

PARACORD!

How to Make the Best Bracelets, Lanyards, Key Chains,
Buckles, and More

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TOOLS AND SUPPLIES

If paracord, or parachute cord, is a hobby or business and you wish to make paracord crafts, then you may need several of the suggested tools that will assist you in making them. These tools will reduce the time it takes to make most paracord crafts and help reduce anxiety and frustration when working on a craft project.

Keep in mind that these are the tools that I prefer to use. Other paracordists may have differing opinions. The reader may want to purchase the following items:



1. Paracord



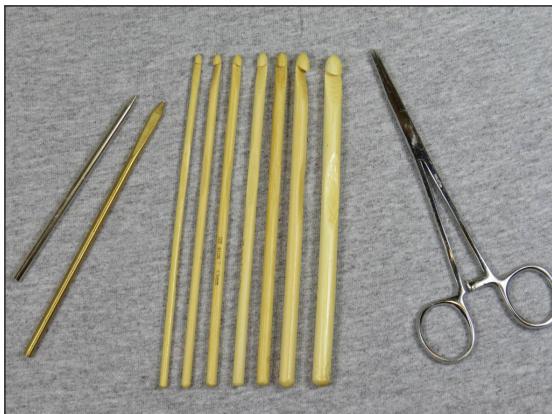
550 paracord is the standard for most paracord bracelets and accessories. What is paracord? There are several types but this book will focus on 550 paracord. Why 550? It can hold up to 550 pounds. Parachute cord is a nylon kernmantle (having a core) rope that will not rot or mildew. It was first used in suspension lines of USA parachutes in World War II. US paratroopers multi-tasked the cord and found it useful for many situations; clothes line for drying socks, replace broken boot straps, secure items to a pack, tourniquet, etc. Also, the inner core may be removed and used for sewing, fishing line, etc.

Now, it's a multipurpose cord.

2. Paracord Jig or Clip Board

A paracord jig or clip board is recommended to help stabilize the paracord so it is easier to work with and help minimize frustration. Paracord jigs can be found in some craft stores and online.





3. Lacing Needle, Forceps, and Crochet Needles

A lacing needle, forceps, and crochet needles can be used to thread paracord through several loops of paracord.

4. Sewing Needles and Thread

Sewing needles may be needed for splicing two cords. If thread is used, then the thread color should match the paracord to help hide the stitched cord. The transparent property of fishing line is useful to keep stitches hidden.



5. Lighter

A lighter is used to singe or melt the ends of paracord.



6. Needle Nose Pliers

Pliers can be used to help take apart a project due to an error or redo. Also, the flat, non-textured, part of the pliers should be used to flatten melted cord.



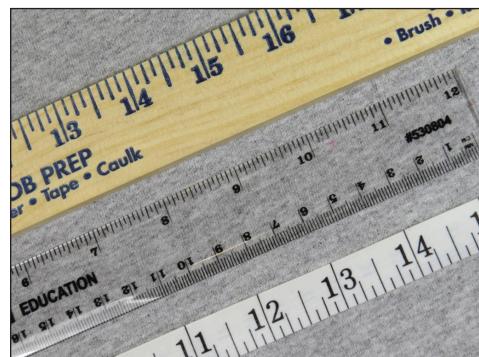
7. Scissors or Knife

Scissors, or a knife, should be used to cut or trim paracord or thread.



8. Ruler, Yard Stick, or Garment Measuring Tape

A ruler should be used to measure the paracord project and a garment measuring tape should be used to measure a wrist, ankle, or neck.



9. Buckles of Various Sizes

The two most widely used buckles are the 3/8" and 5/8" and are used for most fashion paracord bracelets. A 5/8" whistle buckle and stainless steel adjustable shackle are commonly used in survival bracelets.

10. Plastic Container

A plastic food container can be used to keep tools and other paracord craft supplies organized.



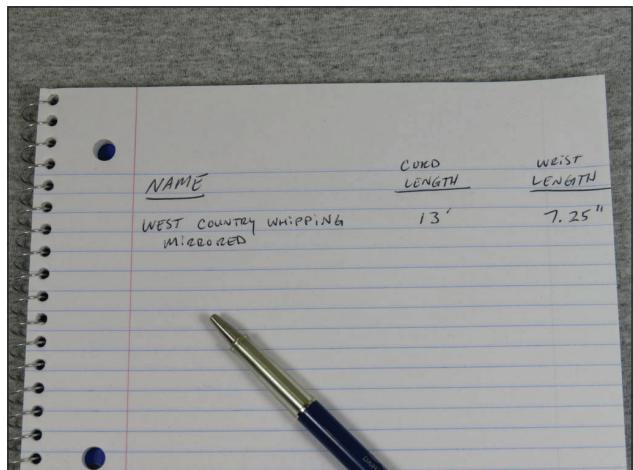
11. Work Space

A work space will be needed to make paracord crafts and keep the things needed within reach.



