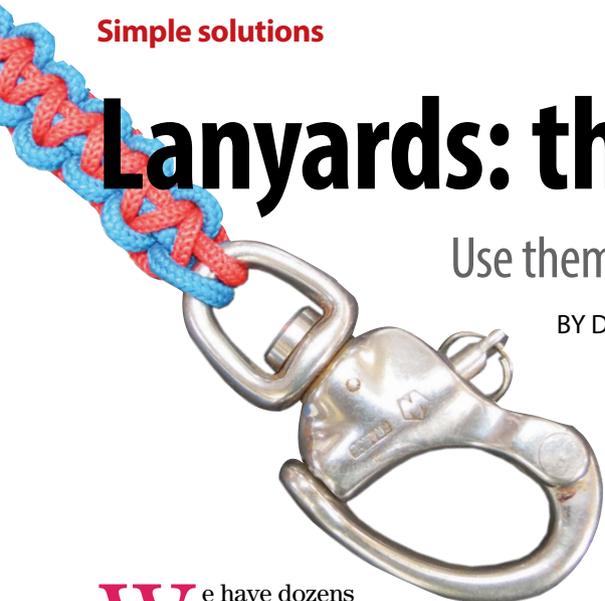


Lanyards: the sailor's keepsafes

Use them for handles, tethers, and tie-downs

BY DAVID LYNN



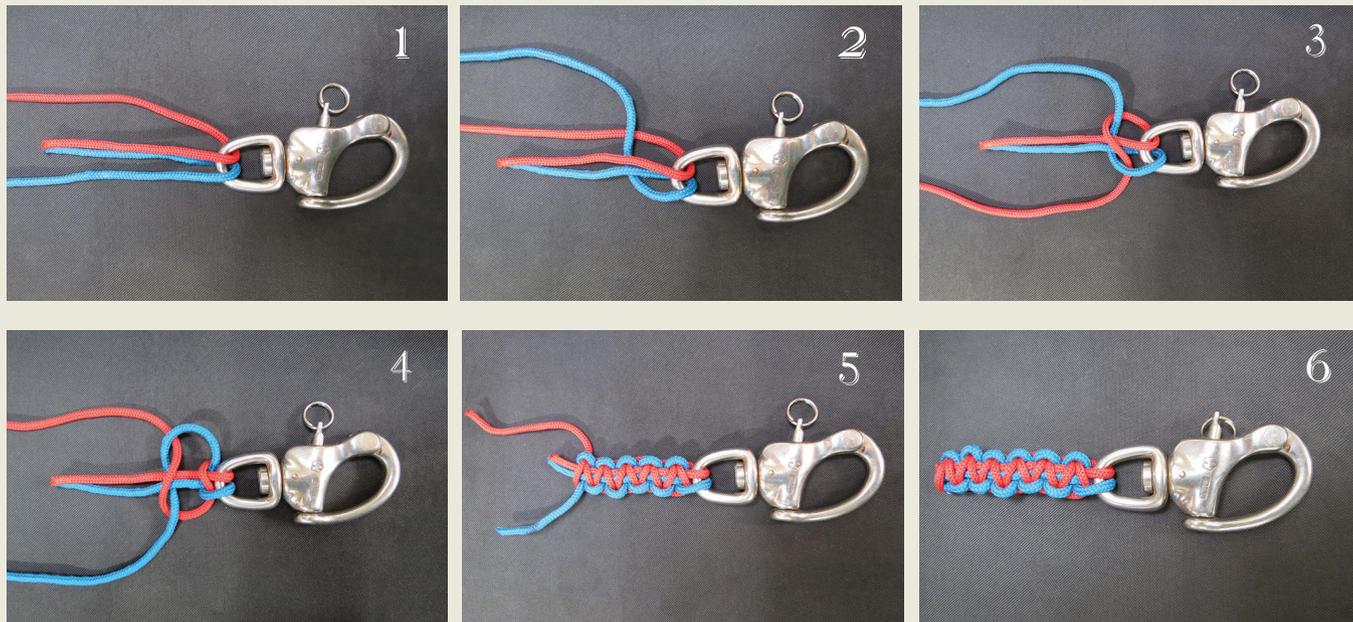
We have dozens of lanyards aboard *Nine of Cups*. We use them on pelican hooks, zippers, key rings, flashlights, and even USB flashdrives. I've used a lanyard knot with very fine line to make jewelry. I once used a variation of it to make a belt when John Santic, a friend who joined us on a passage to Easter Island, discovered he had forgotten to bring one. Our ship's bell sports a rather fancy lanyard attached to its clapper, and we use another lanyard to secure the cockpit table when it's not in use.

When at sea, and I go forward at night or when the weather is bad, I never leave the safety of the cockpit without my safety harness on, attached to the jacklines with a stout lanyard, and I always take my trusty rigger's knife with me, attached to a lanyard around my neck.

The Ashley Book of Knots, one of our most-used onboard reference books, devotes a number of pages to different lanyard knots. Some are simple, some are extremely complex, but all are useful and decorative. The version I describe here is one of the easiest to make. 

David Lynn is a Good Old Boat contributing editor. He and his wife, Marcie, have lived aboard Nine of Cups, their 1986 Liberty 458 cutter, since purchasing her in Kemah, Texas, in 2000, and have sailed more than 70,000 nautical miles in their ever-so-slow world circumnavigation. Marcie has just published Nine of Cups Caribbean Stories, an ebook about the first major destination on their cruise. It's downloadable at www.audioseastories.com. More will follow.

Lanyard step by step



Start with a length of line 12 times the finished length of the lanyard and cut it in half. To begin the knot, pass the two lines through the ring in opposite directions (PHOTO 1). The most difficult part of the lanyard is tying the first knot (PHOTOS 2 and 3). Tie it as shown and pull it tight (PHOTO 4). Once this knot is done, repeat the process until the lanyard is complete. Note that one of the lines always passes over the top of the two center lines while the other always passes beneath them. (Normally, the lines won't be different colors

as in the photos, and it is not always easy to keep track of which line passes on top. I tie a small knot at the end of the top line to keep them straight.) Work the knots tight and stop knotting when the lanyard is the right length (PHOTO 5). To finish, cut the ends off each of the lines, leaving about 1/8 inch, and use a cigarette lighter to melt the remaining ends (PHOTO 6). (While they are still hot, I press the ends flush with my finger. Alternatively, I sometimes put a drop of clear glue on each end and trim them once the glue has dried.)