

Boater's Tip: The Chain Sinnet ('Daisy Chain') Knot

by
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Most competent boaters whether power or sail regularly use basic sailing knots that have been in use for millennia... my list of 'must know' knots includes the Bowline ('King' of knots), Reef, Belaying, Clove Hitch, Round Turn-Two Half Hitches, Figure-of-Eight, Fisherman's Bend, Sheet Bend, Rolling Hitch, Sea Coil and Flemish. Each of these knots has the added characteristics that they are generally easy to tie and untie (i.e. do not easily jam) and have a specific purpose for which they are best suited. I think the Chain Sinnet should also be considered a basic sailing knot and used regularly.

The Chain Sinnet, which is also called a 'daisy chain' is a very easy knot to tie and has several interesting features. The Chain Sinnet knot:

- Can be tied in various degrees of looseness without losing effectiveness;
- Results in a 4.5:1 length reduction and can be quickly deployed at any increment of its length;
- Is highly resistant to tangling and is easily stored;
- Has good shock absorbing characteristics and can be used as a semi-permanent snubber;
- Is often used as a decorative knot for fancy rope work and macramé; and,
- Is the preferred knot for storing and washing rope (see **Boater's Tip** on Washing Rope).

My epiphany involving the Chain Sinnet came when trying to quickly deploy a back-up anchor that had been Sea Coiled and stored in a locker – it tangled and I spent precious minutes dealing with the mess while watching my boat drift towards the rocks. The same anchor with the 200' of rode tied in a Chain Sinnet never tangled and was always easily deployed.

Like most things, there are some down sides to the Chain Sinnet. It takes a few more minutes to do the 'daisy chain' loops than to Sea Coil a line; however, I think the safety factor and ease of storage more than make up for the extra time. Also, it is tougher to tie the knot with old, stiff lines (esp. 3-strand nylon). Finally, it may take a little longer to deploy the line and it is not suitable for heaving. However, no matter how well I Sea Coil and stow some lines, they almost always get tangled and cause problems during deployment. I've used the Chain Sinnet on lines up to 300' with no worries about stowing, tangles or deployment. Here's how to tie the Chain Sinnet knot:

