

Grief knot

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A **grief knot** (also **what knot**) is a knot which combines the features of a granny knot and a thief knot, producing a result which is not generally useful for working purposes. The word *grief* here is a portmanteau of *granny* and *thief*.

The grief knot resembles the granny knot, but tied so that the working ends come out diagonally from each other, whereas a granny knot's ends both come out on the same side. It unravels rather elegantly: as tension is applied, the ropes rotate like little cogs, each one twisting to feed the rope through the knot.^[1]

Grief knot



Names	Grief knot, What knot, Whatnot, Grass bend, Reeving-line bend
Category	Trick
Category	Bend
#2	
Related	Reef knot, Thief knot, Granny knot
Releasing	Non-jamming
Typical use	Used for jokes and tricks. It unrolls itself under a light load.
Caveat	Highly insecure
ABoK	#1208 , #1406, #1407, #1459, #1490 , #2579

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Tying

To tie the grief knot, tie a single "overhand knot" (nb: this isn't the same as a single-strand "overhand knot" often used as a stopper or as a component of other knots, such as the fisherman's knot or ring water knot), as if starting a reef knot. Then thrust the two free ends together down through the center of the just-tied overhand knot.^[2] Twist the free ends to form half hitches to lock, twist the other way for the granny knot-like configuration that rolls apart when the standing parts are pulled. In short, if the standing parts (the "main lines" which bear force into the knot) nip/cross their own ends, the knot will lock; otherwise, it will probably slip.

As a trick knot

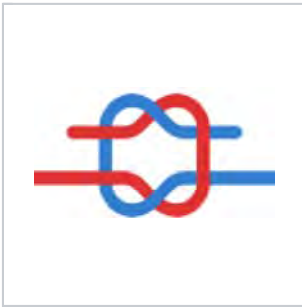
The starkly differing behavior of the knot, depending on how it is arranged, has been exploited as the basis of a parlor trick.^[1] When pulling on the standing ends the knot starts slipping and the working ends become crossed. By twisting the working ends so that they uncross and then recross in reverse, the knot's structure is changed so that it will no longer slip. The twisting motion has been paralleled to the turning of a key, "locking" and "unlocking" the knot.

Security

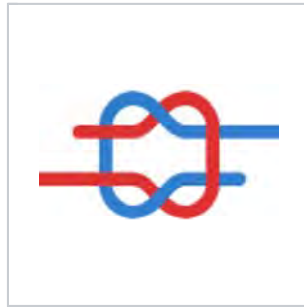
Because the grief knot is known to slip apart "with astonishing ease",^[2] it is considered one of the most insecure of knots.^[3]

However, in its locked opposing half-hitch arrangement, the grief knot has been used as a practical bend for tying together flat materials, such as straps, belts, blades of grass, and similar materials. This is because the flat shape helps to prevent the knot from accidentally "unlocking". When used in this manner, the knot is known as a **grass bend**.^[4]

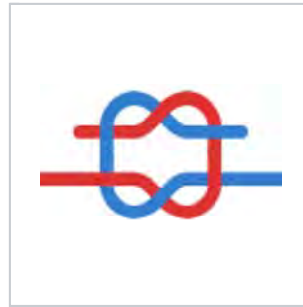
Related knots



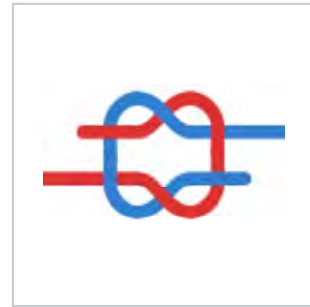
Reef (square) knot



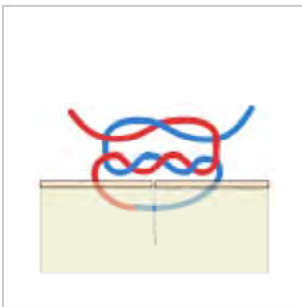
Thief knot



Granny knot



Grief knot



Surgeon's knot

See also

- List of binding knots
- List of knots

References

1. Ashley, Clifford W. (1944), *The Ashley Book of Knots*, New York: Doubleday, p. 415
2. Cyrus Lawrence Day (1986), *The Art of Knotting and Splicing* (4th ed.), Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, pp. 44–45
3. Geoffrey Budworth (1999). *The Ultimate Encyclopedia of Knots*. London: Hermes House. p. 155.
4. Ashley, p. 269

External links

- The Reef Knot Family (<http://notableknotindex.webs.com/reefknot.html>)

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Categories: Trick knots | Bend knots | Non-jamming knots

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