

Bondage for
BEGINNERS



FULL CIRCLE **KINK**



CONSENT



Good consent is the most important kink skill. Unfortunately, most of us have learned bad consent practices from mainstream culture. As you begin exploring kink, we encourage you to level up your consent game.

Ask, don't guess

You know the best way to find out if your partner wants to do something? Ask. Guessing what your partner wants is a high-risk practice that often ends badly.

Yes means yes

Obviously, **no means no**: if someone asks you not to do something, don't do it. But that isn't enough: the best way to ensure everyone has a good time is **yes means yes**. Only do things you and your partner have explicitly agreed you both want to do.

Leave them wanting more

Not sure whether to add something ambitious to today's play? Ask yourself how you'd like your partner to feel about today's session:

- "That was great—can we do more next time?"
- "I wish you hadn't done that. Maybe there won't be a next time."

Impaired consent doesn't count

Consent is only valid if it's freely given by someone in their right mind: you can't give valid consent under pressure, or when you're drunk. By the same token, you can't give valid consent when you're in subspace.

SAFETY



Keep yourself and your partner safe with these simple safety rules. And remember: nothing is sexier than competence.

Rule 1: No solo bondage

When people die during kink, it's almost always because they were tied up and alone. There is no safe way to tie someone up and leave them alone and there is no safe way to tie yourself up when you're alone.

We know people who died because they thought they had a foolproof plan for doing solo bondage. Please don't join them.

Rule 2: Be vigilant about nerve damage

The most common serious bondage injury is nerve damage from rope pressure on the wrist or upper arm. We know more people than we can readily count who have lost the use of their hands for periods ranging from minutes to weeks because of bondage accidents.

Make smart decisions about your risk profile and make sure you have the necessary skills for whatever risks you choose to take.

Rule 3: Don't fall

It's easier than you might think to fall and hurt yourself while you're tied up. If your legs are tied, you're likely to trip. If your hands are tied, you can't catch yourself.

Rule 4: Have a cutting tool

The fastest way out of a bondage emergency is to cut rope. Always have an appropriate cutting tool within reach.

Rule 5: No suspension (yet)

Suspension bondage involves supporting most or all of your partner's weight using rope. We love suspension, but it's an advanced technique that requires extensive training.

Rule 6: No neck rope (yet)

Rope around the neck is dangerous in ways that aren't always obvious. When performed by a skilled rigger with a comprehensive understanding of the relevant anatomy and risks, neck rope is high risk. When performed by someone without those skills, it is reckless and irresponsible.

MODULE 1

The Single Column Tie



Single Column Tie

[p. 5](#)

If you only learn one bondage technique, learn this one.



CORE SKILLS

Negotiation

[p. 13](#)

Good negotiation leads to good sex. Bad negotiation leads to...



SAFETY

Nerve Safety

[p. 10](#)

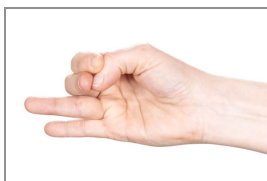
Reduce your risk of suffering the most common bondage injury.



Kneeling Position

[p. 15](#)

A super simple position that's surprisingly versatile.



Nerve Self Test

[p. 11](#)

Here's an easy way to test yourself for nerve damage while you're tied up.

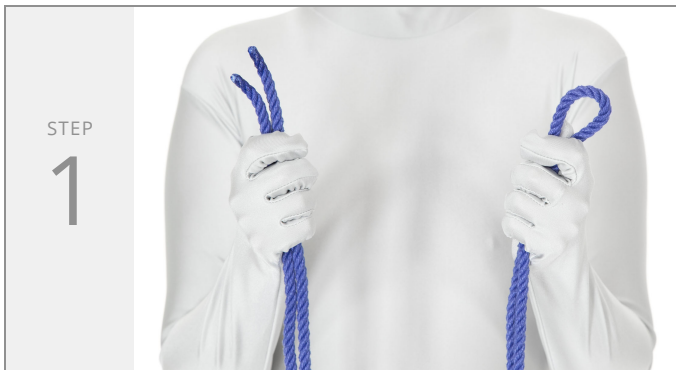


Coiling Rope

[p. 18](#)

A simple and effective way to keep your rope tidy.

SINGLE COLUMN TIE



Double the rope by holding the ends in one hand and running the other hand along the rope until you get to the center. Make sure the ends are even.

The loop at the center of the rope is called **the bight**.



Wrap the bight clockwise around your leg, then pass the ends of the rope through the bight.

You just tied a [lark's head](#) around your leg.



Make a **reverse tension** by *reversing* direction and pulling on the rope to adjust *tension*.

The rope should be snug but not tight.

