

# Sailing Study Guide

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

In order for a rope to be useful on a boat you need to know how to work its ends and ensure they link up with other elements of the rigging. Ropes can be used for mooring, anchoring, towing and fastening. On a sailboat, ropes can be used for raising sails, trimming sails, holding up the mast and countless other tasks. Once rope is placed on a boat it is referred to as line. Knots are used to tie the halyards to the sails, the sheets to the boom and traveler, as well as cleat the boat to the dock.

Rope is measured by its diameter and by the load that it will support without breaking. Common sizes range from 1/8" to 3/4". Different types of ropes have different characteristics. Natural rope, which is made from vegetable fibers, were used for thousands of years but have mostly been replaced. It is easy to work with, but will weaken quickly once weathered. During World War II a need for a more abundant material was created and as a result synthetic rope-making materials were produced. Most ropes used today are synthetic ropes because of their superior strength qualities and ability to resist rotting, although UV rays can damage them. The chart below shows traits of four common types of rope.

TYPE	ADVANTAGE	DISADVANTAGE	TENSILE STRENGTH (1/2" diameter)
Nylon (Polyamide)	Little stretch until 25% of breaking strength at which the amount of stretch increases.	Vulnerable to UV rays.	4200 lbs
Dacron (Polyester)	Highly elastic until 25% of breaking strength, then little to no stretch. Durable against UV rays.	Expensive and not as strong as nylon.	3600 lbs
Polypropylene	Low elasticity and inexpensive. Great for <u>mooring</u> because it floats.	Highly vulnerable to UV rays and weak.	2500 lbs
Manila (Natural)	Cheap and easier to splice. Best price for natural <u>line</u> .	Weaker, heavier and will rot	1350 lbs

**Figure 8**

This knot is used as a stopper knot. It is easy to take apart when needed, even after heavy load is applied and the line has been wet.

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