



Editorializing Carol Wang

My apologies for the lateness of the newsletter. I will not bother you with excuses but only promise to do my utmost to be more timely in the future.

This issue sees the first of our Knot Tyer Profiles, starting with a bang with J.D. Lenzen, author and YouTube video mainstay. An article of exploration and analysis that ends up finding a flag already planted but nevertheless enriches the knot world with new insight. We get our long promised closer look at Karl's knotboard. Reviews of iPhone/iPad knot related apps, and the usual reporting on the activities of the branch.

The Constrictor Knot--Two Versions Tig Dupré

One of my favorite binder knots is the Constrictor Knot (ABOK #1249). I've used it for many things: temporary repairs on a garden hose, binding coiled line for over-the-shoulder travel, and binding leather zipper pulls. And for years I have been tying it incorrectly. With success, I might add, because the knots I've tied have lasted, even with extensive use.

I was going through my weathered, well-used copy of Ashley's Book of Knots, looking for something else entirely, and the page flipped to the section on binding knots. There it was, #1249, the Constrictor. And it doesn't look at all like the knot I've been using.

This intrigued me, so I started looking back through all references to constrictors and bindings to see if the knot I'm using has any specific name

or reference. Nope. At least, not in Ashley. (Not yet, anyway. More on that later.)

Looking at the mechanics of the knots to see why the Ashley version works, and how my version works, I figure that the crossing over the top of the simple overhand knot portion provides a compression. The more it's tightened, the harder it's compressed, and the longer it holds.



[Figure 1: Clove Hitch]

More closely studied, the Ashley Constrictor seemed to have evolved from a Clove Hitch (Figure 1), with the running end brought back under the right-hand loop to make the overhand knot under the compressor. (Figure 2)



[Figure 2: Loose Constrictor Knot]

When the knot is tensioned, it binds and compresses the entire knot so no slippage occurs. (Figure 3)



[Figure 3: Tensioned Constrictor Knot]

The way I've been tying the knot is to bring the running end over the working part, and passing it under all previous loops. It still makes an overhand knot under a compressor crossing, but now the compressor runs nearly parallel to the overhand knot, instead of crossing the top of the overhand. (Figure 4) This resembles, but is not the same as ABOK #1233, the Diploma Knot. As it turns out, my variation is actually Ashley #1239, the Strangle Knot. I missed seeing it the first time I researched, not recognizing the drawing as being the knot I was tying.



[Figure 4: Loose Strangle Knot]

When fully stressed and tightened, the Strangle Knot can only be cut off, same as the Ashley Constrictor. It cannot be untied. (Figure 5)



[Figure 5: Tensioned Strangle Knot]

It seems to operate about the same as ABOK #1249, providing a binding overhand knot with a compressor to keep it tied, and it also functions as a quick whipping for line ends when it is doubled. (Figure 6)



[Figure 6: Loose Doubled Strangle Knot]

Once doubled and tightened, there are three turns of line, bound and compressed. This knot can be applied and tensioned in under ten seconds for a lasting whipping. (Figure 7)



[Figure 7: Tensioned Doubled Strangle Knot]

I initially sent this article to Knotting Matters and the IGKT-PAB editor for review. Lindsey Philpott of Knotting Matters sent me a very kind reply, informing me that the knot I tied was indeed Ashley #1239, the Strangle Knot, to be found on the page opposite the Constrictor Knot. As my grandfather used to say, "If it was a snake, it would have bit you."

So the mystery is cleared up, and I have a new knot in my vocabulary.

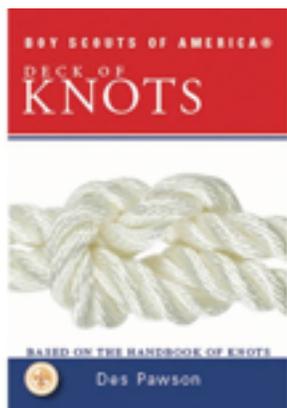
Kit Reviews

Carol Wang

OK, not really kits this time around, but the Boy Scout deck would be if they just packed a bit of rope to go with, and the game totally would be if it weren't also a game...

