

Shoe Lacing Advice / Instruction Sheet

Tying your own shoe laces requires a level of dexterity most children don't possess until they're between five and seven, so take it slow.

Hints and Tips

- Practice looping the cords on the waistbands of shorts, joggers or dressing gowns just to get your child used to making that first part of a knot.
- Make sure that the laces are long enough, the shorter the laces the harder it is to manipulate the laces through the fingers.
- Use two different coloured laces in the same shoe to allow the child to easily differentiate between the various steps involved. Alternatively, you can stick different colours of tape to the two different ends of a shoelace.
- Flat laces are easier to tie than round ones as they are less likely to loosen between each stage.
- When trying to tie a shoelace for the first time have your child sit on the floor with the shoe between their legs, or alternatively placing the shoe on a table top. This is easier than trying to reach down, as the shoe is closer to them, and they are not having to concentrate on balancing. Once your child is able to tie the shoe in this position get your child to place the shoe on their knee whilst they are sitting on a chair or step. Finally put the shoe on your child's foot and have them put their foot up on a raised step or chair so that they can still see what they are doing.

Skill: Tying

There are numerous ways to teach shoe lacing to your child.

You may need to try a number of different methods to find out which one suits your child's needs most appropriately.

Ian's shoelaces website (<https://www.fiegggen.com/shoelace/>) is a good website with videos and many different ways to tie shoelaces, so your child can find which method is right for them. This advice sheet provides two different methods to trial.

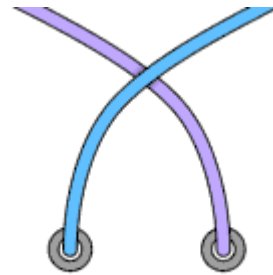
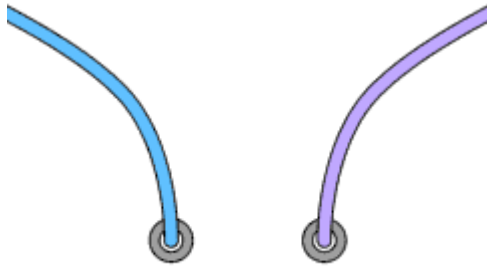
Your child may need lots of practice to learn this skill. **Try practicing often and frequently** e.g. twice per day, for only 5 minutes each time.

In order to obtain a securely tied shoelace bow it is often useful to start with a double loop knot. This helps to secure the lace while attempting to tie the shoelace bow.

The diagrams show a blue and purple lace to make instructions easier to follow.

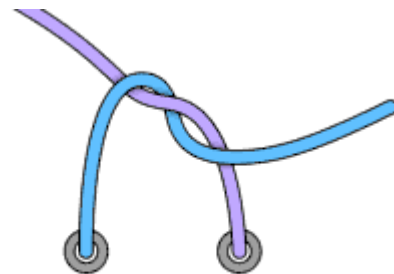


TYING A SECURE STARTING KNOT:



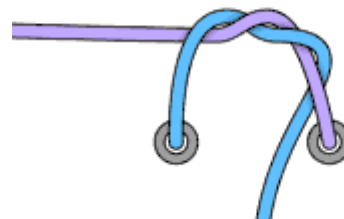
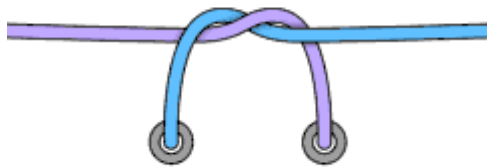
Hold one end of the lace in each hand

Cross the left (blue) lace over the right (purple) lace to end up on the right side



Begin to wrap the right (blue) end around the left (purple) end and feed it through the gap between the laces

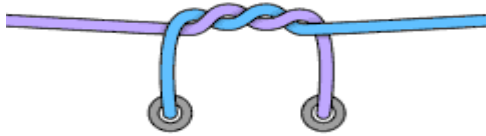
Start to pull the right (blue) end out the right side.



The single knot is now complete

Once again, wrap the right (blue) end around and feed it through the gap between the laces



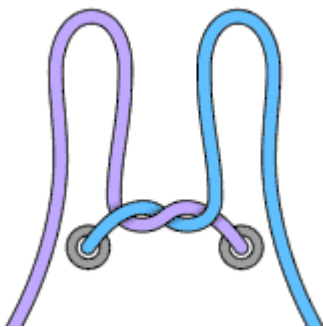


Having now formed a double knot,
continue pulling on both ends of the laces.

The completed double starting knot after the
ends have been pulled tight

OPTION 1- TYING A TWO LOOP SHOE LACE BOW:

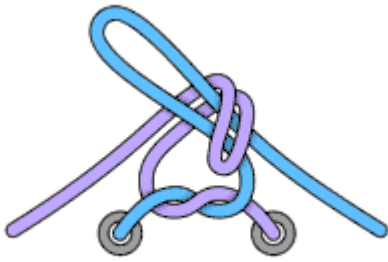
(This method can often be easier for children with motor planning difficulties, as a lot of the steps are similar! This saves learning lots of different steps.)