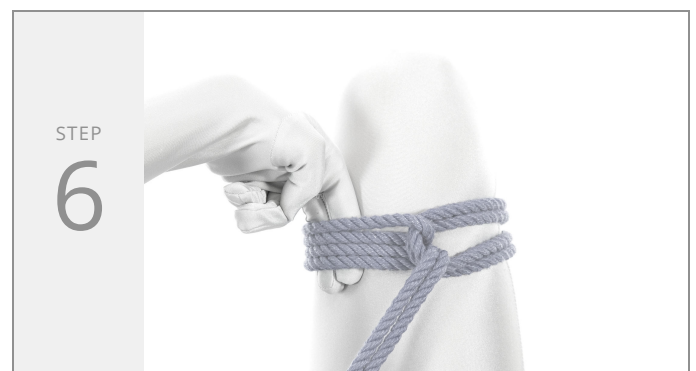


Wrap the rope clockwise around your leg again, just above the first wrap.



Bring the rope through the reverse tension you made in step 3 and reverse tension again.

Make sure you're going through the reverse tension, not the bight.

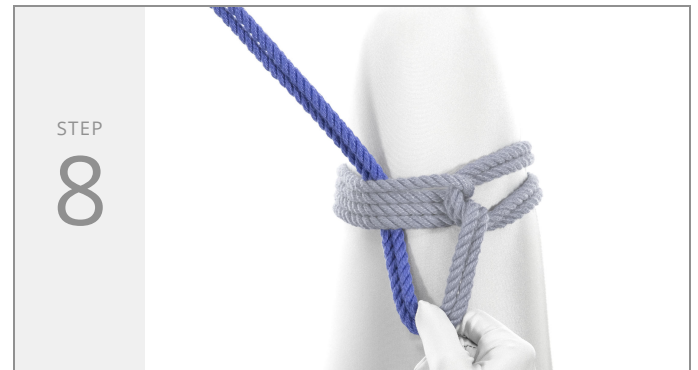


Check that all the wraps are even. You should be able to comfortably fit two fingers side by side under the rope.

CONTINUED



Make a **triangle** in the rope by pulling it toward your body with one hand while the other hand pulls the ends toward your knee.

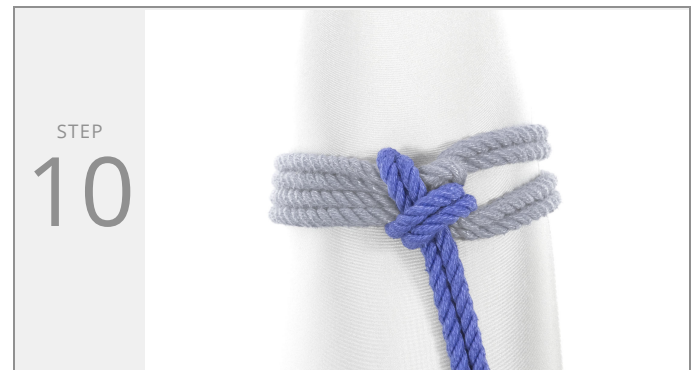


Go under all the wraps, maintaining the triangle shape.



Go back through the triangle.

Steps 7 - 9 tied a [half hitch](#) around the wraps.



Pull the knot snug.

Check that the cuff doesn't get tighter when you pull on the rope.

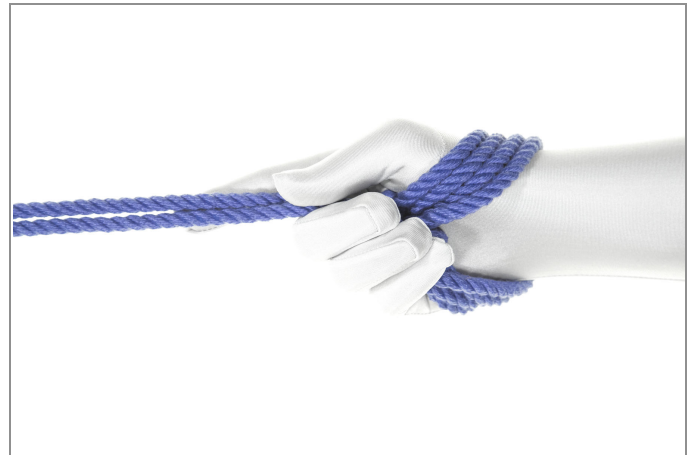
HOW TIGHT?

Wrist cuffs

The wrist is vulnerable to [nerve damage](#), so be careful about tying wrist cuffs too tight or pulling too hard on them.

Our favorite places to put wrist cuffs are:

- On the forearm right above the wrist (this works well for [crab](#)).
- Tied loosely on the wrist, so the cuff rests on the hand more than the wrist.



