

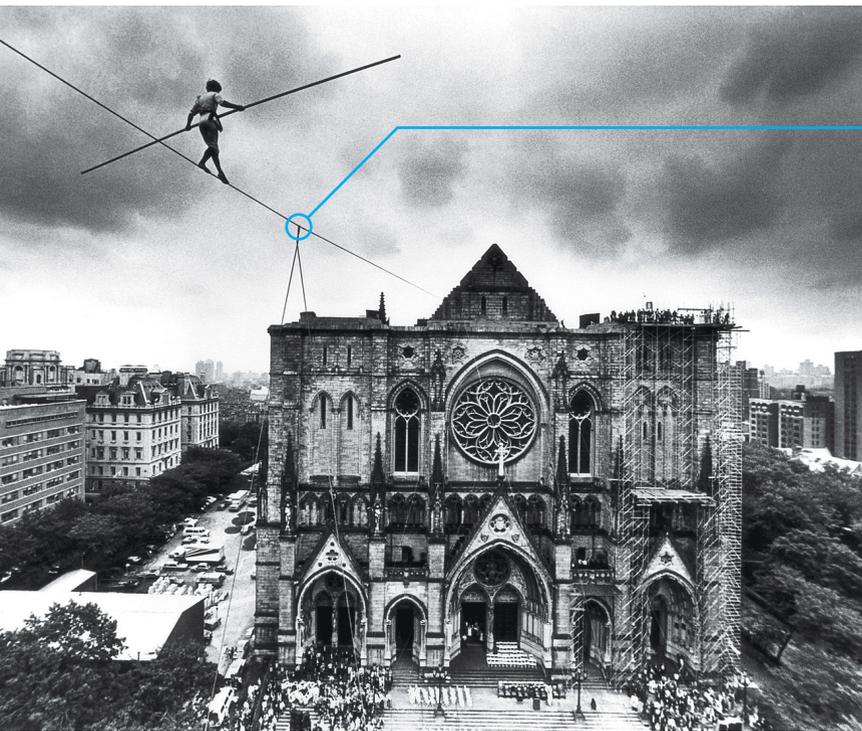
# Step by Step

When your life depends on tight ropes, you become a master at tying knots.

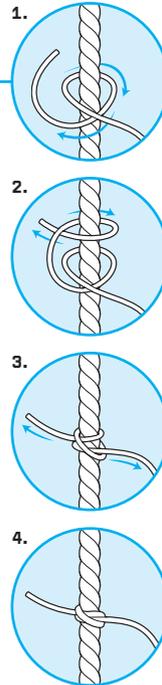
**PHILIPPE PETIT DIDN'T SET OUT** to become an expert knot-tyer. But after almost 50 years of high-wire stunts, Petit, most famous for a jaw-dropping (illegal!) 1974 tightrope walk between the Twin Towers, has become a master. *Why Knot? How to Tie More Than Sixty Ingenious, Useful, Beautiful, Lifesaving and Secure Knots!* is Petit's illustrated guide to some of his favorites, like the slipped clove hitch he used to anchor the wire on which he walked across New York's Grand Central Terminal, the farmer's loop that held him steady as he traversed the Sydney Harbour Bridge, and the bowline he tied one-handed to keep himself from falling off the roof while shoveling snow. The book also has some useful instructions if you need to hitch a camel to a post, escape from a burning hotel, or just keep your shoelaces in order.

"I tie out of necessity to survive my high-wire walks," Petit says. "But it all runs together: the enthusiasm, the patience, the passion."

As a 6-year-old Cub Scout, Petit learned the square knot—"left over right, right over left, you can never forget." But the skill became an obsession when he began to walk the high wire, learning the trade from a Czech circus master. Papa Rudy, as he was known, taught Petit "the joy of knowing what you call the secrets of rigging." Petit has collected nearly 200 knotting books, is a member of the International Guild of Knot Tyers, and carries a length of rope in his pocket in order to perform tricks at a moment's notice. The book comes equipped with a section of cord so readers can do the same. "Imagine a world without knots," Petit says. "It would crumble apart!" —*Ariel Ramchandani*



## CLOVE HITCH



For this 1982 walk above New York's Amsterdam Avenue, Petit attached the guylines (ropes that balance and support the wire) to the cable with a clove hitch, one of his "Gang of Five" most useful knots.

## Decode: Future Imperfect

**A time machine lets you change history. Great, right? Well, even good-hearted gestures can lead to havoc. Unscramble the letters to figure out how you unwittingly set each scenario in motion.**  
—*Thomas Snyder*

1) Unopposed, Stalin's tanks roll through Europe within months.

**THE ACTION:** Go back to the mid-20th century and  
○○○○ ○□○○○○.

(EHIKLLLR)

2) *Good Will Hunting* sweeps the 1997 Academy Awards, setting Van Sant, Affleck, and Damon up for the inevitable crappy sequel.

**THE ACTION:** Go back and warn the  
○○○□ of the  
□○○○○○○.

(ACCEIINRTTW)

3) An infusion of capital just as a former employee returns leads a tech company to double down on the Newton at exactly the wrong time. It goes out of business in a few years.

**THE ACTION:** Go back to 1997 and  
○□○○○○ in  
□○○○○.

(AEEILNPPSTV)

4) The fabric of spacetime rips apart—at least for your family—and you cease to exist.

**THE ACTION:** Go back and  
○○○□ your □○○○○○.

(EHIKMORSST)

5) The course of evolution changes ever so slightly, and Neanderthals go on to dominate the planet.

**THE ACTION:** Go back to see the dinosaurs, but ○○□○ on a  
○○○□○○○○○.

(BEEFLPRSTTU)

The Cubs still lose 4 games to 3 and fail to win the World Series for over a hundred years. (Some curses aren't so easy to break.)

**THE ACTION:** Go back to 1945 and allow the ○□○○○  
□○○○ to stay.

(ABGILLOTY)

**If you pull out all the boxed letters, you might learn this big lesson:**

Trying to change the past is probably just □□□□□□  
□□□□!

**COMMON OFF-LABEL USES FOR DRUGS** BIRTH CONTROL PILLS: TREATING ACNE IN WOMEN; ASPIRIN: REDUCING HEART ATTACK RISK; VIAGRA: TREATING PULMONARY HYPERTENSION; WELLBUTRIN: QUITTING SMOKING; ZOLOFT: TREATING PREMATURE EJACULATION