

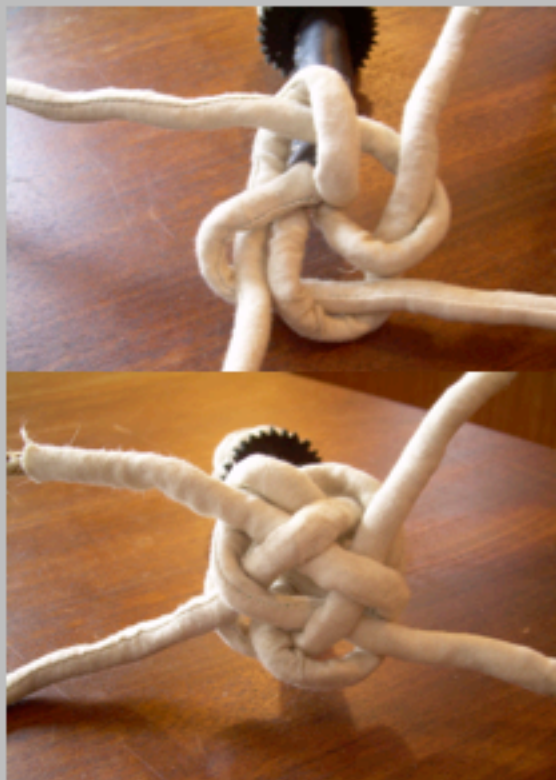
## TRADITIONAL SAILOR'S CHEST BECKET

BY DIDIER MURAT PAGE 1



IT WAS CUSTOMARY FOR SAILORS TO MAKE THE HANDLES TO THEIR SEACHESTS IN A WAY THAT WOULD SHOWCASE THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF ROPEWORK AND KNOT TYING. FROM A SIMPLE LOOP OF ROPE TO VERY INTRICATE WORK, IT MADE EACH CHEST UNIQUE WITH THE OWNER'S TOUCH.

**MATERIAL AND TOOLS:**  
3/8" HEMP OR MANILA ROPE.  
ASSORTMENT OF TARRED HEMP THREAD.  
LEATHER SCRAPS.  
CLOTH, NEEDLES AND THREAD.  
MARLINSPIKE, AWL,  
SAWING PALM, NETTING  
NEEDLE, SERVING MALLET



WE WILL START WITH THE "BOLT" WHICH SERVES AS A HINGE AXLE. TAKE TWO FEET OF 3/8" ROPE, AND ADD ONE STRAND TO MAKE A FOUR STRAND ROPE. SAW A 4" LENGTH OF THICK LEATHER. SOAK THE LEATHER TO SOFTEN IT, AND PIERCE IT WITH AN AWL FOR THE THREAD - CAREFUL MEASURING IS IMPORTANT, THE LEATHER SHOULD BE VERY TIGHT TO THE ROPE TO MAKE A STIFF AXLE. NOW THE TEDIOUS PART... COVER EACH STRAND WITH A LIGHT WEIGHT CLOTH. I SEW LITTLE STRIPS ON A SEWING MACHINE, FLIP THEM INSIDE OUT AND SLIDE THEM ONTO THE STRANDS. MAKE IT AS TIGHT A FIT AS POSSIBLE. THIS WILL MAKE A NOTICEABLE ESTHETIC DIFFERENCE IN YOUR FINISH BECKET. THERE IS A MULTITUDE OF CHOICES FOR THE STOP KNOT... IN THIS CASE IT IS A DIAMOND AND CROWN KNOT. A SINGLE CROWN FOLLOWED BY A WALL AND THEN FOLLOW THE LEADS WITH A SECOND PASS.

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TIE ONE KNOT, CUT 4 LEATHER WASHERS JUST SLIGHTLY SMALLER THAN THE DIAMETER OF THE FINISHED KNOT



THE HANDLE IS ALSO MADE WITH 3/8" ROPE, 3 STRANDS, ABOUT 3 FEET LONG. THE BODY OF THE HANDLE IS 22" AND ABOUT 3" FOR EACH EYE. START WITH THE EYE HITCHING IF YOU DON'T HAVE A NETTING NEEDLE, AND THEN SPLICE BOTH EYES. KEEP A MARK AT THE MIDDLE OF YOUR HANDLE AND KEEP SPLICING UNTIL YOU REACH THE MIDDLE POINT FROM BOTH ENDS. MAKE AN OTHER 3 OR 4 PASSES ON EACH SIDE, OVERLAPPING THE SPLICE AND AT THE SAME TIME TRIM THE STRANDS TO CREATE A TAPERED THICKER MIDDLE SECTION.

THE NEXT STEP IS TO PARCEL AND SERVE. IT IS A TRADITIONAL WAY TO WRAP ROPES OR CABLES WITH CLOTH AND TIGHTLY COVER WITH TARRED HEMP TO HELP PROTECT AGAINST ABRASION AND THE ELEMENTS. HERE IT IS NOT NECESSARY TO USE PRICY TARRED HEMP, SMALL MANILA ROPE WILL DO.



