Child

You will need 6 pieces of 4-foot long rope per team, a blanket (for indoor game) or a wagon (for outdoor game), and a broom handle or stout stick. The object of the game is to tie the ropes together to have a rope long enough to throw to someone out about 15 feet away and pull them to safety. One girl sits on the blanket or in the wagon and waits for her team to tie the ropes together using square knots or sheet bends. Once the rope is thrown to the waiting girl, she must tie a bowline in the end while the other girls tie a clove hitch around the stick. All pulling must be done on the stick and not the rope. The first team to pull the girl to safety with all the knots properly tied wins.

Knot Step Contest

Line up the girls at one end of the room. Each is given a 6-foot length of rope. Call out the name of a knot. Each girl ties the knot. Judges check the knot. Each girl who tied the knot correctly can take one step forward. The process is repeated until a girl is across the finish line.

Square Knot Relay

Divide the girls into two teams. Give each girl a piece of rope. At the signal, the first girl runs down to a rope lying on the ground, ties her piece to the end using a square knot or sheet bend, and returns. Each girl repeats in turn. The first team to successfully tie all pieces of rope together using correct knots wins.

Friendship Circle Closing

Each troop member is given a 3-foot length of rope which she ties to her neighbor's with a square knot so that a circle is made. Girls pull back on the line with their left hands and make the Girl Scout Sign with their right. The Troop Leader says, "This circle shows the bond of friendship we have in Girl Scouting. Now please join me in the Girl Scout Promise."

Drop the Knot

The group sits in a circle with their hands behind their back. One person walks around the outside with a piece of rope. They select someone, place the rope in their hands and say a knot. They then continue around the circle. The challenge is for the knot to be completed correctly before they return to the same place. If the knot is not finished or not correct, the person tying it changes place with them and goes around the circle with the rope. The game can be adjusted according to the knotting skills of participants - either by the range of knots that may be specified or if they are more competent with their knots by requiring the knot to be tied with hands kept behind the back.

Knot Dodge

Two teams are numbered off. The leader of the game calls out a number and a knot. The person with the corresponding number from one team has to go to a designated point and tie the knot. The person from the other team with the same number has to go to another point and try to hit the person tying the knot by throwing a ball (or a beanbag) at them. So the person tying the knot has the double challenge of tying the knot correctly while also dodging the throws. We used to play this on a basketball court. A length of rope was tied hanging down from the stand behind the backboard, and the knot was tied with a second length of rope onto the first. The person tying the knot would signal they had completed it by swinging on the joined ropes. The person throwing the ball had to throw from behind the free throw line (with older scouts who can throw harder and more accurately this may even need to be inside the center circle). They can go anywhere to retrieve the ball after a throw, but cannot throw it again until they have returned to the free throw line.

Human Knot

Up to twelve people stand in a circle. Each would first put in their right hand and hold with another one (not adjacent to you). Then put in the left hand hold with another one (not adjacent to you). You must get the group untied without letting go of hands.

Round-Robin Knots

Take the basic eight knots (overhand, square, clove hitch, two-half hitch, bowline, taut-line hitch, sheet bend, and timber hitch) and see who can tie them in 60 seconds or less. Good game that enforces the ability to tie knots.

"Champ-Not"

All the girls form a circle, each with a length of rope. The instructor calls out a knot, and the girls tie it, then drop the rope at their feet when finished. The first one to correctly tie the knot drops out, then the remaining girls go for it again on signal. This process continues, using the same knot, until only one girl is left, who is then declared the "champ-not" for that knot. (The beauty of this game is that the girl who needs the most practice gets the most practice.)

Knots and Lashes

Give each team three broom handles, and three lengths of rope about 10 feet long. On "go," they have to lash the three broom handles in a triangular shape (using square lashings), then use the resulting structure as a platform to carry a team member a certain distance and then back to the finish line. Lots of fun - requires them to know how to lash, and know how to lash well enough that the structure doesn't come apart while carrying one of their team members! Also requires teamwork, planning, etc.

Blind Knots

Tie 8-10 different knots and put them in bags of textile fabrics, one in each bag. See if anyone can recognize all of the knots without opening the bags. You can let them put their hands in the bag or just touch on the outside.