

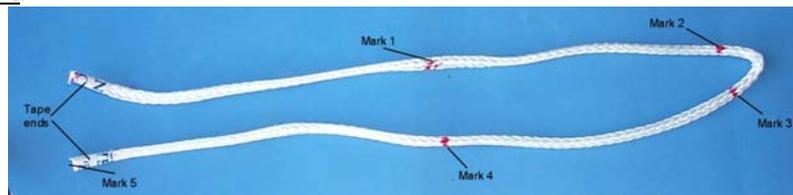
## **BRAID JIB SHACKLE (Soft Shackle)**

A very strong, lightweight and versatile alternative to the metal shackle, the braided rope version of the old three-strand 'jib shackle' seems to have come to the modern yachting scene from Germany. Its strength lies in the use of HMPE hollow braid; lightweight because of course HMPE fibres are much lighter than steel and versatile in that it can be used in place of many different types of metal shackle and as a soft hook arrangement both above and below decks.

One rope shackle can be made with less than a metre of Dyneema or Vectran braid; suitable pieces can usually be found in the 'rope end bins' of your chandler, cheaper than off the reel. The rope must be of hollow construction, such that it will bunch up to allow enough room in the centre to pass the working end through it.

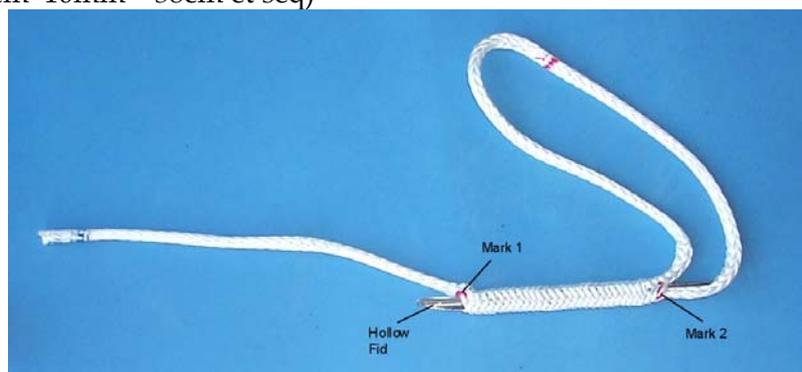
**Tools required:** You will need a sharp pair of scissors, marker pen, a hollow fid the same diameter as the rope and a hot knife or butane flame. Alternatives to the hollow fid are – a splicing needle or wire loop, although these are not as easy to use as a hollow fid.

### **Marking out:**

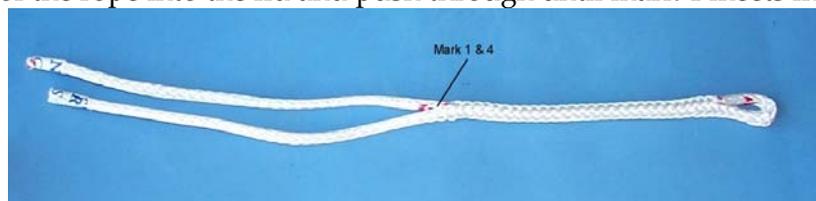


Using 6mm braid as an example – measure 20cm from the working end of the rope, mark with pen – from this point measure the circumference of the shackle required and make mark 2 – measure 5cm make mark 3 – repeat the circumference measurement again and make mark 4 – finally measure 20cm and make mark 5. Tape the rope at mark 5 and cut with knife or scissors to leave a soft end.

(8mm – 28cm 10mm – 38cm et seq)

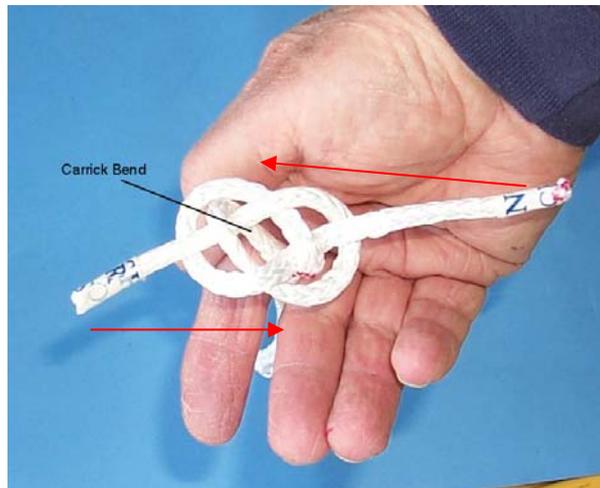


Feed a hollow fid through the centre of the rope from mark 2 to mark 1 – insert the taped end of the rope into the fid and push through until mark 4 meets mark 1.