Ankle cuffs

Don't put pressure on the ankle bone—it isn't dangerous, but it's painful in a way that is irritating rather than fun. We usually tie ankle cuffs loose enough that the cuff hangs below the ankle bone or place it well above the ankle on the calf.



FRAPPING

The single column tie is great for binding two body parts together. You can use it to bind the wrists together like handcuffs, or to tie a wrist to an ankle for the [crab](#).

The simplest way to bind two body parts together is to simply put them side by side and tie a single column tie around them. If you want to make the tie more secure, you can add some rope between the two body parts (called **frapping turns**). Frapping makes the tie more secure by eliminating wriggle room and creates padding between the ankles.

To add frapping, leave an inch or two of space in between the wrists. After you finish the tie, wrap the rope once or twice around the tie, in between the wrists. If you like, you can secure the frapping with a [half hitch](#). For a more robust two column tie, we recommend the [two column Somerville Bowline](#).

Bondage terminology can be confusing. This tie is called a single column tie, even if it's tied around two wrists. If we add frapping, it's called a two column tie.

Without frapping



A plain single column tie around the wrists. We've increased the space between the wrists for clarity.

With frapping



Adding frapping turns takes a bit of time, but makes it more secure.

SUBTLE DETAILS

How many wraps?

We like to use two complete wraps around the column, but there's nothing magical about that number. You can use a single wrap, or add an third one if you like. Three full wraps is about as many as the tie will accommodate before it starts to get unstable.



Starting direction

In step 7, does it matter whether the triangle points up (toward your body) or down (toward your knee)?

It matters a little bit. When you finish the tie, the end of the rope will point in the same direction that the triangle was pointing. If you pull on it in that direction, it'll be stable. But if you pull on it in the opposite direction, the tie will tend to roll over on itself and become uncomfortable.

For best results, point the triangle in the direction you plan on pulling the rope.



Pulling in the direction of the rope: the tie stays flat and comfortable.



Pulling in the opposite direction: the tie rolls over and is less comfortable.

NERVE SAFETY



Most serious bondage injuries involve nerve damage. Bondage always involves some risk of nerve damage, so everyone who does bondage should understand the basics of how to avoid nerve injuries.

If you choose to engage in high-risk bondage, you must get expert training on nerve injuries before you start. This is just as true for bottoms as for riggers.

What is a nerve injury?

Nerve injuries are usually caused by rope putting pressure on a vulnerable nerve. The most serious nerve injuries can drastically reduce your ability to use your hand or arm for a period of several months, with significant lifelong impairment.

What about circulation loss?

Circulation loss is fairly common in bondage. In an otherwise healthy person, it is fairly safe to leave an area red, swollen, and warm for up to 20 minutes. Bondage that makes an area cold, clammy, or pale should be removed immediately.

Some health conditions can make any amount of circulation loss dangerous. If you have diabetes, peripheral neuropathy, or any other chronic health condition, you should avoid any circulation loss unless your doctor tells you otherwise.

Nerve tests

If you choose to engage in high-risk bondage, you should learn to perform nerve tests and use them frequently. We like the [nerve self test](#) and [nerve partner test](#) that we learned from Topologist.

Risk reduction for beginners

1. Some ties are much riskier than others

Most serious nerve injuries involve suspension bondage and/or a TK, which places rope over the radial nerve in the upper arm. These are both high-risk techniques that require substantial training to perform responsibly.

2. Nerve damage is an emergency

Nerve damage gets worse over time: quickly detecting and correcting a problem can make the difference between a minor nuisance and a serious injury.

3. Take all warning signs seriously

Numbness can be caused by nerve damage (which is often serious) or circulation loss (which is often not serious). Because there is no reliable way to tell the difference, you should always treat numbness as an emergency.

4. Nerve damage is cumulative

If you sprain your knee repeatedly, you are likely to develop chronic knee problems. Similarly, repeated nerve injuries can cause cumulative damage. Be thoughtful about the long-term consequences of your choices.

NERVE SELF TEST



1: Stroke your thumb

Use your index finger to stroke the back of your thumb, starting at the nail.

Numbness between the tip of the thumb and the knuckle suggests sensory damage to the median nerve.



2: Keep stroking

Keep stroking all the way to the base of the thumb.

Numbness between the knuckles suggests sensory damage to the radial nerve.



3: Push with your thumb

Push your thumb against your index and middle fingers, as though trying to make a thumbs up gesture.

Loss of strength in the thumb suggests motor damage to the radial nerve.

