

# Fishing ABC's

By C. Boyd Pfeiffer

## Tie A Better Knot

Anglers often spend too much time learning too many knots. They *don't* spend enough time concentrating on the few, best possible knots for their fishing and practicing the best ways to tie them.

Knots are essential in fishing. They're used to connect line and leader to lures, hooks and rigs; connect line-to-line or line-to-leader; make loops in lines or leaders for various rigs and special functions. In addition, knot choices will vary with the size and type of the line.

"Musts" for any knot is that it be easy to tie, pull up securely so that it is strong, pull up consistently every time it is tied for reliability, and have a high strength which approaches the line strength.

A knot that is not strong is a poor knot, since it becomes the weak link in the fishing line. Using a knot that only tests 50 percent of line strength, for example, means that fishing with 12-pound test line effectively reduces the strength of the system to 6 pounds. Most good knots will test about 90 percent or higher of line monofilament strength; somewhat less for the new braided lines.

Some excellent basic knots include the **improved clinch knot**, the **palomar**, the **Trilene® knot** and the **uni-knot**.

Each of these knots has advantages and disadvantages.

For example, while the palomar knot is considered ideal by many experts, it does require slipping the terminal rig (or lure) through a loop of line. If this is a hook, fly or even a simple lure such as a jig, that's fine. For large crankbaits, bait rigs or buzzbaits and spinnerbaits, it is a problem, especially if you are in a hurry.

The uni-knot is easy to learn and tie and you can use it for several different applications. The improved clinch is a good knot and relatively easy to tie in any rig, although often not rated quite as strong as the Trilene or palomar.

The Trilene knot, developed by Berkley, is like a regular clinch knot, except that the line is run through the

### Trilene® Knot

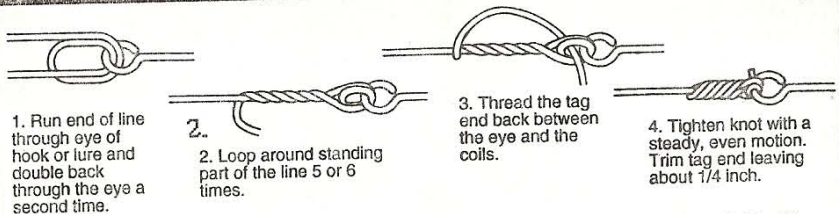


Illustration courtesy Berkley Trilene®

### Improved Clinch Knot

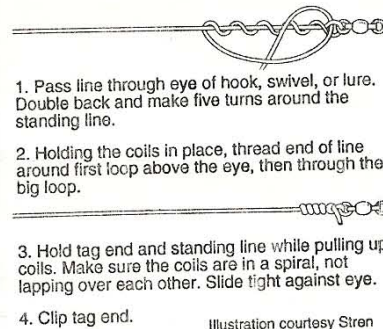


Illustration courtesy Stren

eye of the hook or lure twice. Thus, for small hooks or small lure/heavy line combinations, this might be impossible and require another knot. Running the line through the hook-eye twice seems to be the best also when tying knots with the new braided lines, with the Trilene and palomar knots proving to be the strongest (about 75 percent of line strength) in early tests.

The new braided lines, such as the Spectra and Stren's Kevlar, have relatively poor knot strength, prompting suggestions of certain knots and some specialty connections. These specialty connections include the Berkley Not-A-Knot wire connectors in three sizes, in which the doubled line is twisted around the wire connector for a knotless fastening, and the DuPont Lok-Knot adhesive connection system designed for braided lines.

Line-to-line connections are also important. They're a must for those situations when using a separate leader

### Palomar Knot

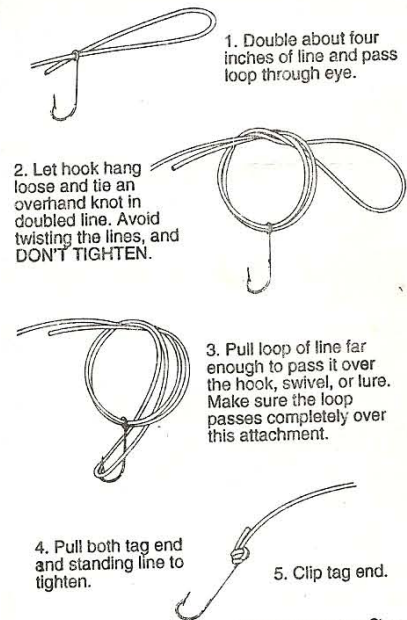


Illustration courtesy Stren

on the end of a line, for constructing fly leaders, for joining a mono leader to a braided line, or for joining new line to old line remaining on a reel when you do not wish to replace all the spooled line.

For these, the **simplified blood knot** is one of the best, since it's a simple, sure knot to tie, pulls up tight and snug and can be trimmed closely. It is also possible to vary the number of line wraps around the standing part of the line based on the diameter of the line. For heavy diameter line

(20 pound test or higher) use only four wraps of line in place of five. If joining light line to heavy line, use four wraps of the heavy line and five or six of the light line.

