



Cordage & Its Uses

Cordage is available in a multitude of sizes, colors and materials. The physical dimension or thickness of a line is important. Some very thin lines are rated quite high for strength (paracord), while some thicker lines are not (plastics). If you need to pull on a line with bare hands, you will want it to be at least 1\2" to 5\8". Any smaller will bite into your skin and be harder to hang onto in a hauling or climbing situation. For snare traps and tie downs, thinner is generally better.

If you are going to practice tying knots, any ole hank of rope will do. In a wilderness survival situation you will want quality rope. If you are going to be putting your life on the line, you will want that line to be very dependable. Quality isn't cheap but, what is your life worth? Ideally, you should have more than one type of line with you:

- Something for sewing (dental floss, good thread and/or fishing line)
- Small stuff for tie downs and snares (paracord or tarred bank line)
- At least one length of quality rope
- Waxed string



Wear, stress, age, and prolonged exposure to sunlight will weaken any rope. The simple answer to these issues is to use good quality, newer, line rated for more than you will require of it. Do you want the line to have some stretch and give like nylon, or almost none like dacron? There are many instances where one is preferable to the other, it all depends on the job at hand. If the situation is likely to put repeated jerks on a line, like a boat anchor compensating for wave action, you will want something with elasticity. If the application is a static pull, then elasticity is not so good.

Survival Tip

The most common materials of modern cordages:

- New cotton and hemp should be soaked then stretched until dry. This will make the line more stable.
- Nylon has natural elasticity, which means it will stretch and spring back as long as it is not overloaded. Sometimes you require a little give in the line.
- Dacron line is very stable with no stretch. Sometimes this may be a quality you want.
- Climbing rope is very specific but it can be used for anything that requires that size line (1\2 to 5\8 diameter)
- Pay attention to the rating of the cordage you are purchasing so you are aware of how much weight that particular type of line will support.
- For safety reasons, try to put no more than half the weight the line is rated for.

Note: Cordage can be manufactured by hand in the wilderness, however, this is a very time consuming process. In our estimation, cordage is second only to a good survival knife. The versatility of its uses will aid in acquiring food, building shelter, first aid, repairing equipment, clothing and a whole lot more. Its uses are as limitless as your imagination, so don't forget to include it in your survival kit.