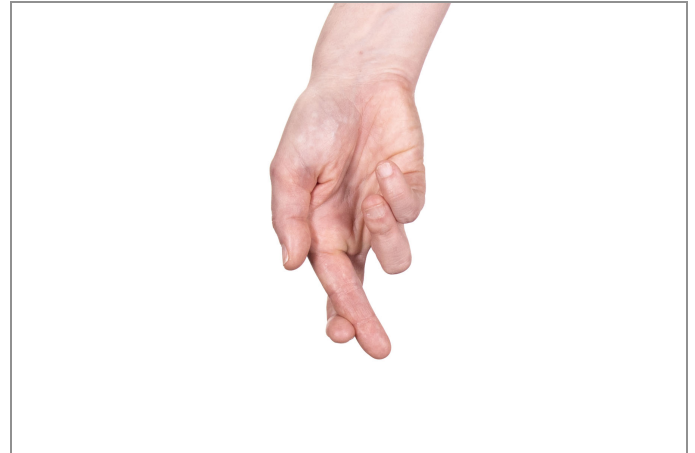


NERVE PARTNER TEST



1: Protect your fingers

Have your rigger twist their index and middle fingers together, to protect them from being squeezed too hard.



2: Squeeze your rigger's fingers

Squeeze the two fingers with your whole hand.

Loss of strength in this test suggests motor damage to one of the nerves of the hand.



3: Expand your fingers

Place your fingertips together and have your rigger wrap their hand around your fingers and thumb. Use your fingers and thumb to force your hand open against resistance.

Loss of strength suggests motor damage to one of the nerves of the hand.



NEGOTIATION



Here's a basic framework for negotiating a bondage scene. Remember: **ask, don't guess!**

Want a more holistic approach? You might like Not A Checklist: <https://fullcirclekink.com/x123>.

Before

Health & safety	Injuries & health	STI status	Risk profile	Limits
Let's discuss	Emotional state	Triggers	Relationships	Skill levels
Are we ready?	Explicit consent	Clear plan	Food & water	Bathroom

During

It should feel:	Sexy	Immobilizing	Tight	Beautiful
You should be:	Playful	Caring	Strict	Connected
How sexy?	Not at all	Intimate	Kissing	Groping
OK to touch:	Face	Breasts / chest	Genitals	Butt
Sex?	Oral sex	Penetration	Orgasms	Safer sex
How challenging?	Easy	Comfortable	Challenging	Strenuous
Pain?	Discomfort	Light pain	Medium pain	Heavy pain
Headspace:	Lab scene	Co-conspirators	Light D/s	Heavy D/s
Communication:	Words	Stoptlight	Safeword	Hand signals
Let's use:	Blindfold	Gag	Collar	Vibrator
Extras:	Tickling	Spanking	Pain play	Role play
Marks are OK:	Under swimsuit	Shorts & t-shirt	Under a suit	Anywhere
Marks lasting:	Up to 1 hour	Up to overnight	Up to 1 week	Up to months
Photos?	Yes, no face	Yes, no nudity	Yes, no sex acts	Anything goes
Share photos?	Just for us	For portfolio	Share on FetLife	Share anywhere

After

Aftercare	Cuddling	Debrief	Food & water	Sex
Check in	Text	Email	Phone call	When?

Just in case

What's your plan if someone gets hurt? If someone experiences a consent injury?

KNEELING POSITION



HOW TO TIE IT

We love the kneeling position: it's easy to tie and works well for all kinds of mischief. Like all our favorite positions, it's tremendously versatile:

- If your arms aren't comfortable in the antiparallel position, put them in front or use a bar tie to reduce the strain on the shoulders.
- Feeling like penetrative sex? Use the same ties, but bend over a couch or bed.
- Don't like kneeling on the floor? Sit on a chair instead.



Have your partner kneel. Maybe take a moment to act all domly, if you have that kind of dynamic.



Bring the arms together in an antiparallel position behind the back and tie them together with a [single column tie](#).

Tying the arms in a crossed position can cause the rope to scissor and tighten when the arms shift.



If the antiparallel position isn't comfortable for you, you can separate the arms with a [bar tie](#).

Alternatively, you can tie the arms in front of the body.



Tie the ankles together with a single column tie.

Many people have trouble with their ankles grinding together: frapping can help by creating some padding between the ankles.

IDEAS AND VARIATIONS

What now?

Your partner is all tied up—it's time to do some naughty things to them. Depending on what the two of you have negotiated, you could try:

Dominance and submission

Rope is a powerful tool for creating a feeling of helplessness and submission.

Hair pulling is a great way to enhance d/s play.

Sex!

The kneeling position is great for both oral and penetrative sex. Consider bending your partner over a bed or couch.

Spanking

Kneeling is a natural position for spanking, especially with your partner bent over.

Buying time

The kneeling position is a great way to “park” your partner for a minute while you prepare for the next activity.

