

Bushcraft knots

Square lashing

Attach two sticks or poles together rigidly using this handy knot – particularly useful for natural frames and den and raft building.

What you'll need: sturdy sticks of similar width, scissors/knife and string or cord

Preparation: make sure you cut a much longer length of rope or string than you think you require. In this example we cut lengths of string approximately 2 metres long. The string or rope needs to be strong. When you tighten the string to make the joint rigid it exerts quite a lot of pressure and you don't want your string snapping. If you are using a manmade rope (e.g. para cord or hempex), you'll need to heat seal the ends to stop the cord from fraying.



STEP 1 Tying on Tie the string to one of the sticks – a clove hitch is a good knot to use, but not essential. Leave a short length (approximately 10cm) loose at one end (for tying off at the end).



STEP 2 Square lashing Place the 2nd stick under the first, at right angles. Take the string down, away from the knot, under the 2nd stick, and back up towards you.



STEP 3 Take the string over the top stick and down, then under the bottom stick. (Note: in the photo the sticks have been rotated 90 degrees).



STEP 4 As you pull the string up towards you it should be going over your tying-on string. As you follow this back over the top stick you should be arriving back where you started. This completes your first wrapping. The wraps should cross at a 90° angle – this right angle gives the square lashing its name.



STEP 5 Follow the line of string, tracing around 3 times. Try to keep tension on the string as you do this.



STEP 6 Check your work

Return to your initial knot and stop. If you are super neat you can make sure the lines of strings line up next to each other. If you wiggle the sticks you will feel they are pretty loose, despite putting tension on the string as you tied them together. This neatly leads onto the clever part...



STEP 7 Frapping Instead of continuing along the normal path, turn off and pass the string around the outside of the lashing, effectively creating a ring in-between the sticks.



STEP 8 Continue wrapping around in this direction, whilst keeping the string as taut as possible. Repeat approx 3-4 times. More is fine, or if you're near the end of your string make less turns. Leave about 10cm remaining to tie-off to the loose end left from your initial 'tying on' knot. At this stage, if the lashing has not become taut and the joint rigid, then we suggest you unwrap the frap and re-do it, pulling harder this time.



STEP 9 Finishing off Tie-off the two ends of the string firmly.



STEP 10 Cut loose ends off with a knife or scissors to neaten it all up.