Boy Scouts of America Deck of Knots (Updated Edition)

based on the handbook of knots by Des Pawson
ISBN 978-0-7566-2925-0
Published by DK



A bit larger than the usual playing cards, but about as thick a deck, the stack begins with 3 four-fold introductory cards. A short introduction from Des, a brief primer on scouting, how to use the deck, logos and icons, a chart of rope materials, breaking load, main uses, etc, rope construction, a

longer discussion of rope materials, rope care and maintenance, best practices, and some knot tying techniques. A final card has detailed publishing information and author info. Which leaves the 43 card deck of knots, one "knot" to a card (or 2*): square knot, fisherman's knot, overhand knot, bowline, round turn & 2 half hitches, sheet bend, clove hitch, diagonal lashing*, sheer lashing*, square lashing*, timber hitch, back splice*, basic net-making*, bowline on the bight, buntline hitch,

carrick bend, common whipping, cow hitch, double overhand loop, eye splice, figure-eight knot, figure-eight loop, fisherman's bend, fisherman's loop, long splice*, marlingspike hitch, monkey's fist*, rolling hitch, sailor's cross, sheepshank, short splice*, slipped square knot, stevedore knot, surgeon's knot, and thief knot

Des being one of the co-founders of the IGKT, and with our own Joseph Schmidbauer one of the consultants, we can hold this set of materials to a particularly high standard. Also, as you would expect from DK, the photographs are extremely clear and well done. Parts are labeled where needed. The text is compressed, of course, in order to fit on a card versus what you would find in a book, but each has icons to indicate what branch of scouting uses that knot, which general category of application the knot applies to and a short preamble about the knot followed by step-by-step photos and explanatory text.

Knot So Fast

Thinkfun Games



A 2 person game involving tying knots in a race against your opponent with a minute timer to keep things moving. Two ropes, 2 rings, the previously mentioned minute timer, a deck of game cards, and a "tug of war" score keeping device. Thinkfun used to be Binary Arts and makes games with an educational emphasis that my kids adore. I got 2 (the second on sale), one

for me and one for the kids so that if they lose pieces to their set I don't have to guilt them. ☺

Each knot is one side of a card (the same thing is on the other side for your opponent to reference) with a nice layout type line illustration and a knot fact. There are 4 categories of knots: beginner, intermediate, advanced, and expert.

Beginner: overhand knot, slip knot, figure eight knot, ring hitch, clove hitch, overhand loop, figure eight loop, double overhand knot, reef knot, stevedore knot.

Intermediate: harness loop, two half hitches, round turn & two half hitches, Carrick bend, bowline, running bowline, lariat loop, bowline on a bight, Portuguese bowline, fisherman's knot

Advanced: buntline hitch, surgeon's knot, tom fool, handcuff, ashley stopper knot, alpine butterfly bend, improved clinch knot, angler's loop, fisherman's bend, double sheet bend

Expert: sheepshank, cat's paw, hunter's bend, tarbuck knot, half windsor knot, square knot, water bowline, single strand plait, blood knot, Chinese button

The kids have played their game a couple of times and generally liked it, although it has certainly not inspired obsession or any solo activity. Also, framed as 2 person game, it's unlikely to become a favourite in a family with 3 kids... That said, the game can be useful for more than just a *game*, see my report on the Vancouver Mini Makers Faire for more details.

Knot Tyer Profile

An interview with J.D. Lenzen

J.D. Lenzen is the creator of the internationally respected YouTube channel **Tying It All Together**, the producer of over 150 free instructional knot videos, and the author of the book Decorative Fusion Knots (2011). He's primarily known as a premier source for easy to follow and hard to find knot instructions, and the

creator of *Fusion Knotting*, a style of knotting which he originated and promotes.



How/when did you get started in knotting?

When I was a kid, about 7 or 8, I started tying lanyards, but quickly grew bored with the limitations of flat (lanyard) cords. So I started fiddling with rope. By my teens, I'd memorized nearly all of the practical and decorative knots in The Ashley Book of Knots. By my twenties I was breaking knots down into their component parts, studying the techniques for tying them, then clustering them according to their fundamental structures. By my late twenties, I'd established a style of tying known as fusion knotting, or innovative knots created through the merging of different knot elements and knotting techniques. I still enjoy tying historical knots, but my primary passion is fusion knots. These days, I generate one to two new fusion knots a week.