PARCELING: CUT STRIPS OF CANVAS, AND TIGHTLY COVER THE LENGTH OF THE HANDLE, A FEW EXTRA LAYERS IN THE MIDDLE WILL ADD TO THE TAPERED THICKER CENTER.

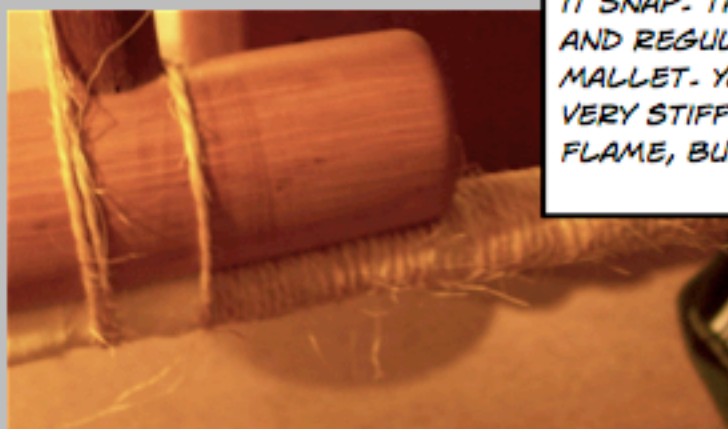
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NEXT, "SERVE" THE HANDLE. YOU WILL NEED TO STRETCH IT BETWEEN TWO POST, A DOOR JAM WORKS GREAT, MAKING SURE IT CAN NOT ROTATE ON ITSELF, AND START SERVING FROM EYE TO EYE, STARTING BY MAKING 2 OR 3 VERY TIGHT TURNS BY HAND AND THEN WITH YOUR SERVING MALLET. IF YOU DON'T HAVE ONE OF THOSE, IT IS EASY TO MAKE... FROM A REGULAR WOODEN MALLET, GOUGE LENGTHWISE A SMALL CHANNEL AND SCREW A SPOOL TO THE TOP OF THE HANDLE. IT WILL TAKE LESS TIME AND ENERGY THAN GETTING SOMEONE TO HELP YOU, AND YOU END UP WITH AN OTHER NIFTY TOOL.



AFTER YOU HAVE STARTED A FEW TURNS BY HAND, PLACE YOUR MALLET ON THE HANDLE AND MAKE TWO LOOPS AROUND THE MALLET'S HEAD, AND ANOTHER ONE OR TWO AROUND THE HANDLE. THIS WILL CREATE FRICTION THAT YOU WILL CONTROL WITH YOUR HAND AS YOU MAKE THE TURNS. PRACTICE, AND GAGE THE STRENGTH OF YOUR ROPE, IT IS VERY EASY TO MAKE IT SNAP. THE SERVING SHOULD BE A LOT TIGHTER AND REGULAR THAN IF MADE BY HAND WITHOUT THE MALLET. YOUR HANDLE AT THIS POINT WILL BECOME VERY STIFF AND SHOULD BE NICE AND ROUND. WITH A FLAME, BURN THE LITTLE FIBERS STICKING OUT.



CUT SOME MORE STRIPS OF CLOTH AND HEM THEM TO ABOUT 1/4 OR 5/16" WIDE AND 50" LONG. WE WILL USE EIGHT STRIPS. START FROM THE MIDDLE AND WORK YOUR WAY TO THE EYES.



## TRADITIONAL SAILOR'S CHEST BECKET

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WEAVE THE STRIPS  
ALONG THE HANDLE,  
TIE THE ENDS AND  
COVER WITH A SMALL  
TURK'S HEAD KNOT.

ASSEMBLE THE BECKET  
WITH A LEATHER WASHER  
ON BOTH SIDES OF THE  
EYES, AND TIE THE  
SECOND KNOT AS PER  
PAGE 1.

TURK HEAD KNOTS CAN BE  
ADDED ON THE REST OF  
THE HANDLE.

PAINT THE BECKET WITH  
PINE TAR, AND YOU WILL  
HAVE BOTH THE AUTHENTIC  
LOOK AND SMELL OF A  
TRADITIONAL BECKET.  
NOT A PLEASANT ODOR  
FOR SOME, AND A  
DEFINITE WAY TO  
RECONNECT WITH  
TRADITIONAL SAILING FOR  
OTHERS.

SOME WERE PAINTED WITH  
DIFFERENT COLORS AS  
CAN BE SEEN ON OLD  
BECKETS.



# TRADITIONAL SAILOR'S CHEST BECKET

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I HOPE YOU ENJOY THIS TUTORIAL!  
DIDIER MURAT, VERMONT USA [SAILORSCHEST.COM](http://SAILORSCHEST.COM)