Sometimes a knot system works for a large number of connections and lines. Such is the case with the uni-knot system, which can be used for tying tight connections to lures, loop knots to lures, line-to-line connections, leader-to-line connections, etc. It's a simple concept, and a strong and sure knot system.

**Snelled hooks** are sometimes used for two-hook worm rigs and a lot of other freshwater fishing.

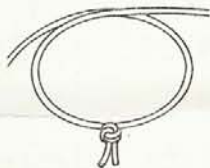
Snelling a hook is also easy using the uni-knot system, one of several different ways to do this basic technique of wrapping mono around a hook shank to secure it to the leader.

### Simplified Blood Knot

1. Take the ends of the two lines to tie a simple overhand knot (which you will clip off later), and tighten.



2. Form a loop where the two lines meet, with the overhand knot in the loop.



3. Pull one side of the loop down and begin turning it around the standing line. Keep points where turns are made open so turns will gather equally on each side.



4. After 8 to 10 turns, reach through the center opening and pull remaining loop (with overhand knot) through. Keep your finger in this loop so that the loop will not spring back.



5. Hold loop with teeth and pull both ends of line, gathering the turns on each side of loop.



6. Set knot by pulling lines as tight as possible. Tightening the coils will make loop stand out perpendicular to the line.



7. Clip off the loop and overhand knot close to the newly formed knot.

Illustration courtesy Siren

Use a hook with a turned-up or turned-down eye (running the line through the hook eye), or do not run the mono through the eye of straight-eyed hooks (it will kink the line at this point) when making the snell.

Practice is the key to perfecting knots, and strong knots are the key to preventing lost fish through breaks, line slippage or using the wrong knot for the job.

More information on knots is available through books on knots and rigs and booklets available from fishing line manufacturers:

**FISHERMAN'S KNOTS, FISHING RIGS, AND HOW TO USE THEM**, by Bob McNally, McNally Outdoor Productions, Jacksonville, FL., 286 pages.

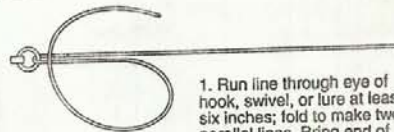
**PRACTICAL FISHING KNOTS II**, by Mark Sosin and Lefty Krebs, Lyons & Burford, New York, NY., 139 pages.

"*Ande Monofilament Book of Knots*," available free on request from Ande Monofilament, 1310 53rd St., West Palm Beach, FL 33407.

"*Berkley Line Booklet*," available from Berkley, One Berkley Drive, Spirit Lake, IA 51360-1041. (First booklet available free; additional copies \$0.25 each).

"*Choosing and Using Lines and Knots*," available from Stren Fishing Lines, 1007 Market Street, Room No. B-6308, Wilmington, DE 19898. This booklet is free with SASE and \$0.52 postage. — C. Boyd Pfeiffer

### Uni-Knot System



1. Run line through eye of hook, swivel, or lure at least six inches; fold to make two parallel lines. Bring end of line back in a circle toward hook or lure.



2. Make six turns with tag end around the double line and through the circle.

3. Hold double line at the point where it passes through eye, and pull tag end to snug up turns.



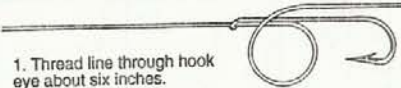
4. Pull standing line to slide knot up against eye.



5. Continue pulling until knot is tight.

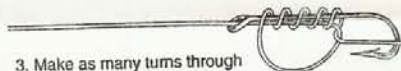
6. Trim tag end flush with closest coil of knot.

### Uni-Knot To Snell Hook

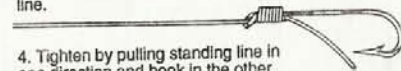


1. Thread line through hook eye about six inches.

2. Hold line against hook shank and form a Uni-Knot circle.



3. Make as many turns through loop and around line shank as you need (at least 6). Close the knot by pulling on tag end of line.



4. Tighten by pulling standing line in one direction and hook in the other.

Illustrations courtesy Stren

## 7 Tips For Better Knots

All fishing knots can be improved with some special tips and methods of tying:

1. When learning a new knot, practice at home with different sizes and brands of line.

2. Don't add steps to knots, since doing so will generally weaken them. For example, the clinch or improved clinch knot is strongest with five turns of line around the standing part. Adding more turns to make a knot with seven, eight or more twists will not strengthen the knot and may weaken it.

3. Pulling knots tight develops heat from friction and can weaken the line and knot. To prevent this, moisten the knot with saliva or water.

4. Pull all knots until they are tight. A loose knot will later pull and possibly slip when fighting a fish, often causing the knot to fail.

5. Do NOT heat the end of the line at a knot with a lighter with the idea of making a "ball" of mono that will not pull through. Heat will weaken the line.

6. Consider using an adhesive, such as the Stren Lok-Knot adhesive or any of the cyanoacrylate "super glues." Such glues will seal the knot to prevent slipping. Knots fail only when they start to slip from strain.

7. If possible, use the same brand of line when making line-to-line or line-to-leader connections.