SOFTWARE & TECH

How To Make Paracord Lanyards

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Introduction to Paracord Lanyards

Paracord lanyards are more than just stylish accessories; they are functional tools that combine practicality with durability. Whether you need a secure way to hold your keys, ID badge, whistle, or small multitool, learning **how to make paracord lanyards**opens up a world of customization and self-reliance. Paracord, short for parachute cord, is a lightweight yet incredibly strong nylon rope originally used for suspension lines in parachutes. Its inner strands can be extracted for emergency sewing or fishing line, making it a favorite among outdoor enthusiasts, survivalists, and crafters alike.

Making your own lanyard allows you to choose colors, lengths, and knots that match your personal style or specific needs. In this guide, we will walk through the entire process from selecting materials to finishing a professional-looking lanyard. By the end, you will have the knowledge and confidence to create your own paracord lanyards for any purpose.

Why Make Your Own Paracord Lanyards?

Before diving into the step-by-step instructions, it is worth understanding why handmade paracord lanyards are so popular. Commercial lanyards are often made from cheap materials that fray, break, or lose their shape over time. Paracord, on the other hand, offers exceptional tensile strength, often rated at 550 pounds for military-spec cord. This means your lanyard can withstand daily wear and tear while still being lightweight and comfortable.

Additionally, making your own lanyard is a rewarding creative activity. You can match colors to your gear, add beads or charms, and even incorporate survival elements like a fire starter or compass. It is also a cost-effective alternative to buying pre-made lanyards, especially if you need several for different items.

Materials and Tools You Will Need

To get started with **how to make paracord lanyards**, you will need a few basic materials and tools. Most of these are inexpensive and readily available online or at craft stores.

Essential Materials

- Paracord: Choose 550 paracord for standard lanyards. It is available in countless colors and patterns. For a basic lanyard, about 6 to 10 feet of cord is sufficient, depending on the knot pattern.
- Lanyard clip or key ring: A swivel clip or split ring will attach your lanyard to keys, badges, or tools.
- Scissors or a sharp knife: For cutting the cord cleanly.
- Lighter or heat source: To melt the ends of the paracord and prevent fraying.
- Tape or a clipboard: To hold your work in place while you tie knots.

Optional Add-Ons

- Beads or charms: For decoration or added utility.
- Ruler or measuring tape: To ensure consistent lengths.
- Pliers: Helpful for tightening knots and pulling the cord through tight spaces.

Choosing the Right Knot for Your Lanyard

The knot you choose will determine the look, feel, and function of your lanyard. Some knots are flat and sleek, while others are thick and braided. Below are a few popular options that are perfect for beginners and experienced crafters alike.

The Cobra Knot (Solomon Bar)

The cobra knot is the most common and recognizable paracord lanyard knot. It creates a flat, braided pattern that is both strong and comfortable to hold. This knot works well for keychains, knife lanyards, and ID badge holders.

The King Cobra Knot

A variation of the cobra knot, the king cobra is essentially a cobra knot layered over another cobra knot. This creates a thicker, more durable lanyard with a textured surface. It is ideal for items that see heavy use.

The Fishtail Knot

Also known as the zipper sinew braid, the fishtail knot produces a narrow, tight braid that is flexible and stylish. It is a great choice for bracelet-style lanyards or for those who prefer a more delicate appearance.

The Diamond Knot

The diamond knot, or lanyard knot, is a classic choice for military and tactical lanyards. It forms a rounded, decorative knot that sits at the base of the clip or ring. This knot is often used as a stopper or transition point between the clip and the main braid.

Step-by-Step Guide: How To Make Paracord Lanyards Using the Cobra Knot

For this tutorial, we will focus on the cobra knot because it is beginner-friendly, versatile, and produces excellent results. Follow these steps carefully, and you will have a finished lanyard in about 15 minutes.

Step 1: Prepare Your Cord and Clip

Cut a length of paracord about 8 feet long. Fold it in half to find the center point. Push the folded center through the hole in your lanyard clip or key ring. Then, pull the two loose ends through the loop created by the fold. Tighten this **lark’s head knot** securely around the clip. This forms the attachment point for your lanyard.

Step 2: Set Up Your Workspace

Tape the clip to a flat surface or use a clipboard to hold it in place. This will keep your hands free to tie the knots. Separate the two strands of paracord so that the left strand is on the left and the right strand is on the right. These strands are your working ends.

Step 3: Tie the First Cobra Knot

Take the left strand and pass it under the right strand, creating a loop on the left side. Then, take the right strand and pass it over the left strand and through the loop from front to back. Pull both ends to tighten. This is a simple half knot. For the cobra knot, you will alternate from left to right.