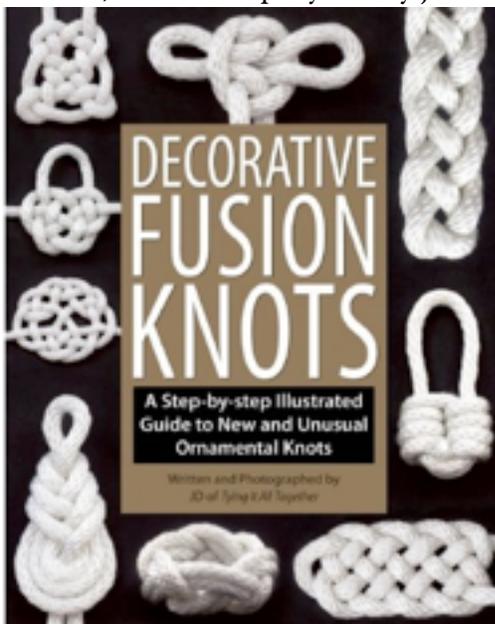


What is your favorite knot?

My favorite historical knot is the Double Coin Knot, a decorative variant of the Carrick Bend. The knot's structure and elegant simplicity make it the perfect base for multiple fusion knots. Also, it was the knot that introduced me into the world of decorative knots.

**Is knotting a hobby, a profession or a part-time second income activity for you?**

Knotting is a full-time love, but a part-time profession. I derive some income from my book Decorative Fusion Knots. Still the "dirty little secret," most knot book authors don't tell, is that returns from book sales (even successful books) are very modest. If you're going to do what we do, you've got to love it, and...don't quit your day job. *smile*

**Do you consider yourself a: sailor, jeweler, climber, crafter, fisherman, scout/guide/cadet (leader or former), general handy type, fiber artist, theatre rigger, etc, etc?**

I consider myself an artist and see knot tying as a creative practice rather than an unchanging

discipline. I experience knots, as a painter would his paintings, only twists, coils and weaves are my pigments and a length of cord is my canvas.

You see... fusion knotting is a form of knotting that, although builds upon the past, constantly strives for something new, something never before seen, or achieved with rope or cord. It's a means by which to create new ties, not just learn and repeat old ones (as the world of knotting has mostly done for the past 70 plus years).

Even Clifford Ashley himself, the famed author of The Ashley Book of Knots, invented new knots. And, in so doing, encouraged others to do the same. Still, despite his example, many knot tyers don't feel a knot is "valid" or "real" unless it is historical. Fusion knotting doesn't concern itself with this limitation. It's not obsessed with knots being historically consistent, accepted or acknowledged. It only cares if the knot created possess esthetic beauty, functions well for a desired purpose, or joy is experienced while tying it.

**What knotty thing would you like to learn next?**

At this point in my life, I find myself discovering more than learning. Nearly a lifetime of research, reading and study have led me to a point where knotting is now a language to me, a natural expression of my thoughts and ideas. In turn, I decide upon a design (usually sketched out first), then "paint", just as an artist would. What separates me from most other artists is that instead of simply seeking praise or money for a piece, I generate a free instructional video

showing how its created. The response to this practice has been overwhelming. My YouTube channel, **Tying It All Together**, the place I share my pieces, has over 20,000 subscribers, and my book [Decorative Fusion Knots](#) has sold over 4,000 copies in less than six months. My role is to inspire others, not only by encouraging the creation of new ties, but through the video illustration of tying techniques.

Where is your favorite place to get supplies and why?

Depends on the ties being performed. This said, I get my 1/4 inch solid braid nylon from my local True Value Hardware Store. My 450 Paracord (the cord used in my more recent videos) are purchased (online) from www.VTArmyNavy.com. I purchase my nylon cord locally on account of convenience. I purchase my paracord from VTArmyNavy on account of the vast color selection, quality of the cords sold, and the price (very reasonable).



What is your favorite knot book and/or reference and why?

