

Maedeup: The Art of Korean Knots

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A Brief History

Maedeup is the Korean art of knotting cord for decoration. Decorative knotted items have been seen in a mural in a tomb from as far back as 357 during the Three Kingdoms period (57 BC- 668 AD) and knots were depicted on a piece of celadon pottery from the Goryeo Kingdom (918- 1392). There is one surviving pouch from the Goryeo Kingdom with knots on the string. This is the oldest existing artifact that has physical Korean knots on it. Maedeup became very common during the Joseon period (1397-1897) and was used to decorate fans, instruments, wall hangings, curtains, and swords. The royal court had artisans who made knots for the court and ladies from all classes wore knotted ornaments called norigae on their dresses for special occasions and for good luck. Maedeup is still used today in Korea for jewelry, cell phone charms, bookmarks, and house decorations.

Materials

The traditional cord used for maedeup is woven on a loom using dyed silk thread and weighted bobbins and could be round or flat. The round cord weave is similar to paracord and it makes a good substitute to use for practice.

Knotted pieces are typically made of one piece of cord and symmetrical on the front and back of the piece. Awls are used to help tighten the knots.

Resources

[Maedeup](#), Korean Traditional Decorative Knotting, Korea Craft & Design Foundation, 2016.

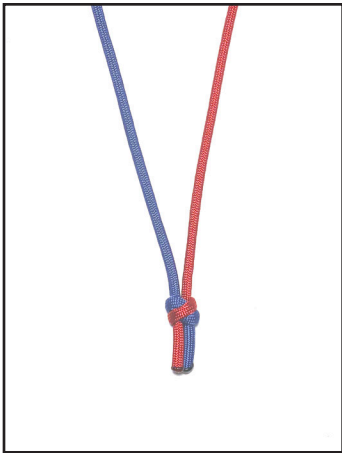
[Maedeup](#), The Art of Traditional Korean Knots, Kim Hee-jin, 2006.

[Knot Another!](#), Elsabe J. van Rensburg, 2009.

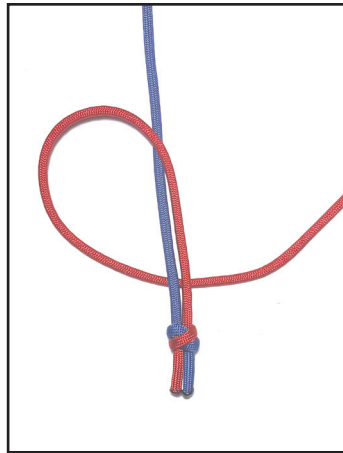
BaekyMaem on Youtube

Dorae Maedeup - Double Connection Knot

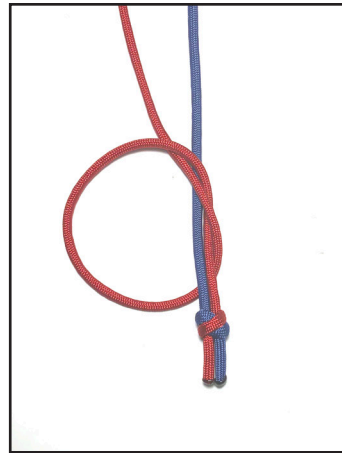
This basic knot is used to before and after other knots to keep them in place.



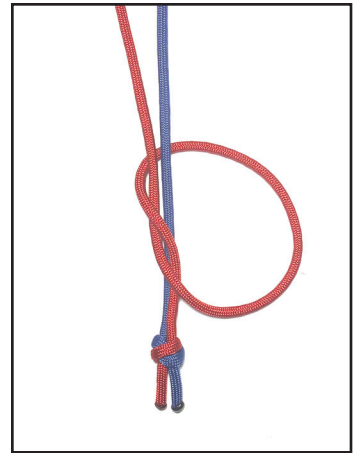
Start with your two stands separated.



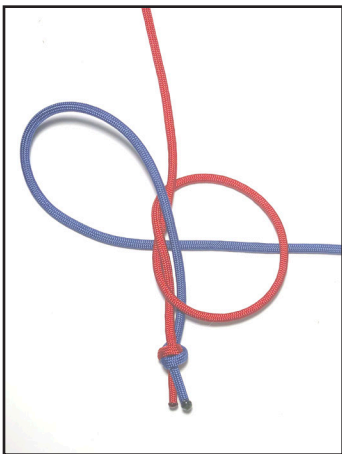
Loop the red strand under the blue strand.



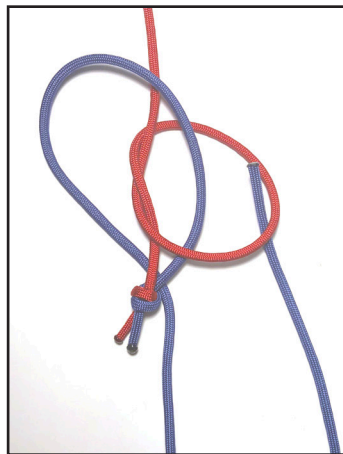
Go through the loop with the red strand.