12. Notebook, Pen, or Spreadsheet

If an individual is going to make more than one paracord craft and learn how to make it repeatedly, then a notebook, pen, or spreadsheet, should be used to record information about each project. Some items to keep track of might include; paracord length, buckle type, knots used, project length, jig placement, etc. Keeping track of data will help reduce paracord waste. Reminder - Keep paracord scraps for future projects.



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TIPS AND TRICKS

1 – Pre-Shrink Paracord

A person's, or a business', reputation can be ruined due to how a paracord project is made. Paracord will shrink the first time it gets wet. It is a good idea to pre-shrink paracord before making a project.

Pre-shrinking paracord will require a 6 quart sauce pan, 1 gallon of water, stove top, tongs, colander, and paracord. This example uses five different colors of paracord each cut to exactly 12 feet. Use caution when using boiling water.



Step 1 – Bring the water to a rolling boil.



Step 2 – Carefully toss in the paracord and wait 30 – 60 seconds.



Step 3 – Remove the paracord with tongs and place into a colander and allow 24 hours to dry before use.



Shrink Data

The paracord shown were all cut to 6 feet lengths which is equal to 72 inches. Take a look at the data to see how much each shrank:

Blue – 64 inches = shrank 8 inches

Olive drab – 52 inches = shrank 20 inches

Navy Blue – 35 inches = shrank 7 inches

Red – 63 inches = shrank 9 inches

Gold – 66 inches = shrank 6 inches

2 – How to Clean Paracord

A paracord bracelet that is worn on a daily basis should eventually be cleaned. This is why pre-shrinking the bracelet is a good idea. Once water is exposed to the bracelet, it will shrink. Cleaning paracord bracelet, or item, is a good idea for the purpose of hygiene and appearance.



Step 1 – Wet the paracord with warm water.



Step 2 – Use a mild soap; foam soap was used in this example.



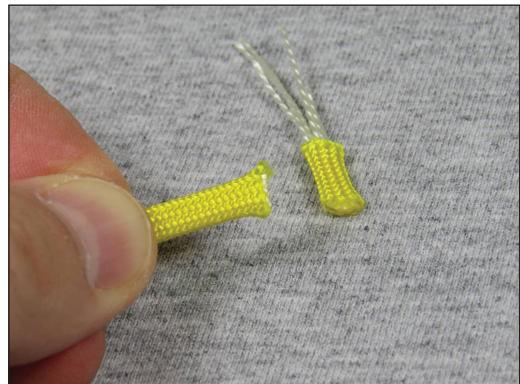
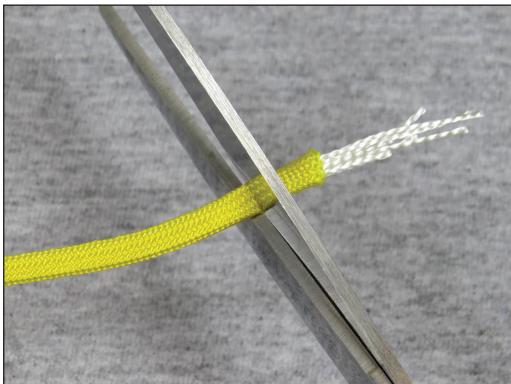
Step 3 – Use a soft bristled tooth brush and gently brush all sides if needed.



Step 4 – Rinse the paracord and allow 24 hours to dry.

3 – Melt and Smash

If the paracordist wants to thread a buckle with ease, it is suggested that the ends of the paracord are melted and smashed. The end result will allow the paracordists to thread the buckle without frustration. Use caution when using fire and do not touch the melted paracord with bare skin.



Step 1 – Cut a small piece off the end of the paracord.



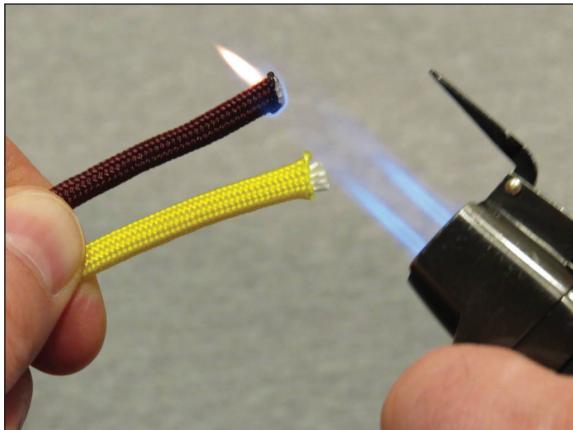
Step 2 – Have a lighter and needle nose pliers within reach. Melt the end of the paracord.