If knotting was a religion [The Ashley Book of Knots](#) would be its bible. I'm a "true believer" so that book stands as the pinnacle of all knotting books to me. Its thoroughness, attention to detail, and clear illustrations, coupled with personal accounts, make the book both informative and approachable. Still there's a key element to [The Ashley Book of Knots](#) that is sadly overlooked. Ashley presented newly made or original knots, without fanfare, alongside historical knots. In some cases a new knot was the product of two historical knots combined, as with **Ashley's**

Flower Knot (ABOK #2445), a combination of ABOK #2435 + ABOK #2451. Ashley clearly had an awareness that different knot elements and tying techniques can be used as building blocks for new knots. And his example marks our permission to explore and create just the same.

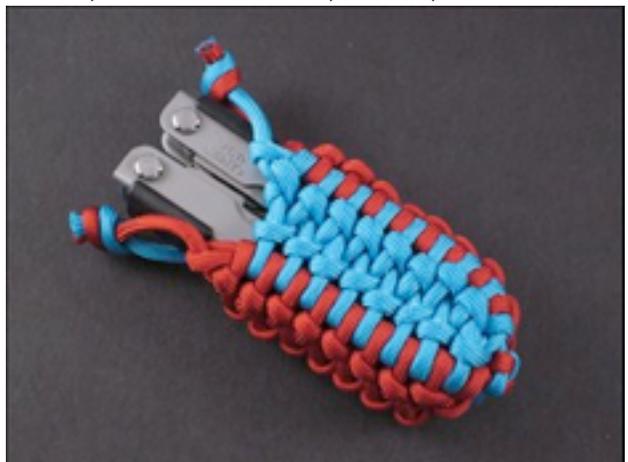


What is your favorite knotty website and why?

My favorite knot site is YouTube. I, like most people, am a "seer-doer" when it comes to knot tying. YouTube videos allow people to see, in real-time, how a knot is tied. This, coupled with the "doing" or following along with the video makes for the best teacher-student relationship available on the web.

What string related and/or knotty groups do you belong to?

I belong to many... But I primarily post and exchange ideas on YouTube, The Fusion Knot Forum, The IGKT Forum, Twitter, and Facebook.



What is your favorite knot tool and why?

My imagination and my hands. I've been blessed with an understanding of knots that my imagination can play with and so create things anew. My hands are the vehicle of those creations. I do not use formal tools when it comes to knotting. Its an "origami thing". That is, just as cutting paper in the art of origami is frowned upon, I feel the use of tools is "cheating". This is simply my feeling and far from a rational fact.

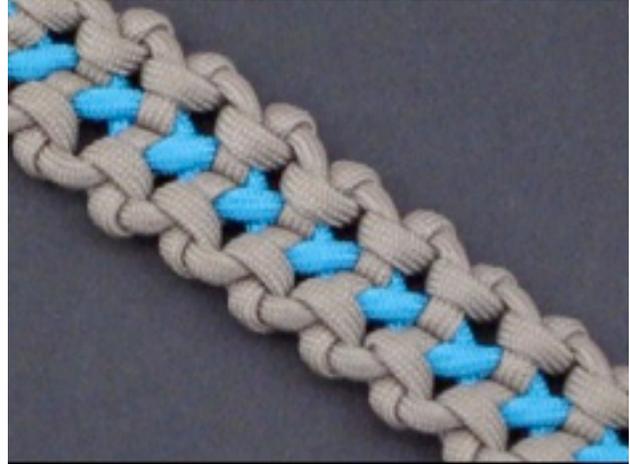
**At what festival, show, jamboree, etc do you demonstrate your knottiness?**

I primarily show my "knottiness" via YouTube. However, I've also taught my ties alongside other members of the IGKT-PAB at the "Summer Sailstice" event, held on Treasure Island, here in San Francisco.

**What is your next project?**

Aside from my continuing presentation of a knot a week on my **Tying It All Together** YouTube channel, I'm working on a three volume book set

of paracord fusion ties. The three books will present ties from my 2010 and 2011 seasons of **Tying It All Together** as well as show new ties and techniques that will not be presented online.