Dialing up the intensity

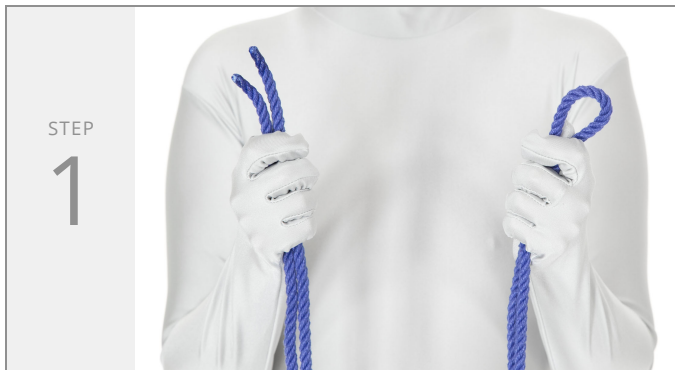


Putting a giant column tie around the thighs and calves makes the position stricter. Frapping it will help keep the tie from sliding off.

Gags and blindfolds are good ways to add intensity.

Instead of tying your partner's hands behind their back, consider tying them [behind their head](#).

COILING ROPE



STEP
1

Hold the ends of the rope in your right hand and run your left hand along the rope, removing tangles as you go. Keep going until you get to the center of the rope (**the bight**).

The rope is now doubled.



STEP
2

Take the bight with your right hand, holding it next to the ends of the rope. Run your left hand along the rope until you get to the end.

The rope is now quadrupled.



STEP
3

Double the rope a third time.

The rope is now octupled and about 2' long (if it's a 15' rope) or 4' long (if it's a 30').



OPTION
4

If you have a 30' rope, double it one more time to make it about 2' long.



STEP
5

Finish the coil by tying an [overhand knot](#) in it.

MODULE 2

Hands Behind Head



Ladder Rung

[p. 21](#)

A basic building block for adding additional components to a tie.



Hands Behind Head

[p. 25](#)

This position combines great access with a fun element of predicament.



Bar Tie

[p. 23](#)

A two column tie with adjustable space between the columns.

LADDER RUNG



STEP 1
Tie a [single column tie](#) around your leg, just above the knee. Make it fairly snug so it doesn't slide up your leg.



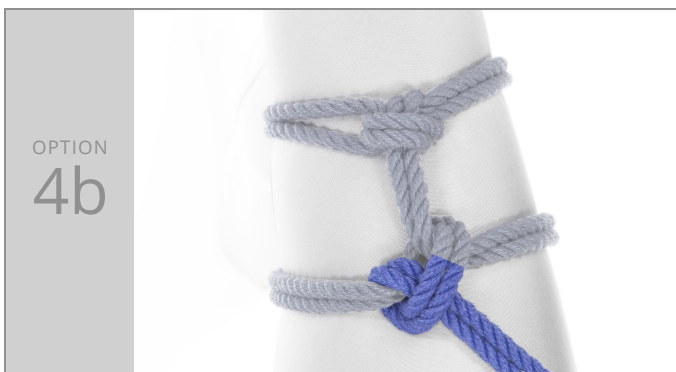
STEP 2
Run the rope up your leg and bend it to the right, making an L shape. Hold the L with one finger and wrap the rope clockwise around your leg.



STEP 3
Go behind and then over the L, making a plus shape.



OPTION 4a
If you like, you can keep moving up your leg and make another ladder rung.



OPTION 4b
If you're done, tie a [half hitch](#) to secure the rope. You can stop here, or take the rope in any direction you like.

CAUTION

Don't pull on the rope that runs lengthwise along your leg, as that will constrict the ladder rung.

BAR TIE



STEP
1

With your legs about 8 inches apart, pass the bight clockwise around both legs, ending up just on the inside of the left leg.

Go through the bight and reverse tension.



STEP
2

Make another clockwise wrap around both legs, just below the first wrap.

Go through the reverse tension and adjust tension but do not reverse direction.



STEP
3

Go down around the lower wraps on the side toward your body and back up on the far side.

If necessary, shift the bight left or right to leave as much space as you want between the rope and your left leg.



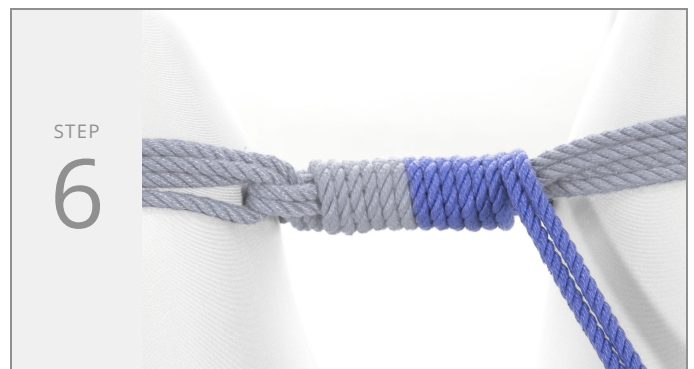
STEP
4

Go back over the upper wraps, moving toward your body. Pull on the rope to squeeze the upper and lower wraps together.



