

KNOT A PROBLEM



Are your nocks and knots driving you loopy? John Dudley offers some valuable tips in this step-by-step guide to the best nock and loop combination for you



Four great nock and loop methods

Nock and loop set-ups have evolved over the years, and there are several ways of using them today that I feel are excellent. Below is all you need to know about these methods. First, though, I will show you the correct way to install a tied nock point, and then how to add a d-loop.

Tied Nock Points

Let's start with materials: I find that the 3D serving from BCY works really well, giving you small, even knots. Other equally good materials are the BCY 2S or 3D serving – if you can find it. Personally, I don't like braided materials (like the #62 braid) – simply because the knot ends up being bigger than I want it. The #62 braid is great for servings, but not for tied knots.

Once you have the correct material, start by tying 'over-and-under' knots (knots formed by overlapping the thread and pulling it tight



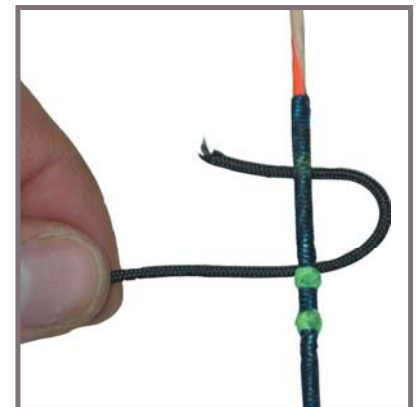
Tying a nocking point

– just like tying a shoelace). I do this on the top of the string and then on the bottom, for about 3mm. After 3mm I backtrack with over-and-under knots towards where I began. The backtrack knots should fit nicely in between the knots tied on the first pass. When you get to the end, backtrack again for two over-and-under knots, and tie a double knot (see bottom diagram). Then cut the excess, and burn the end flush to the knots.

Loop Installation

To install a good quality d-loop that's safe and slip-free, you will need some BCY loop material with poly; a pair of needle-nose pliers; a razor blade; and a lighter.

Start out with a piece of loop material about 9" long and form a U at one end, as shown in photo below. Wrap the ends of the loop material



Start your loop by forming a U

around your string serving, and pull both ends through the U. Slide the loop into the desired position, and pull tightly on the short end using the pliers. Do the same with the long end of the loop material. This should firmly secure the first half of the d-loop. Before finishing off the other side, you will need to burn a good ball on the side you have just done. Do this by cutting the loop material – again with about 3mm excess



Burn the loop ends with a lighter

– and fuzz it up by rolling it around on your finger. This will give you a really nice ball when you burn it down with the lighter (see above). After you have burnt the ball, take your pliers and, once again, pull tightly on the remaining end of the material.



Pulling tight on the loop ends

The next steps are where 90% of people screw up. Finish the loop by lying the remaining material over the opposite side of the string, and then looping it around the string and to the inside of the loop. Then cross over the top of the loop; go under the string; and then back through. When done properly, this process should mirror the diagram below. At this point, you will be able to adjust the length of the material to get the length of d-loop you want. You will then need to pull very tightly on the

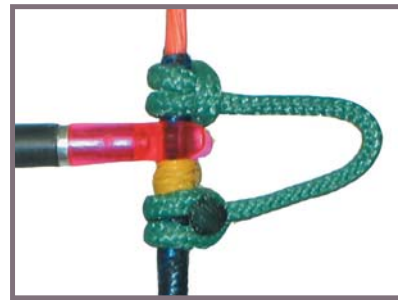


Finishing the loop

excess of loop material with the pliers, and then cut the material; fuzz and burn as before. To completely secure the loop and adjust it to the exact size, slide the needle-nose pliers inside the d-loop and spread them apart to make the loop as tight as possible. When you have done this several times, you will be able to spread the d-loop about 1-2mm further apart than it originally measured – depending on how tight your loop knot was before you burned it. You should always keep this in mind, and make the d-loop a few millimetres smaller than your desired final length before spreading it apart with the pliers. Spreading it hard with the needle nose pliers really bites it into the strings; this will prevent it spinning around the serving, or loosening up and causing a mis-fire.

Now you know how to properly make a d-loop and tie good nock points, you should find it easy to use these nock point methods successfully.

Method One: Single Nock with D-Loop

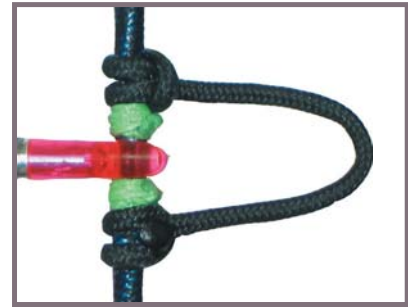


The process is fairly simple; it consists of making one nock point below the arrow, and then tying the d-loop above the arrow and below the nock point. This system is used by champion field archer Dave Cousins – so it's obviously a good one. Because this method only has one nock below the arrow, it puts downward pressure on the arrow at full draw when the bow is pulled back. This is desirable for many archers, because the arrow puts constant pressure on the arrow-rest and doesn't lift up off it at full draw, or when shooting severe angles (as in field archery). I have found that this system works w

more downward pressure will also change the spine of your arrow (see Method Two: double nock with d-loop).