**What other hobbies do you have?**

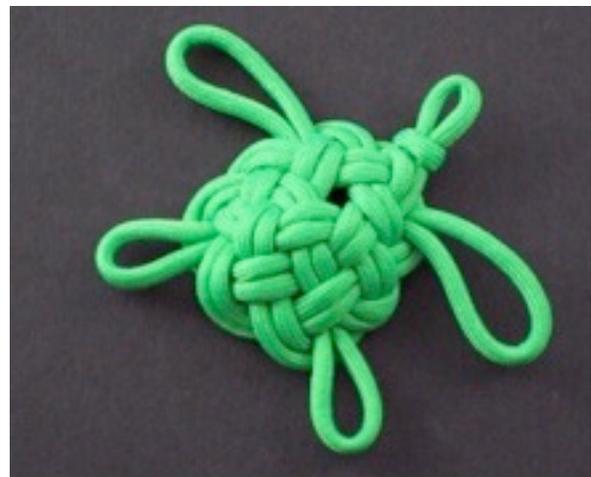
I write novels. My first and second novels Soft Candy (2006) and Disturbingly Normal (2010) are both available online (via Amazon.com). My third novel, Park Days, will be available later this year.

Is your family involved in your knottiness?

For the most part no. But a handful of my nieces and nephews appear to be showing an interest, which I support wholeheartedly.

Know of any knotty travel destinations you'd like to share?

I'm a huge fan of East Asian knots, and so would one day love to travel and explore China, Korea, and Japan.



While clearly you spend a lot of time tying, researching and thinking about knots, as a practical matter do you use knots much in your day to day life?

I work as a contractor by day. So on occasion, I use knots in support of my work. As irony would have it though, I mostly use utilitarian knots of the non-decorative variety (primarily square knots, taut-lines and half hitches). Not necessarily knot related, but I use string (for plumb lines and other measurements) a lot. As for the bracelets, baskets, rock slings and others ties I create and teach, I wear/use them on occasion, but not every day. This said, I swap out the fob on my key chain all the time. I don't go anywhere without at least 12 feet of a continuous line of paracord. A fact that has served me well on many an occasion.



For more information regarding J.D. Lenzen, visit his website: <http://www.fusionknots.com/>

Tech Review: iPhone and iPad Apps

Carol Wang

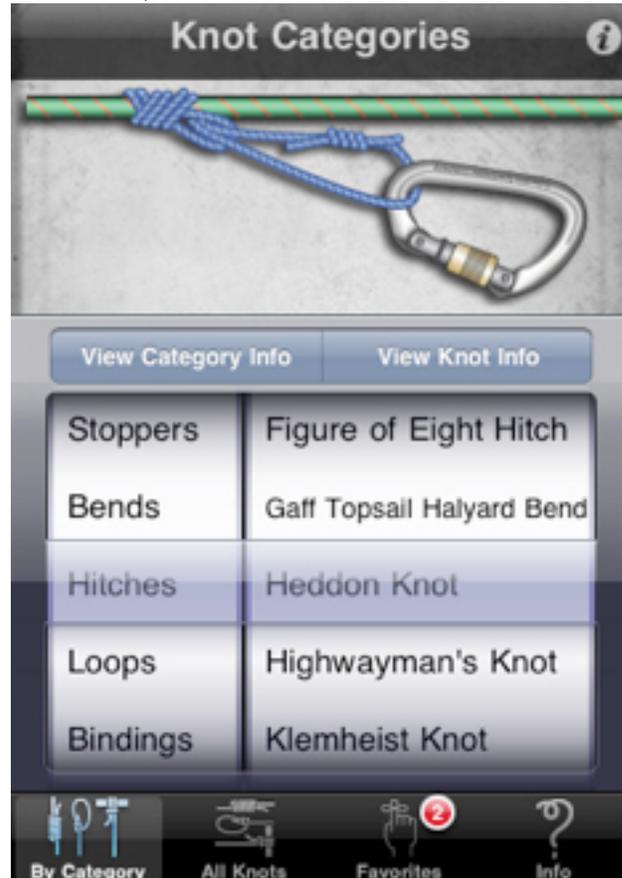
This review is about iPhone and iPad apps, because these are the devices I own and use. If someone wants to loan or give me a Kindle, Android, Blackberry, etc, etc I would be happy to investigate! Failing such unexpected largesse, however, it is probably up to you, Dear Reader, if you (or someone you know) has access to such devices, to investigate and report back on other platforms.

