

# Monkey's fist

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A **monkey's fist** or **monkey paw** is a type of knot, so named because it looks somewhat like a small bunched fist/paw. It is tied at the end of a rope to serve as a weight, making it easier to throw, and also as an ornamental knot. It was also used in the past as an anchor in rock climbing, by stuffing it into a crack. Nowadays it is still sometimes used in sandstone, e.g., the Elbe Sandstone Mountains in Germany.

## Monkey's fist



**Category** Stopper

**Typical use** tied at the end of a rope to serve as a weight or an anchor

**ABoK** #2202

**Instructions** [1]  
(<http://www.animatedknots.com/monkeysfist/>)

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## Description

The monkey's fist knot is most often used as the weight in a heaving line. The line would have the monkey's fist on one end, an eye splice or bowline on the other, with about 30 feet (~10 metres) of line between. A lightweight feeder line would be tied to the bowline, then the weighted monkey's fist could be hurled between ship and dock. The other end of the lightweight line would be attached to a heavier-weight line, allowing it to be drawn to the target easily.



a monkey's fist with an eye splice, custom-made at the chandlers Arthur Beale

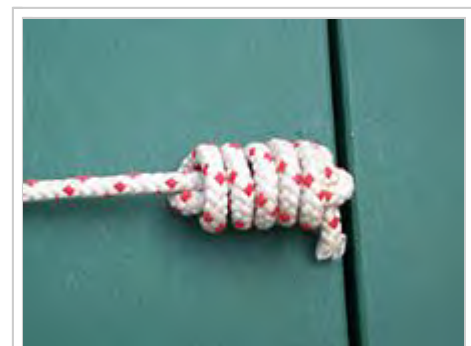
The knot is usually tied around a small weight, such as a stone, marble, tight fold of paper, grapeshot, or a piece of wood. A thicker line will require a larger object in the centre to hold the shape of the knot. Another variation of the monkey's fist knot omits the use of an internal object as a weight and rather uses the spare end which gets tucked back into the knot. This results in a nicer looking knot of a lesser weight, minimizing the potential danger of hurting someone with the knot when hauling line.

## Tying



tying the Monkeys fist

A simpler knot to use as weight while throwing a rope is heaving line knot tied using the same 3 step method as a monkeys fist but with only one turn (light version) or one and a half turns (heavier version) in the first step, most of the rope weight provided

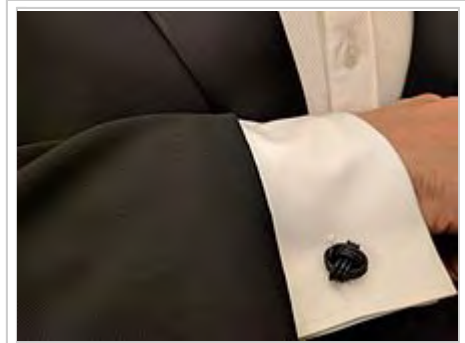


heaving line knot, light version

by the turns at the second step, and as third step threading the end through the nearest bight pinched by the turns at the second step and tightening.

## Other applications

A monkey's fist can be used on two ends of a tow line of one side a fish net which is then thrown from one trawler to another, allowing the net to be cast and set between two boats so the trawl can be used between the two, in pair trawling<sup>[1]</sup> where the tow or catch is negotiated between both parties. This makes it easier to catch fish given the greater surface area between both boats to turn around and catch missed fish from the sea much more quickly. Once all fish have been hauled up from the sea, tow lines of the fish net is returned by way of thrown both monkey's fists back to the host trawler. Alternatively, a monkey fist can be used as a weight of a heaving line thrown to over to an opposing ship to bring two ships together.<sup>[2]</sup>



A cufflink made from a wire tied into a Monkey's fist knot

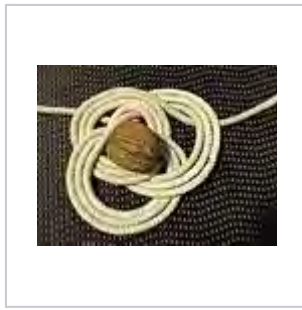
Because of its use as a lifeline thrown from boat to boat, this knot was adopted as a symbol of solidarity among the hobo community.

Monkey's fists are commonly used as a convenient and unobtrusive method of storing and transporting precious gemstones.

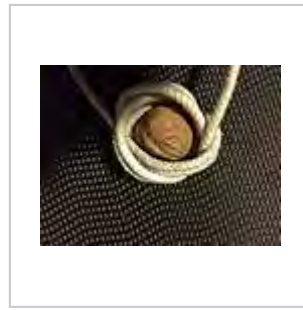
A floating monkey's fist can be created by tying around a buoyant material such as cork or styrofoam.



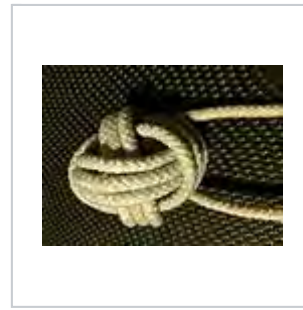
Step 1 of tying **monkey's fist knot**: tied flat



Step 2 of tying **monkey's fist knot**: flat, with content in the middle



Step 3 of tying **monkey's fist knot**: loosely wrapping content



Step 4 of tying **monkey's fist knot**: loosely tightened around content

The three coils of cordage in a monkey's fist form in effect a set of Borromean rings in three dimensions. This is most obvious when tied flat.

It is also the most common knot used in a pair for cufflinks where it is considered a "silk knot."

Monkey fists have become popular as main deployment handles for sport parachute systems.

## See also

- List of knots

## Notes

1. Board on Science and Technology for International Development, National Research Council (1998). "Fisheries Technologies for Developing Countries". The National Academies Press. Retrieved 2009-06-28.
2. Leishman, J. "Leg 1: Ft. Lauderdale to Bermuda - Across the Atlantic in 18 Trawlers ([http://www.nordhavn.com/newsroom/articles/sea\\_09-04\\_AcrossIn18.pdf](http://www.nordhavn.com/newsroom/articles/sea_09-04_AcrossIn18.pdf))." Sea Magazine, September 2004. Accessed 2009-06-28.

## External links

- [Animated tying diagram](#)



Wikimedia Commons has media related to ***Monkey fist***.



Look up ***monkey's fist*** in Wiktionary, the free dictionary.

([http://www.homeofpoi.com/articles/monkey\\_fist.php](http://www.homeofpoi.com/articles/monkey_fist.php))

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