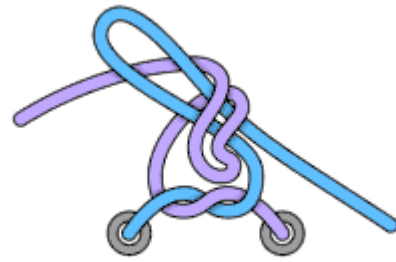
Tie a standard or secure knot, then make both
ends into "loops" by simply doubling them
back onto themselves - as "Bunny Ears"

Cross the two loops over each other so
that the right (blue) loop ends up in front
and the left (purple) loop ends up behind
The purple loop is now the right loop

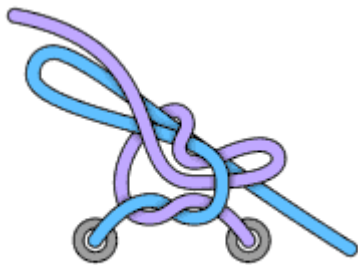




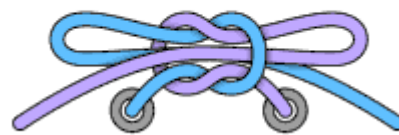
Begin to wrap the right (purple) loop around the left (blue) loop to end up in front.



Start to feed the right (purple) loop into the "hole" that has just been made. This is really the same as if you were tying a standard knot, except that you are working with a loop instead of a loose end.



With the right (purple) loop now through the "hole", grab hold of both loops and start to pull the knot tight.

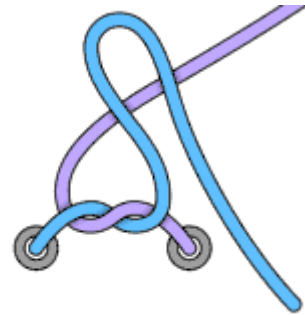
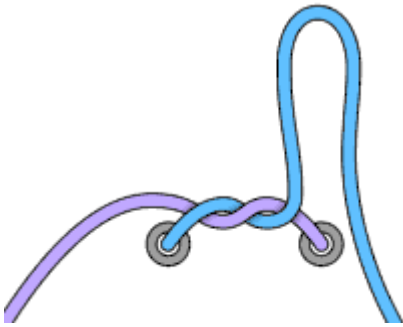


Notice that the loose end of the right (purple) loop drops back down to the front left, making the finished knot exactly the same as if you'd used the regular method.



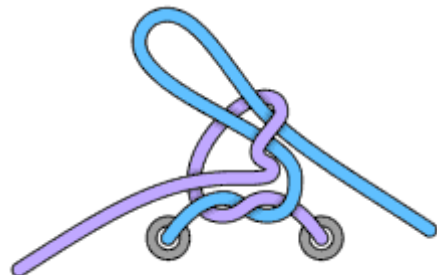
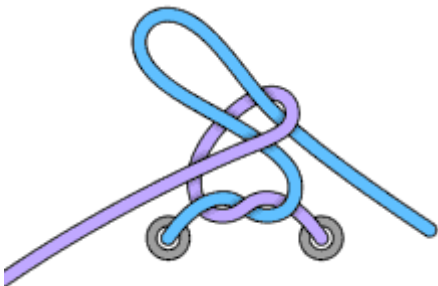
OPTION 2- TYING A STANDARD SHOELACE BOW:

(this is a traditional method, which is more commonly known than option 1)



Tie a standard or secure knot then make the right (blue) end into a "loop" by simply doubling it back onto itself.

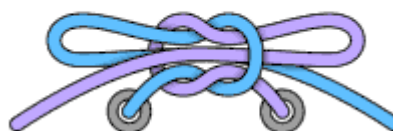
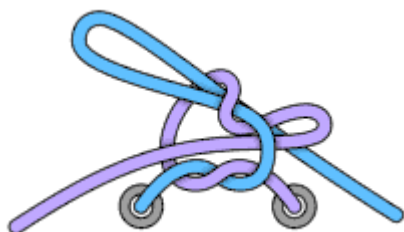
Take the left (purple) end and pass it around to the right, going **behind** the blue loop.



Continue the left (purple) end **around** the right loop to end up in front.

Start to feed the left (purple) lace into the "hole" that has just been made.





With the left (purple) lace now through the "hole", grab hold of both loops and start to pull the knot tight.

Continue pulling on the loops until the knot is firmly tied.

Skill: Untying

Use a backward chaining approach. This means that carer support is required through the entire learning process, leaving the last part or parts of the action for child to complete.

1. Child pulls one lace end to release the bow
2. Child loosens knot/crossed laces using index finger to hook underneath
3. Child hooks index finger under one lace and pulls
4. Child unties bow completely



Alternative Strategies to tying shoe laces

If your child is unable to master this skill then alternatives to shoelaces are available. Velcro is the easiest way of fastening shoes however if your child has shoes with lace holes then please see below for alternative options.

- Hickies Laces - Hickies are easy to fasten laces that expand and contract with foot movement to deliver secure fitting.



- Greeper Laces - Greeper laces are fitted to the footwear and they are loosened simply by pulling on the pull tab of the toggle. The user then simply makes the lace loops bigger to tighten the laces and enjoy a secure, snug fit. Small stoppers on the lace loops prevent the Greepers from coming undone.



- No tie shoelaces



- Elastic Laces



- Atlas Laces



- Magnetic shoelace fasteners



References

1. Dunn Klein, Marsha. 1983. *Pre-Dressing Skills Revised*. Communication Skill Builders
2. Fieggen, I.W. 2005. www.fieggen.com
3. <https://www.nhsggc.org.uk/kids/resources/ot-activityinformation-sheets/shoelace-tying-information-sheet/>