The two long ends will now be used to form a diamond knot knob.

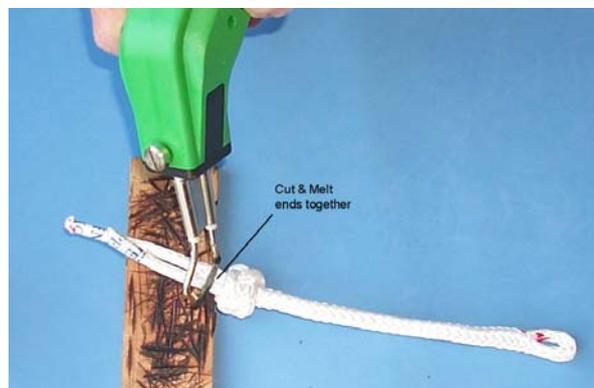
**Knob knot:**



With the two ends, form a Carrick Bend as shown, taking care not to loose the noose.



Pass the left end around the lead emerging from the rope and then up through the centre of the knot, pass the right hand end around the other lead and up through the centre alongside the first one. Tighten the knot by holding the ends and the shaft pulling gently, then gradually tighten, from the point where they enter the knot, to each end.



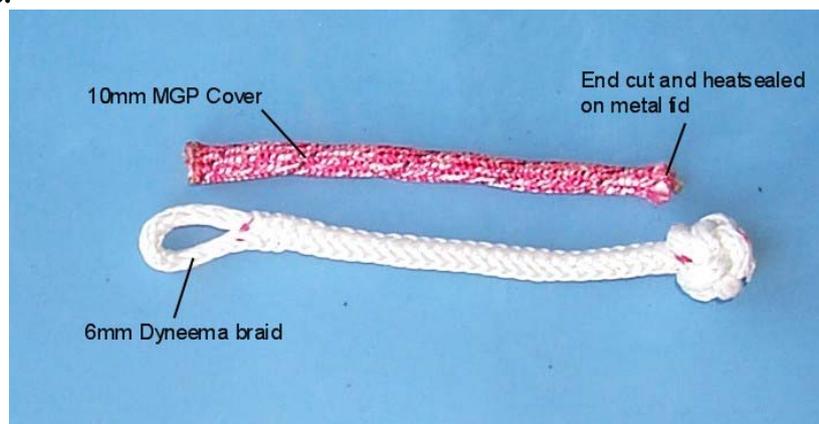
When nice and firm cut both ends close to the knot with a hot knife, or if you do not have a hot knife, stop the ends together with whipping twine close to the knot and

cut the ends off about 10mm from the knot - seal with a butane flame, taking care not to damage the diamond knot.



Open the noose by sliding the outer cover towards the diamond knot - push the diamond knot through the noose and milk the cover back towards the noose.

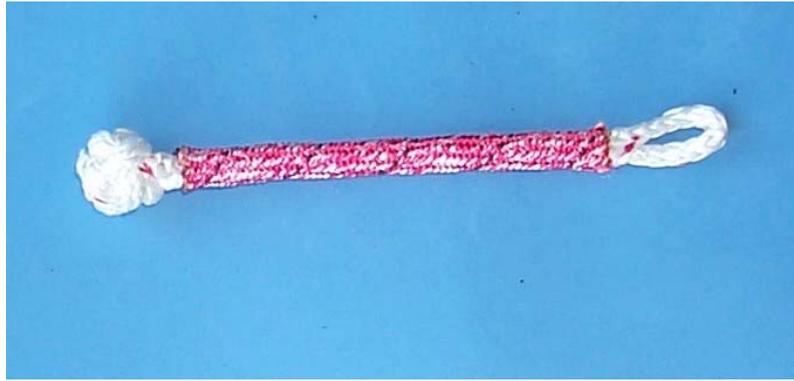
#### Variations:



1. For **added protection** the part of the shackle from the knob to the noose can be covered with MGP Cover or the cover from a polyester braided rope slightly larger than the shackle stem - cut to length, feed the end on to a metal spike or hollow fid, then seal the end with a hot knife - repeat for the other end.



Pull the noose through with whipping twine.



2. To make a **soft hook** - to hang coils of rope or articles below decks - make the stem an appropriate length allowing about 20mm for securing. The stem can be secured to a stay, stantion or handrail with the diamond knot uppermost, using a round seizing, or, dare I say it, a cable tie.