

French Knitting Basics

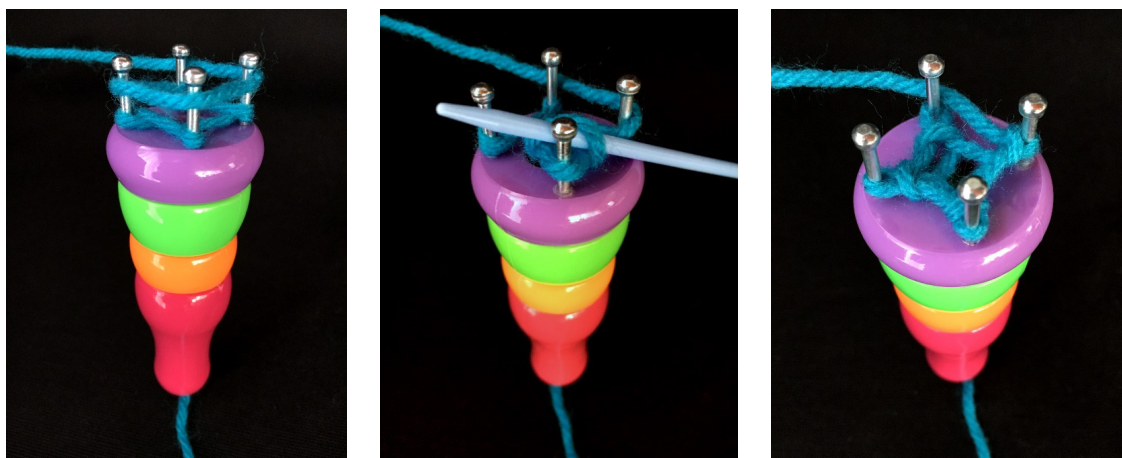
A *mathematical knot* is a length of string (or knitted tube) which is wrapped around itself, with the ends invisibly joined to form a continuous loop. In this handout, we demonstrate how to French knit a tube of knitting which can be used to make a mathematical knot. (See our handout *French Knitting Mathematical Knots* for instructions on how to construct a knot.) You will need a French knitting spool with four nails, the yarn of your choice, and a tapestry needle with a large eye.

French Knitting

1. Begin by threading the yarn through the spool from top to bottom. Working in an anti-clockwise direction, wind the yarn at the top of the spool exactly once around each of the four nails in turn.



2. Next, wrap the yarn once around the outside of the four nails in an anticlockwise direction, as shown in the first image below. Each nail now has two strands of yarn on it: the loop of yarn created in the previous step, at the bottom, and the strand of yarn we have just wrapped around it, at the top.



3. Beginning with the first nail, use the point of the tapestry needle to lift the bottom loop of yarn over the top strand of yarn and off of the nail. Tug gently on the yarn tail at the bottom of the spool to keep your work tight. Repeat for each of the nails to form four "stitches" and one complete "row".

4. Repeat Steps 2 & 3 to continue making rows. You will see that you are creating a knitted tube.



5. When a sufficient length of knitted tube has been made, it is time to cast off. To do this, cut the yarn leaving a 10cm tail and thread the tail through the eye of the tapestry needle. Starting with the nail to the left of the one that the yarn tail is attached to, push the needle into the middle of the loop of yarn on the nail and pull it all the way through and out the other side so that the yarn tail is now threaded through the loop. Leave the loop of yarn on the nail for now. Repeat for all four nails.



6. Next, using the tapestry needle, lift all four loops of yarn off of the nails. (They won't unravel because they have the yarn tail threaded through them.) Then pull firmly on the yarn tail to pull the stitches together and cinch closed the end of the knitted tube. Remove the finished knitted tube from the spool.

You have now made a tube of French knitting and are ready to turn it into a mathematical knot. See our handout *French Knitting Mathematical Knots* for instructions on how to construct a knot.

