FIELD GUIDE · NO. 13

Bowline

A fixed loop for ridgelines, gear, and anchors — practiced until your hands remember it.



FROM THE BOOK

1. The bowline creates a fixed loop for attaching ridgelines, securing gear, and anchoring rope. It is one of a handful of knots the book recommends for most shelter-building tasks in the field.
2. A tight ridgeline between two sturdy anchors is the foundation of a simple A-frame tarp shelter. A dependable fixed loop is often how that line gets attached.
3. Learning a few knots well is more useful than memorizing many you cannot tie under stress.
4. Practice these knots before you need them. They become much easier after a little repetition, and they are far easier to learn on a calm afternoon than in a storm or fading light.

PRACTICE IT

Tie and untie a bowline on a piece of cordage until you can form a secure fixed loop without stopping to think, then use it to attach a line to a post or tree.