

The LEGEND of the MONKEY'S FIST

The Monkey's Fist is an ancient nautical knot used by sailors and mariners. It was originally made with 3/4" halyard rope and a cannon ball. The knot was used as a weighted fob to propel a ship's tie down lines to either a dock. It was also used in the same method as a way to bring two neighboring ships together. In addition, it was used in the event of someone falling overboard. Because ships back in the day, relying entirely on wind to propel them forward, were unable to turn around to retrieve any unfortunate souls who fell overboard. And even if a rope was thrown over for the person to grab, because of the frigidity of the water, the person's hands were likely numb, making it difficult to grip the rope which would slide through the person's fingers. Having a Monkey's Fist knot would give the person something solid to grasp and hold onto, thereby allowing them to be pulled back to the ship. The Monkey's Fist symbolizes that lifeline/lifesaver connection to a friend, something to grasp and hold onto when we feel like we're drowning.

Additional Monkey's Fist Symbolism

- Each completed Monkey's Fist is different in some way, just as friendships each are different and special.
- A Monkey's Fish once completed will not be perfectly round and will possess imperfections (gaps and bumps)...just as with developing friendships. Yet the fist, as the friendship, will become more round with time and attention. The imperfections, we all have them, will come to be appreciated or be less important with time.
- A Monkey's Fist is made of one continuous piece of rope to symbolize the beauty of long, never-ending friendships.
- The fist is attached to a circle key ring loop. This reminds the wearer that the friendship represented by the Monkey's Fist is one of a many circle of friends.
- In the center of the Monkey's Fist is a marble. It represents the solid base around which a great friendship is built. The marble also serves as a reminder to the inner beauty and strength we all possess.

I learned about Monkey's Fists at Camp Ronald McDonald for Good Times, where the fists are a beloved and significant tradition. At camp, there are campers that have relied on their Monkey's Fist as a reminder of the friends and support they have at camp. During difficult times or painful procedures, campers have held tight to their Monkey Fist, and received support and help from the "ever present" friends. We are also proud to have known of camp friends being laid to rest wearing their Monkey Fist, a humble symbol of the love they shared with friends.

MONKEY'S FIST

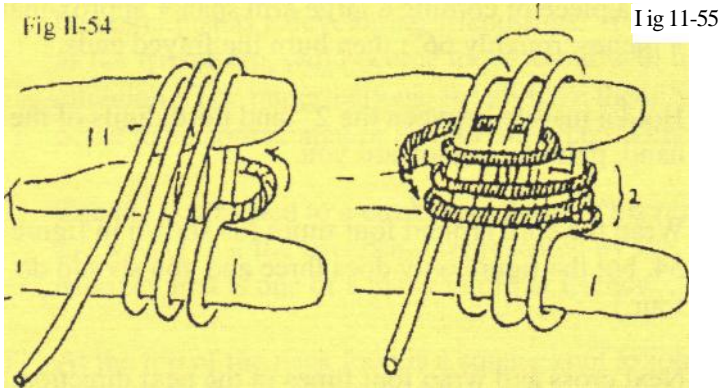


Fig 11-56

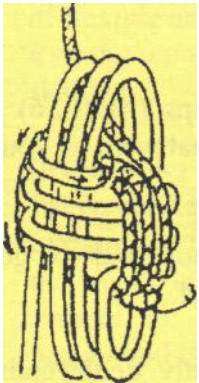


Fig 11-57