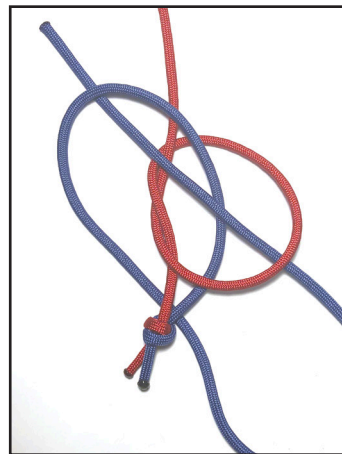
Grab the loop and flip it under the blue strand. The strands have now switched sides.



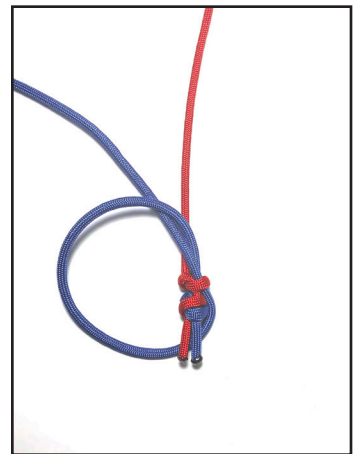
Loop the blue strand under the red loop.



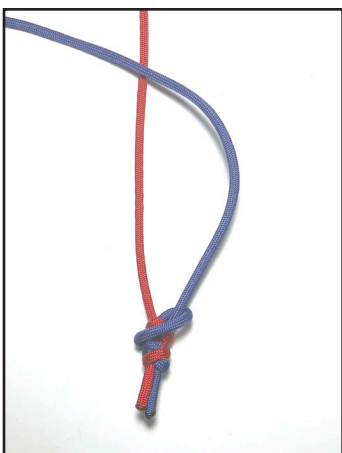
Go through the red loop with the blue strand.



Go over the middle loops and strands and go through the blue loop with the blue strand.



Tighten the red loop. You can move the knot up or down the strand while tightening this loop.



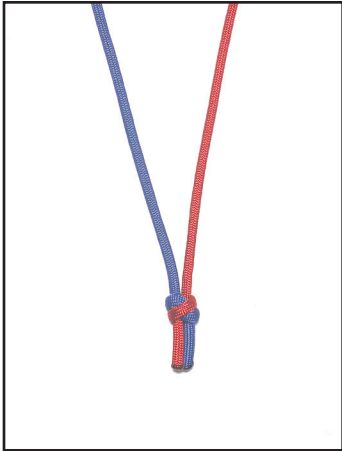
Tighten the blue loop on top of the red knot.



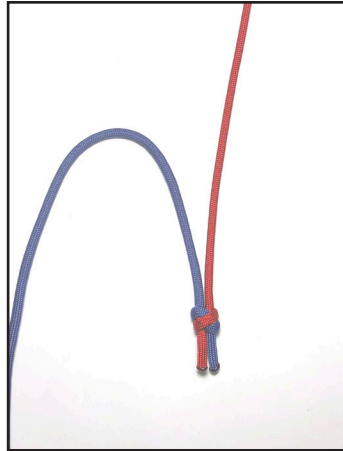
Finished dorae maedeup.

Saengjjok Maedeup - Ginger or Cloverleaf Knot

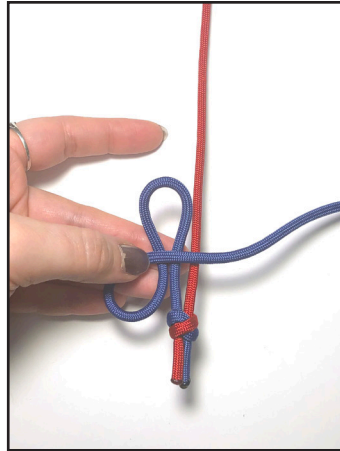
This knot is used to build several other knots but is also pretty on its own.



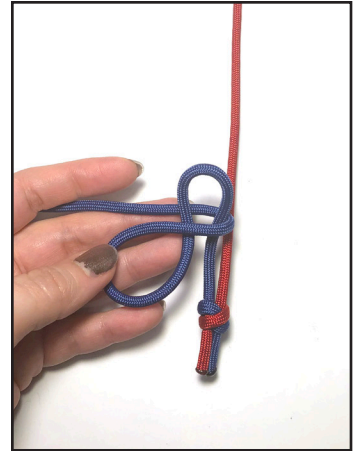
Start with your two strands separated.