STEP
5

Continue to wrap the rope in a spiral, forming a round bar as you move toward the right leg.



STEP
6

Keep going until you get to the right leg, leaving a comfortable space between the rope and the leg.

CONTINUED



Go through the space between your leg and the rope.



If you like, you can finish the bar tie now by tying a [half hitch](#).



Go back to the middle of the bar. Holding the rope with one hand, make a 90° bend, moving toward you.
(If you noticed that you're about to make a [ladder rung](#), go to the head of the class)



Go all the way around the bar and bring the rope under itself, making a ladder rung.
Pull everything snug.

HANDS BEHIND HEAD



HOW TO TIE IT

This position works particularly well for dominance and submission. It's also a good way to keep your partner's arms out of the way for tickling or chest play.

This is a very versatile position: by changing the position of the hands and the anchor point, you can adapt it to almost any body or play style.

SAFETY NOTE: To avoid an embarrassing ER visit, don't try to walk while your hands are tied.



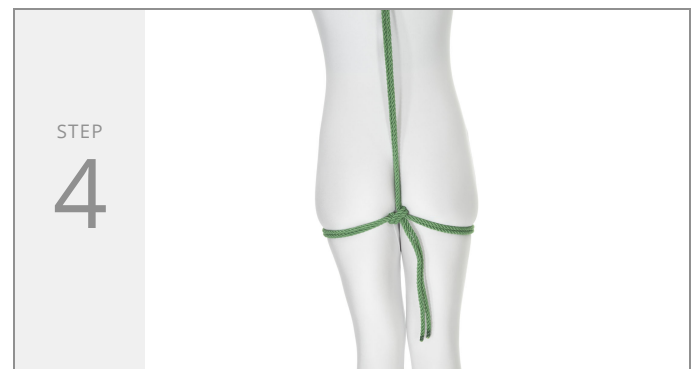
Tie your partner's wrists together in front of their body with a [bar tie](#).



Place the hands behind the head.



Attach a new rope using a [lark's head](#).



Run the rope to just below the butt and tie a [ladder rung](#). Make sure it's snug against the butt so it won't slip.

IDEAS AND VARIATIONS

Add a crotch rope

You can use a crotch rope instead of going under the butt. Bring the rope down the back and between the legs, then tie a [ladder rung](#) around the waist.

You can adjust the sensation of the crotch rope by splitting the rope to pass on either side of the genitals or by tying knots in it, depending on your inclination.



Make it more secure

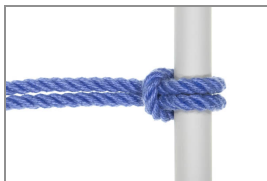
If your partner likes to wriggle, they may be able to slip their arms over their head. Placing a frapped column tie over each arm can help with this vexing problem.

If your partner can't comfortably place their hands behind their head, you can place them in front. This is a great place to use the ladder rung: experiment and have fun!



MODULE 3

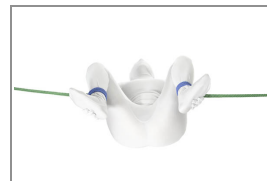
Tying Off and Crab



Lark's Head

[p. 29](#)

Simple but useful, especially for adding additional rope.



Crab Position

[p. 31](#)

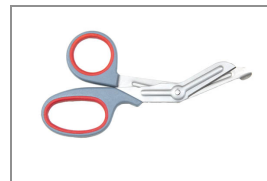
Hands down, this is our favorite position for fucking.



Round Turn & 2 Half Hitches

[p. 30](#)

Use this whenever you want to tie to furniture.



Gear

[p. 36](#)

You don't need a lot of gear to get started with bondage.

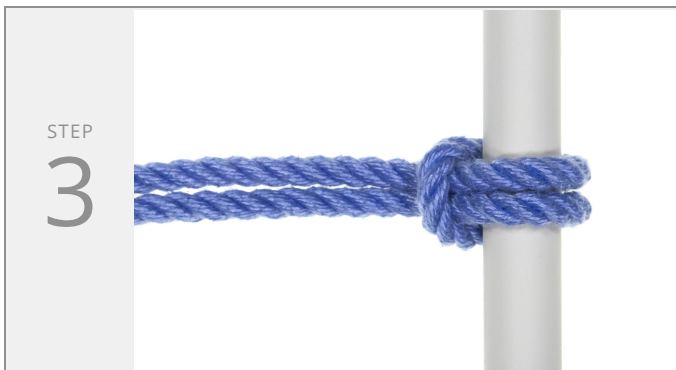
LARK'S HEAD



STEP
1
Pass the bight over and around the pole.



