

# Learning Macrame Basics

Macrame is the art of knot tying. It is different than other fiber arts because it is built on individual knots. Learning these knots is the key to creating beautiful macrame projects. This project teaches you three unique knots that are widely used in modern macrame art. Practice each of the following knots before starting the project to have a smoother experience. **Be sure not to cut any ropes that came with your kit at this point because you'll need these ropes later to complete your plant hanger.**

## Vocabulary

**Working Cords:** The cords you manipulate and twist to form knots.

**Filler Cords:** Cords you do not actually manipulate and twist but are used to support the knot by being the base and inner portion of the knot.

### Materials Needed

- Rope from your kit
- Either a Dowel or hoop from kit
- Tape or pins with a macrame board.

### Larks Head Knot

This knot is commonly used in the beginning of macrame projects to attach ropes to a dowel, a hoop, or to other ropes. It can also be used in the body of a project.

#### Step 1

Fold a rope in half. Make sure the ends are together so that you can properly identify the middle of the rope.



#### Step 2

You should have a loop end and an end with the cut sides of the rope. Take the loop and place it an inch or so over the dowel or hoop.



### Step 3

Treat the cut ends as one, placing them through the loop you created with the last step. Tighten by pulling the cut ends taught. Make sure the ropes that wrap around the dowel are pushed together with no gaps for a clean professional look. Also make sure the cut ends are still even. If they are not even, adjust your knot.



### Step 4

Practice this knot a few times. Make sure you go in the same direction everytime so that your knots look the same.



### Right Square Knot

Likely the most commonly used macrame knot. It can be manipulated to form a variety of other knots. Learning the square knot allows you to create a multitude of macrame designs. In a way, this knot is really the foundation of the macrame artform.

### Step 1

Start with two larks head knots as shown. Then tape your dowel down to the table to prevent the project from moving around. The two center cords are filler cords and the two outside cords are working cords. Fold the right most cord over the two center filler cords.



## Step 2

Place the most left cord on top of the folded right cord.



## Step 3

Twist the left rope behind the filler cords and through the loop you originally created, bringing the left cord to the front. Tighten by holding the center cords taught while pulling the outer cords in different directions. You should have two center filler cords and the working cords forming a twist around them. Play close attention to make sure what you're doing looks like the photo. It's okay if you have to try a few times before you get it.



## Step 4

To complete this knot you will simply repeat the last three steps except this time you will start with the left most cord. Fold the left most cord over the center filler cords.



### Step 5

Place the most right cord on top of the folded left cord. Refer to the photo.



### Step 6

Pull the right cord behind the filler cords and back through the loop you made on the left to bring the cord forward. This should form another twist around the filler cords. Tighten the twist by holding the middle cords taught while you pull the right and left ropes in opposite directions.



### Step 7

This is what a completed right square knot looks like. Practice this many times. It is the most commonly used knot in macrame. Once you've learned this knot you will be able to make so many beautiful macrame items. Remember that macrame is not the easiest skill to learn so don't be too hard on yourself if you don't get it on the first try.



## Gathering Knot

The gathering knot is mainly used to support the bottom of plant hangers in macrame. So it is important that this knot is done tightly so that your heavy plant in its pretty pot is well supported. You won't need to tape down your dowel or hoop for this knot.

### Step 1

To practice this knot you want to fold multiple ropes (maybe 4) over a dowel or hoop.



### Step 2

Take an additional rope and fold it about 6 inches from one end. Use the photo for guidance. Then simply place it next to the bunch of ropes as shown in the photo. Note the loop is at the bottom and the cut end is at the top.



### Step 3

Next, hold everything together with your non-dominant hand.



#### Step 4

Using the long end of the rope, tightly wrap around all the ropes in the same direction. Coil around all the ropes downwards. Be sure not to leave any spaces or go back at all.



#### Step 5

Once you've fully wrapped around at least 6 times (it's okay if you go more than that) you'll put the rope you've been wrapping with through the loop you created toward to the bottom. Hold it through the loop taughly to not undo the work you've done.



#### Step 6

Locate the shorter cut end that should be poking out of the top of your gathering knot. Pull it and notice how the loop gets smaller. Pull this just until the loop is closed tightly around the rope you put through it.





### Step 7

Normally, you would now cut the rope that is hanging out of the bottom loop down to a half inch. Since we are practicing, don't actually cut the rope because you will need these ropes when you actually create your plant hanger. Use the photos to understand the following steps.



### Step 8

Pull the top rope again just until the loop and would be cut ropes are hidden underneath the gathering knot then stop. If you continue pulling past this point your knot will unravel and you'll need to start over.



### Step 9

Cut the top rope you were just pulling so that it is flush with the rest of the gathering knot. You should have a clean looking knot that will support your plantings.



**Now that you've learned all your knots you can move on to your project!**