Note that, generally speaking, the iPad will always run iPhone apps but iPad specific apps don't always run on the iPhone.

What Knot To Do in the Greater Outdoors

by The Columbia Sportswear Company

Cost: free, Platform: iPhone



Notable features: rope part atlas and glossary in the introduction.

Knot Categories: bends, hitches, loops, bindings, special, stoppers

Each category is described and an illustration of the knot is shown as you dial through the knots. When you request knot information, a text description is shown along with an ABoK number. At the bottom is a button for step by step tying instructions. Swipe through the nicely done line art illustrations and short text descriptions. You can also add the knot to your short list of favourites.

The knots are also indexed and accessible by name: Albright special, alpine butterfly, anchor bend, anglers loop, ashley's bend, Bachmann knot, blood knot, blood loop dropper knot, boa knot, boom hitch, bowline, bowline on the bight, buntline hitch, Carrick bend, clove hitch, constrictor knot, cow hitch, diagonal lashing,

double bowline, double figure of eight bend, double figure of eight hitch, figure of eight hitch, figure of eight lashing, figure of eight loop, figure of eight knot, fisherman's knot, flemish bend, gaff topsail halyard bend, grapevine knot, harness bend, heaving line bend, heaving line knot, Heddon knot, highwayman's knot, hunter's bend, Klemheist knot, lighterman's hitch, man of war sheepshank, marlinespike hitch, mast jury rig knot, midshipman's hitch, miller's knot, mooring hitch, Munter hitch, Ossel hitch, overhand knot, oysterman's stopper knot, Palomar knot, pedigree cow hitch, pile hitch, pole lashing, prusik knot, reef knot, rigger's hitch, ring bend, rolling hitch, round turn and two half hitches, sailor's lanyard knot, shake hands bend, sheep shank, sheer lashing, sheet bend, simple simon bend, square lashing, stevedore knot, strangle knot, threaded figure of eight loop, timber hitch, transom knot, trucker's hitch, zepplin bend.

Nicely thorough for a field guide, well illustrated, good user interface, and *free*. This one's a must-have. Hats off to the Columbia Sportswear Company.

Ian's Laces 3.0.0

by Ian Fieggen and Ultra Software Solutions

Cost: \$1.99, **Platform:** iPhone

Cost: \$2.99, **Platform:** iPad



Each hand uses the two fingers inside its OWN loop to grab the loose end of the OTHER hand's loop. Use the left thumb

Ian Fieggen of the now famous Ian shoelace knot released this app a number of years ago. I remember that it was either \$0.99 or \$1.99 and I thought nothing of giving Ian my \$\$ and did insufficient

research on the topic before spending. It turned out that the app was all about weird and wonderful ways to lace up your shoes and nothing about knots. Because I (through my biased lens) had thought Ian was all about the knots I was expecting (among other things) that his knots would be in the app. Alas, no. So I wrote the experience off to rashness and, y'know, giving money to a worthy cause even if it didn't contain what I wanted. I did not delete the app only because I am a packrat. Well, somewhere

between 1.0.0 and 3.0.0 (no, I wasn't paying any attention to what was happening with updates, either) my knot problem had been fixed!! 18 knots and 2 knot starter configurations have been added to the app! With self-playing step by step line art slideshows that you can slider through one image at a time if you like. Instructive text accompanies the images. Problem solved through inattentiveness! ☺

The Knots: standard shoelace knot, two loop shoelace knot, Ian knot, Ian's secure shoelace knot, surgeon's shoelace knot, turquoise turtle knot, better bow shoelace knot, freedomKnot shoelace knot, double shoelace knot, double Ian shoelace knot, mega Ian shoelace knot, crossed Ian shoelace knot, two stage shoelace knot, loop the loop shoelace knot, halloween shoelace knot, boat shoe knot, one handed shoelace knot, reef knot, starting knot and double starting knot.