Step 3 – Quickly smash the melted cord with the flat portion of the pliers' claw.

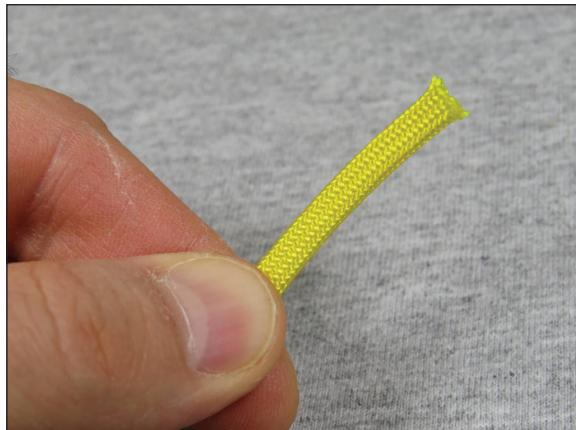
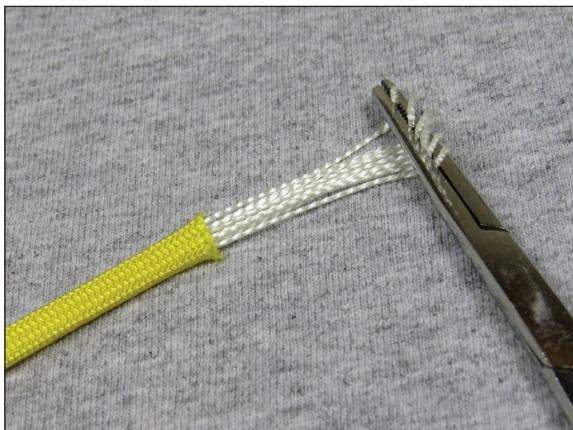
4 – Two Color Splicing: Sleeve and Stitch Method

Most paracordists will simply melt two ends of paracord and smash them together until the melted cord hardens. This is known as the Melt and Smash Method of Splicing. However, once the paracordists attempts to thread a buckle, the splice may not go through a buckle. The melted splice can also cause a bulge in the design of the paracord weave in any design.

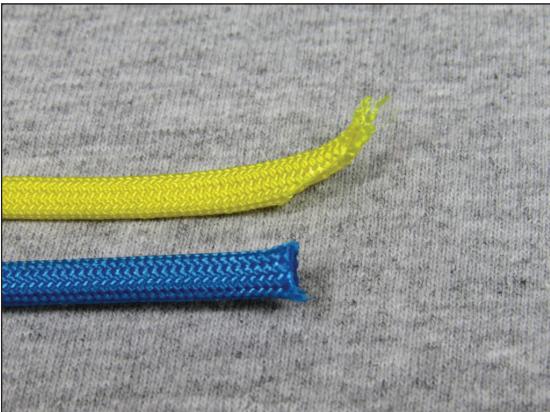


The Melt and Smash Method of splicing paracord is shown here.

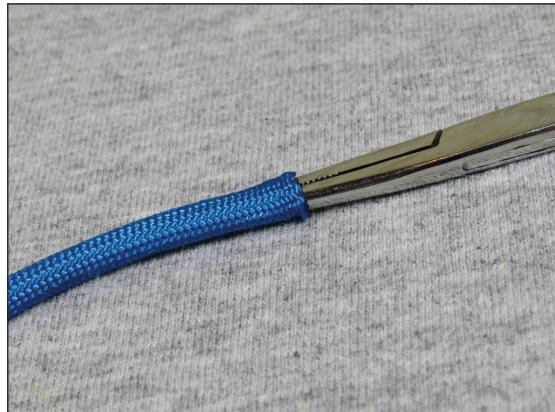
A solution to this problem is using the Sleeve and Stitch Method of splicing. This method may take more time but the end result in a design with no bulge and is easy to use.



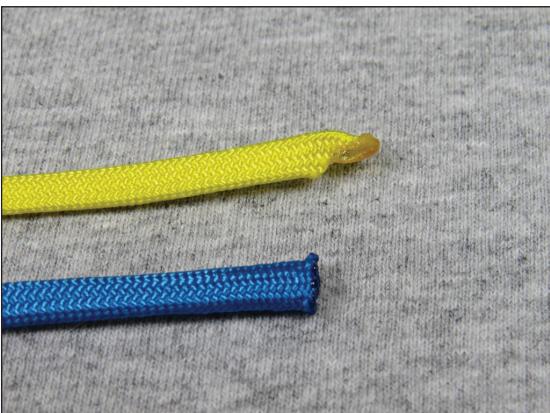
Step 1 – Pull roughly one inch of the 7 strand core out and trim. Run fingers over the otter core to reduce the slack.