What I don't like about this method is that if the loop breaks, you lose the top nock point – because the loop knot is the nock point. Also, a loop knot is not even all the way round, and if your loop turns to the side it will put different pressure on the arrow nock. However, as I said earlier, Dave Cousins has proved that this system works perfectly when set up correctly – so perhaps it's simply down to personal preference.

Method Two: Double Nock with D-Loop



This method is my favourite. To use it, start by placing the arrow at 90° on your rest; then, tying the top nock point using the over-and-under technique, make both nocks about 3mm. I like to leave a 1mm gap between my arrow nock and the bottom tied nock point. This is because at full draw the gap will close from the string angle, preventing the nock points from pinching the arrow nock. I then tie my normal loop on the outside of each nock point. On the single cam bows that I've used since 1998, the nock travel has been really good – so I have had no need for the extra downward pressure that Method One provides. After I've completed this process I like to take the point out of my arrow, and pull the bow to full draw. If the arrow lifts up off the rest I know my tied nocks are too close together, and are pinching the arrow. If the arrow stays perfectly on the rest then all is well – the arrow point weight will maintain all the downward pressure needed.

Another great thing about this method is that when you're trying new things with your bow, you can change loop lengths and loop materials – or replace old loops – without losing nock height and arrow tune. Also, as the string wears in and naturally turns, the pressure will remain constant regardless of loop position – because the tied nocks are perfectly round. The only downside with this method is that sometimes your nock travel will not allow it. If your arrow (minus point) continually lifts off the rest, even when you have a gap between the arrow nock and the bottom tied nock, then you should stick to Method One.

Method Three: Single Nock with Loop Under

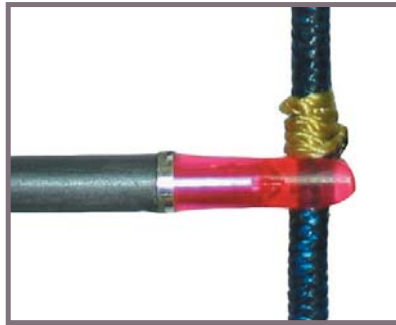


This method has probably been around for the longest, in one form or another. Archers who like lower anchor points tend to use it. Tie your over-and-under knots to make your nock point above the arrow; then do a normal d-loop, with the entire loop under the arrow. This system also puts a lot of downward pressure on the arrow, and will keep it on the arrow rest. The downside to this method is that people with shorter draw lengths and slower speeds sometimes have difficulty achieving 90m for clearance – although this depends on bow set-up. It also produces large loop knots under the arrow, which can look silly. To prevent this, switch to a smaller loop material so that the loop knots aren't so far apart. BCY makes a special material for me, called 'Dudley braid', that is superb for this method. I'm sure they would sell it to other archers if asked.

There is another variation to this method which I like even better; it was developed by 90m world record holder Clint Freeman. He has made a great little loop that fits easily under the arrow, and works well for hinge-style release. What makes his set-up so neat is that the loop can actually twist horizontally – which is what you want if you are using a hinge-style release aid. It's totally torque-free; it is also completely served, so the longevity is tremendous. He calls

it 'Clint's Loopy': visit www.clintslumpy.com to order.

Method Four: Single Nock



This system consists of a single nock point tied above the arrow. It's for people who shoot a caliper-style release aid, or a release aid with loop material attached directly to it. Hinge-style releases (like a Carter Colby or Revenger) usually pivot best when used with the loop on the release itself. One benefit of a tied nock point over a brass nock is that it doesn't lose speed from the extra weight in the middle of the string. Also, a properly tied nock point won't slip, and produces less wear on the arrow nock and your face. Because this system

generates a lot more stress on the nock itself, as the arrow is forced up against it, I would recommend making three or four full passes on the over-and-under knots, to make the diameter of the knot itself a little larger than it is when you use a loop.

All four of these methods have their own specific advantages. Release type; shaft spine; nock fit; nock travel; and string angle should all be factors in deciding which one to use. All of these methods have probably shot world records over the years, and I am sure they will continue to do so in the future. What is important for you, though, is to find the one that works best for your bow and arrow combination. If you want to reach your maximum potential, you should try them all and compare your scores. The single nock with d-loop; double nock with d-loop; single nock with under loop; and single nock methods will all help you improve your game. Good luck and good shooting!

John Dudley

John Dudley is International Sales Director at Mathews Inc, Sparta, USA. He is also a top pro-staff archer, with many tournament wins under his belt in recent years.

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