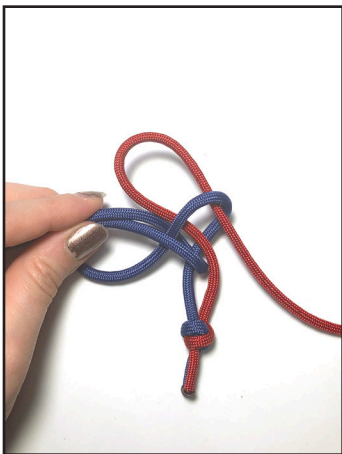
Arch the blue strand down.



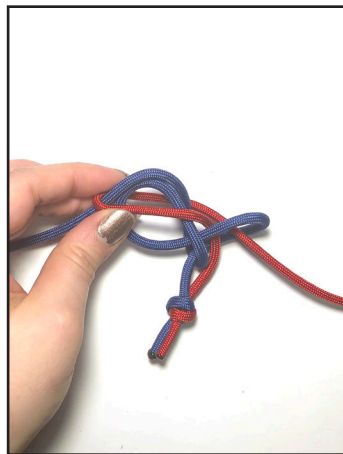
Loop the blue strand up and then across itself.



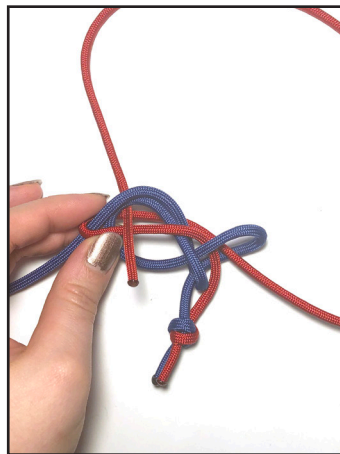
Loop the end of the blue strand under itself.



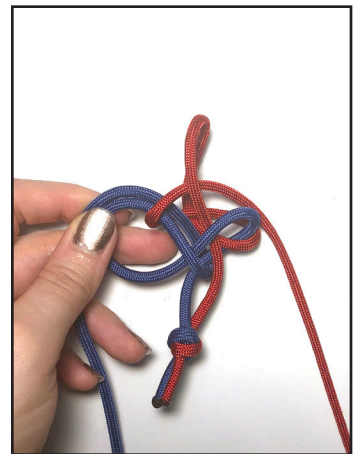
Holding the two blue strands, feed a red loop through the top blue loop.



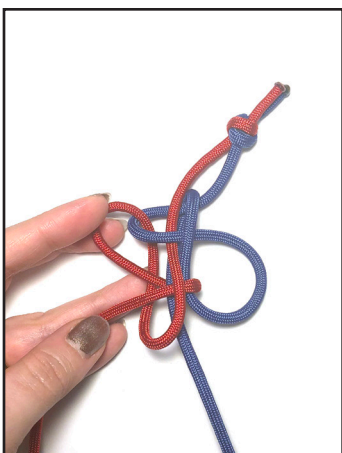
Pull the two blue strands through the red loop.



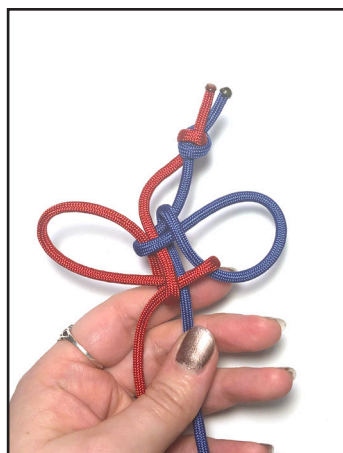
Feed the red strand from behind through the space created between the blue strands and red loop.



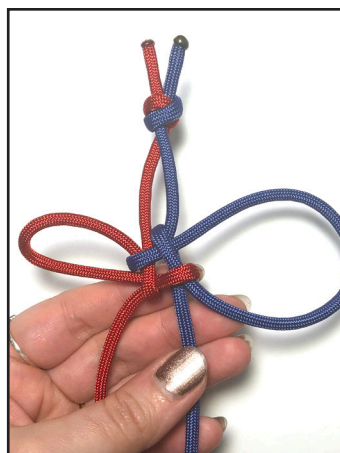
Once you pull the red strand through, push the red loop off the blue strands.



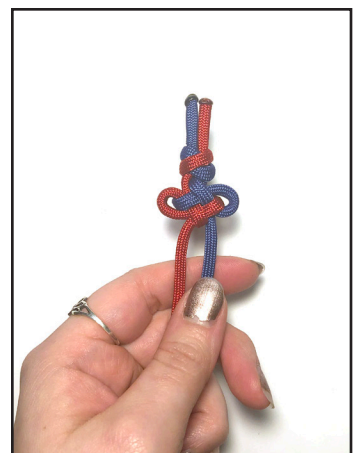
Turn the knot upside down.



Start tugging on the top, sides, and bottom strands.



Continue tightening the knot, the center starts to form.



Feed the strands through the knot in order to tighten and move the knot. Finished saengjjok maedeup.