Now, take the right strand and pass it under the left strand, creating a loop on the right side. Take the left strand and pass it over the right strand and through the loop. Pull tight. You have now completed one full cobra knot.

Step 4: Continue the Pattern

Repeat the alternating pattern until you reach your desired length. For a standard lanyard that hangs to your chest, aim for about 24 to 30 inches of braided cord. Keep your tension consistent so the knots are uniform. If you need to pause, simply tape the ends to prevent unraveling.

Step 5: Finish the Lanyard

Once you have reached the desired length, you need to secure the end. Cut the working ends close to the last knot, leaving about a quarter inch of cord. Use a lighter to carefully melt the tips and press them into the side of the knot with the flat side of the lighter or a metal tool. This creates a clean, secure finish that will not come undone.

Step 6: Add a Breakaway Feature (Optional)

For safety, especially if you wear the lanyard around your neck, consider adding a breakaway buckle. Instead of attaching the cord directly to the clip, thread the folded end through the male part of the buckle before tying the lark’s head knot. Then, attach the female part of the buckle to your keys or badge. If the lanyard gets caught, the buckle will separate, reducing the risk of injury.

Tips for Perfecting Your Paracord Lanyards

As you practice **how to make paracord lanyards**, you will develop your own techniques and preferences. Here are some tips to help you achieve professional results every time.

- Maintain even tension: Consistency in pulling the knots tight is key to a uniform appearance. Practice makes perfect.
- Use a fid or awl: These tools can help loosen knots for adjustments and thread the cord through tight spaces.
- Experiment with colors: Two-tone lanyards are easy to make by using different colored strands on each side or by mixing colors in the pattern.
- Seal the ends properly: Melting the ends not only prevents fraying but also gives the lanyard a polished look. Be careful not to burn the cord.
- Measure twice, cut once: It is better to start with a longer piece of cord than to run out mid-project. You can always trim the excess.

Creative Variations and Customization Ideas

Once you master the basic cobra knot, you can explore many variations to create unique lanyards. Here are a few ideas to inspire your next project.

Add Decorative Beads

Slide beads onto one or both strands before tying the knots. Choose metal, wood, or acrylic beads to complement the cord color. Beads add visual interest and a personal touch.

Incorporate a Whistle or Fire Starter

For outdoor adventures, attach a small whistle or fire starter to the end of the lanyard. These items are lightweight and can be lifesavers in emergencies.

Create a Lanyard with Multiple Colors

Use two different colors of paracord for the left and right strands. The cobra knot will produce a striped pattern that is both attractive and easy to identify.

Make a Lanyard with a Woven Pattern

Try the fishtail or diamond knot for a more intricate look. These knots require a bit more practice but yield stunning results that stand out from the crowd.

Common Mistakes and How to Avoid Them

Even experienced crafters make mistakes. Here are some common pitfalls when learning **how to make paracord lanyards** and how to avoid them.

- Uneven tension: If some knots are tight and others are loose, the lanyard will look crooked. Practice maintaining consistent pressure on each knot.
- Cord twisting: Paracord can twist as you work, causing the braid to spiral. Periodically straighten the cord to keep the pattern flat.
- Running out of cord: Always measure the length of the cord before starting. A good rule of thumb is to use three times the desired finished length for a cobra knot.
- Incorrect knot direction: Pay attention to whether you are passing over or under the strands. Mixing up the order will cause the pattern to break.
- Burning the cord: When melting the ends, hold the flame close but not directly in the cord for more than a second. Melting too much can create a messy blob.

Caring for Your Paracord Lanyard

With proper care, your paracord lanyard will last for years. Paracord is resistant to mildew and rot, but it can accumulate dirt and oil from daily handling. To clean it, simply hand wash the lanyard in warm water with mild soap, rinse thoroughly, and air dry. Avoid machine washing or drying, as the heat can damage the cord fibers.

Inspect the lanyard periodically for signs of fraying or wear. If the inner strands become exposed, it is time to replace the lanyard. Given how easy and inexpensive it is to make a new one, you can always keep a spare handy.

Final Thoughts on How To Make Paracord Lanyards

Learning **how to make paracord lanyards**is a skill that combines creativity, practicality, and a touch of tradition. Whether you are crafting a simple keychain or a complex survival lanyard, the process is rewarding and the results are useful. The ability to customize length, color, and attachments means you can create a lanyard that fits your exact needs and style.

As you gain confidence, you will find yourself experimenting with different knots, adding utilitarian components, and perhaps even teaching others. Paracord crafting is a

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