A slightly more expensive iPad specific version exists that takes advantage of the larger screen real estate, reformatting some features and offering other windows into the content, but not actually adding more content, although I expect that the images are bigger and not just sized up.

There is also a new lite version that has 10 lacing methods and "soon" to have a selection of knots as well for your sampling pleasure.

Ian's got a wacky niche knot (and shoelace) obsession, but that's how this craft progresses, right? I imagine him to be a modern day Imelda Marcos, but with a high top runner and boot collection instead of designer fashion shoes (or whatever it was she had).

Macrame Knots Guide Free

by Adot Studio (<http://adotstudio.appspot.com/>)

Cost: free (\$0.99), **Platform:** iPhone

There is a free and \$0.99 version of this app. Someday I will count how many books I have on this topic, but suffice to say that I spend more than enough money on knot reference material. I am therefore reluctant to spend more on what I clearly already own, so even though the full version is less than a buck, I have not purchased

it, even on your behalf in the name of a more thorough review. Sorry.



The illustrations are all photographs of highly textured braided cord.

This does not always provide the best clarity, plus the photos are not always in crisp focus.

In a number of places there is a note that says "Click on the icon to see a larger image," but this never works. Perhaps it works in the paid version, I don't know. There are also what appear to be internal links (eg. from a pattern using the square knot, presumably back to the square knot instruction page). These links don't work either. In places it's clear that the text has been written by someone for whom English is a second language, but whoever they are, their English is no doubt better than your Chinese (!?) and it really doesn't get in the way.

Knot Categories: square knot designs, half hitch designs, larks head designs, mounting and finishing knots, other important basic knots, chinese macrame knots, celtic knots, important techniques and tips.

The Knots: square knot, picot designs, alternating square knots, alternating V patterns, snowflake design, spiral stitch, square knot button, square knot sennits, alternating half hitch, waved basket stitch, basket stitch, half hitch spiral, double half hitch mount, double half hitch diamonds, half hitch patterns, double half hitch patterns, vertical half hitch, spiral design, shell knot, plaited chain stitch, larks head knot, vertical larks head, larks head design, larks head sennits, double buttonhole, buttonhole scallops, cats paw hitch, venetian picot mount, chain picot mount, clover hitch, unique mount designs, wall knots, oysterman knot, stevedore knot, barrel knot, linen stitch, overhand knot, linked OH knots, wrapped

knot, matthew walker knot, monkey fist, manrope knot, cockscomb knot, lanyard knots, chain sennit, hanger knot, interlocking weave, sailors knot, portuguese sennit, masthead mat technique, pitcher knot, triangle knot, slipknot, clew knot, knife knot, spanish hitching, wishbone design, cloverleaf knot, brocade knot, Chinese button knot, Chinese snake knot, Chinese step knot, cross knot, double connection, crown knot, plafond knot, rectangle knot, mystic knot, Chinese triangle, celtic button knot, josephine knot, celtic square knot, celtic triangle knot, interlaced plaits, flat turks head, celtic circle, figure 8 patterns, star knot, celtic designs, celtic ring knot, celtic compass, turks head knot, globe knot, moebius knot, and celtic mat.

There is a lot of material here with 6-15 items in each category and each item sometimes covering more than one knot, most of which is reasonably presented and for free or \$0.99 you're getting your money's worth if you don't already have a book in any of the featured categories (well, except the tassel section (making fringe, adding cords, and creating tassels), I wouldn't even consider \$0.99 well spent for that...) Plus you're going to want to consult a more authoritative guide for names... but other than that, totally worth it! ☺

Knot Time Lite

by 7zillion.com

Cost: free (\$3.99), **Platform:** iPhone



For those new to the iPhone/iPad market, a "lite" version of an app is usually a limited (in scope) free version of an app. A sample meant to entice you into purchasing the full version.

Notable Features: this app is particularly glitchy and as I review this article for publication,

I sadly cannot double check my facts because the app won't even start.