STEP
2
Go through the bight.

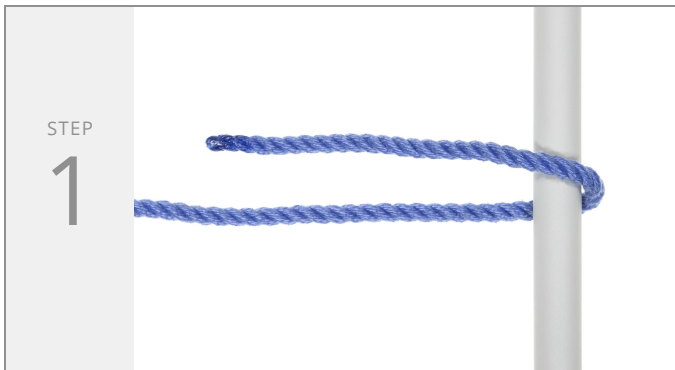


STEP
3
Snug the knot.

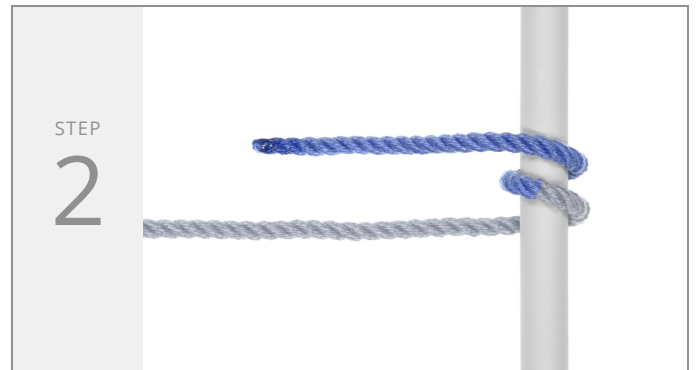
CAUTION

Notice how the lark's head constricts when you pull on it. That makes it great for attaching to furniture or rope, but terrible for attaching directly to a person.

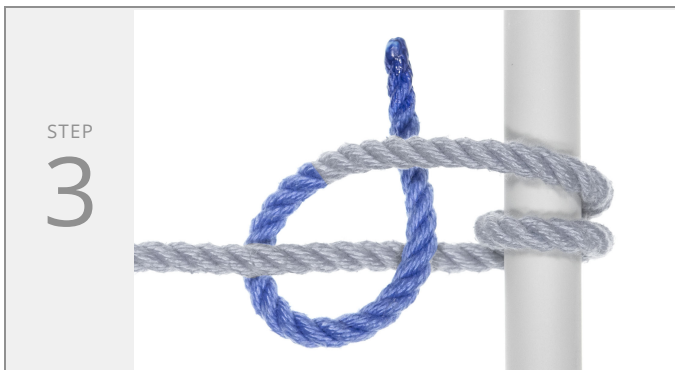
ROUND TURN & 2 HALF HITCHES



Go under and around the pole.



Go around the pole a second time.
This is called a **round turn**.



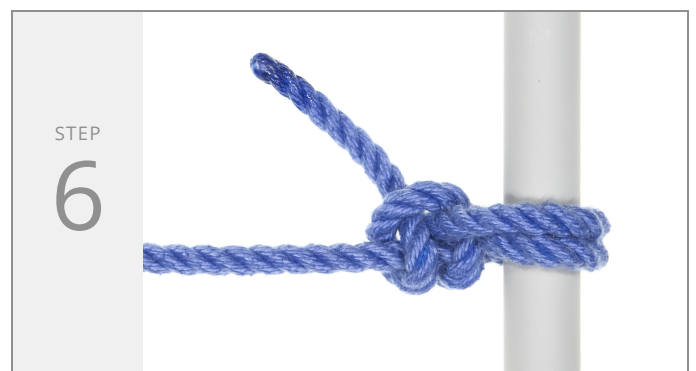
Make a [half hitch](#) by going under and around the standing part, then under the working end.



Snug the half hitch into place.



Make a second half hitch.



Snug the second half hitch.

CAUTION: this knot constricts when you pull on the rope. That makes it great for attaching to furniture but terrible for attaching directly to a person.

CRAB POSITION



HOW TO TIE IT

We love the crab position for its versatility and because it's a great position for almost any kind of sex. Spread eagle may be classic, but crab is better.



Start by getting into position.

Face up crab is comfortable and exposed but leaves a lot of wiggle room unless you tie off to a bed.



Face down crab gives great access to the ass and is much more immobilizing.