The knots: there are 33 knots in the paid version, in the lite version: square knot, trucker's hitch, bowline, bowline on a bight, cleat hitch, figure 8, monkey's fist, rolling hitch, sheet bend

The knots are shown on a sliding icon menu. Tap on a knot to see the short accompanying text. Tap again (or tap the "watch the video" icon) to see the video instructions. Knots are tied in a yellow braided cord over a woodgrain table. They could have made a higher contrast choice, but it's not bad. Also, the menu will sometimes spaz out and just keep scrolling even if you are not tapping or sliding or, indeed, touching anything at all.

Perhaps the paid one is bug-free. ☺ For \$3.99 and all these other competing options available... you'll want to really like full video versus well done step by step illustrations.

Navy Knots (Learning the Ropes)

by defencejobs.gov.au/navy/Training/

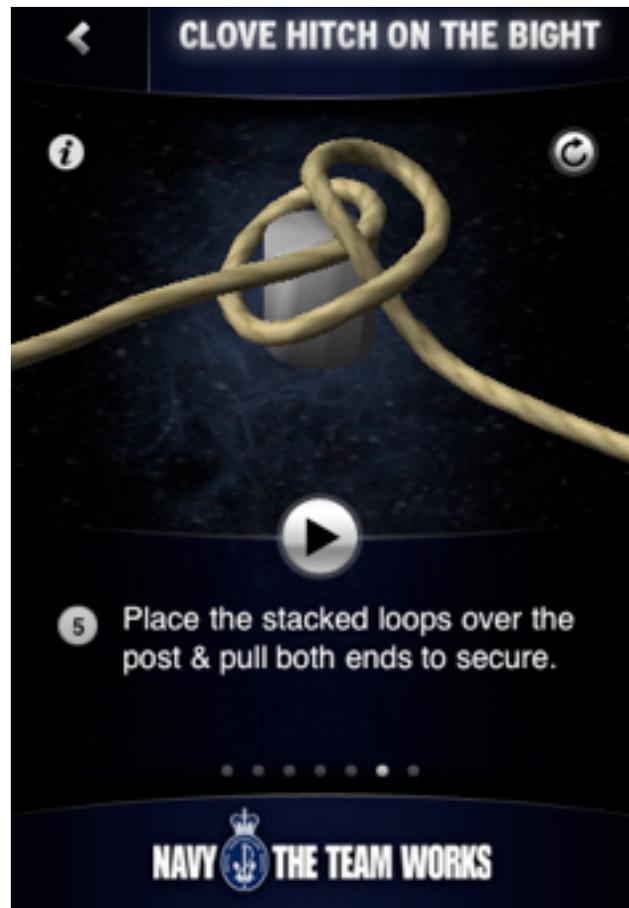
Cost: free, **Platform:** iPhone

Notable Features: 6 screens of "knot facts", mostly ropehandling tips.

Select a knot: bowline, clove hitch, clove hitch on the bight, figure of eight, reef knot, rolling hitch, round turn and two half hitches, sheet bend accessible through an info icon on the knot pages is a text only glossary.

The knot instruction pages, while limited, are unique in presentation. The tying is broken down into animated steps using 3d computer animated "ropes". That is to say, each steps animates, then pauses for a moment, during which you can read the text for that step or just more thoroughly study the image, then advances to the next automatically. Each image can be fully rotated in a trackball-like fashion.

The "sailor training" leads to the raison d'être of the app, a YouTube video and the Australian Navy recruiting website. Nifty learning tool for this handful of knots though. Plus, y'know, free. Your tax dollars at work (if you're Australian ☺).



Knots Free! or Knots-o-rama

by www.innerfour.com/iphone or

www.purplepenguin.com

Cost: ad supported, **Platform:** iPhone

Notable Features: This exact same app has different names and different websites.

The Knots: bowline, slip knot, reef knot, granny knot, sheet bend, figure 8 knot, clove hitch, double overhand stopper, double fisherman's bend, and prusik knot.

The knots are presented in step by step photographs of baby blue and lime green ropes on a billiard table with green felt background... it's actually not that bad for visual contrast but could easily be better. In general, the photos are decently focused and reasonably lit. The user interface for moving through the steps is fine. Difficult to complain about much here except for the number and selection of knots here in this ad supported app.