Some people may find this position uncomfortable. It can also be hard to breathe if you're on a soft surface.



Tie the forearms to the lower legs. Crab is usually more comfortable if you tie a little bit above the wrists and ankles. There are lots of options for how to do this: take a look at the next page for some ideas.

HAND POSITIONS

Hands on the inside



This option is exposed and secure without being too strenuous.

As with most of these positions, this is often most comfortable if the hand is able to grasp the foot. Try to place the column tie well above both the ankle and the wrist.

Hands on the outside



Putting the hands on the outside of the ankles makes the position a bit more comfortable and sustainable, at the cost of making it less exposed. This is often a better choice for a face-down crab.

Locking the arm under the knee



Pass the forearm under the calf, so the hand is grasping the outside of the foot and ankle.

This position is typically much more secure. It is quite comfortable for some people and almost impossible to get into for others. It generally only works with face-up crab.

Forearm to thigh



For something less demanding, try attaching the forearm to the thigh with a [square lashing](#).

You can use this technique with the arm on the inside of the thigh, or lash the forearm to the calf.

IDEAS AND VARIATIONS

Tie it off!

Face up crab is fun on its own, but we urge you to tie your partner's ankles to the bedframe.



Use a ladder rung

Depending on your partner's geometry, tying the forearm to the calf with a [ladder rung](#) can make the crab much stricter.



HAPPY BABY VARIANT



We like this crab variant, which is inspired by the happy baby pose in yoga. It uses a simple rope behind the back to pull the thighs apart. It's up to you whether to tie the forearms to the calves or not.



STEP

1

With your partner sitting up, tie a column tie around the right thigh, a few inches above the knee. With a second rope, tie another column tie around the left thigh.

You should have a couple of feet of rope left over.



STEP

2

Pass the tail of the left rope behind your partner's back and through the column tie on their right leg.

Gently pull on the rope to pull the thighs as far back as is comfortable before tying off with a [round turn and two half hitches](#).

GEAR



You don't need to spend a lot of money to get started with bondage. Fancy rope is expensive, but \$30 can buy a basic rope kit and a pair of safety shears.

Rope

For basic bondage, don't worry about how strong your rope is. Choose rope that feels good against your skin, is supple, and holds knots well. Most people find that 1/4" thick rope (6mm) is the most comfortable and easy to work with.

You'll want a few short ropes (10' - 15') and a few long ones (20' - 30').

Fancy bondage rope comes in many colors. Have fun, but remember that dark rope is hard to find and work with in the dark.

Hardware store rope

The cheapest place to buy bondage rope is a hardware store. You can get a 100' bundle of 1/4" nylon rope for less than \$20 and cut it yourself (duct tape the spot where you're going to cut to keep the rope from unraveling.)

Some hardware store rope feels great and some is awful: try to handle the rope before buying it.

Hemp rope

Our favorite rope is hemp rope. It's expensive (\$1 a foot or more) but it feels great, smells wonderful, and holds knots securely. You can buy raw hemp rope, but pre-conditioned bondage hemp feels better against skin.

There are many good sources of hemp rope, but our favorite is [Twisted Monk](#).

Synthetic rope

There are many kinds of synthetic rope available, some of which work better for bondage than others. Rope that's sold for bondage is typically more expensive but higher quality.

We particularly like [Dye Addict Rope](#), but there are many good vendors.

Safety shears

You should have safety shears on hand any time you do bondage. You want EMT shears (also called bandage shears), which are designed to cut through thick material without cutting skin.

We like Clauss Titanium Bonded Bent Snips (about \$10).

WHAT NEXT?

If you'd like to do more bondage, check out our guide to next steps at fullcirclekink.com/next.



ropeinseattle.com is a great guide to Seattle-area rope classes and events.



This class is free on our website: check how to tie something from your phone, or share the class with a friend.



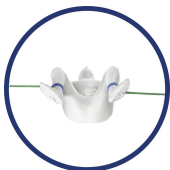
Core Bondage Series

This class is part of our core bondage series:



BONDAGE FOR BEGINNERS

Interested in bondage, but not sure where to start? Our introductory class will teach you basic kink principles and techniques as well as a set of versatile skills that will let you get up to all kinds of mischief.



BONDAGE FOR SEX

Combining sex with bondage is one of our favorite things. This class will teach you bondage that immobilizes your partner while leaving them exposed and accessible.



BONDAGE FOR IMMOBILIZATION

As well as being a great addition to other kinds of play, bondage is a lot of fun in its own right. This class focuses on techniques for strict, immobilizing bondage.



BONDAGE FOR PAIN

Rope doesn't have to be comfortable! This class covers safe and versatile techniques that can deliver anything from mild discomfort to intense pain, as well as predicament and stress positions.