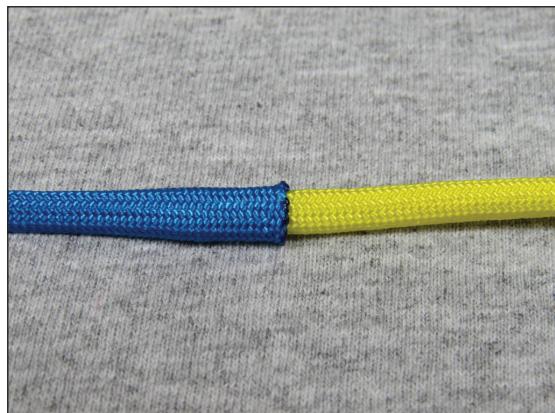
Step 2 – After gutting both cords, cut one of the cords at an angle.



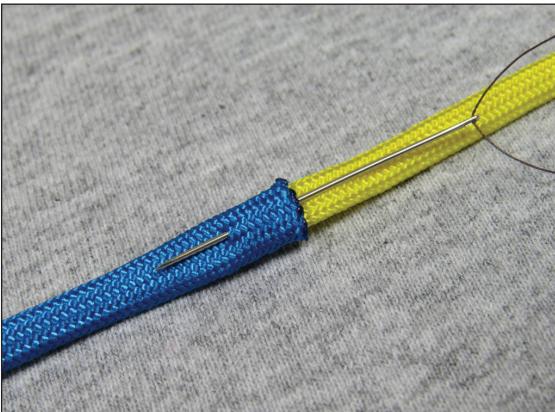
Step 3 – Slightly singe both cords. Smash ONLY the cord cut at an angle.



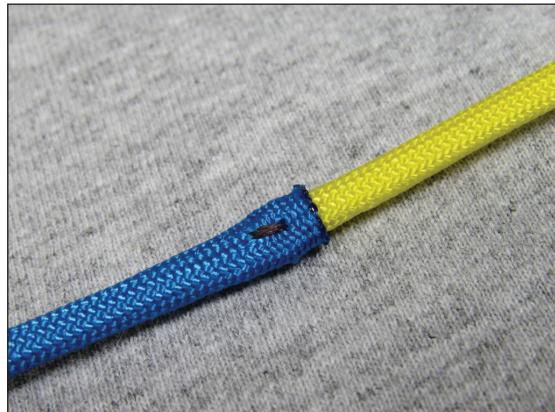
Step 4 – Insert small forceps.



Step 5 – Open the claws several times to expand the cord.

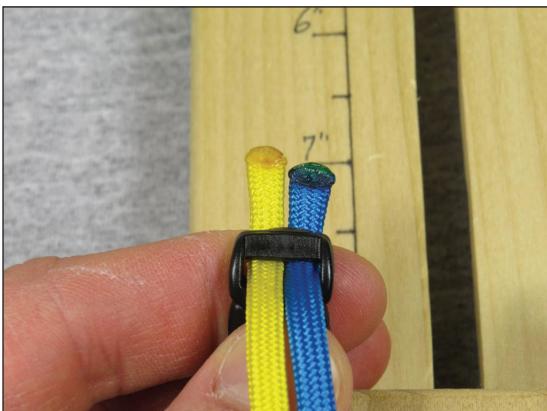


Step 6 – Insert the angled cord into the open and expanded end of the other cord.



Step 7 – Stitch the splice multiple times to ensure it is secure.

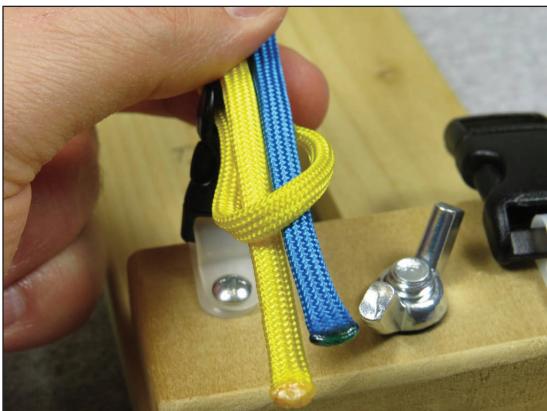
5 – How to Thread a 3/8 inch Buckle



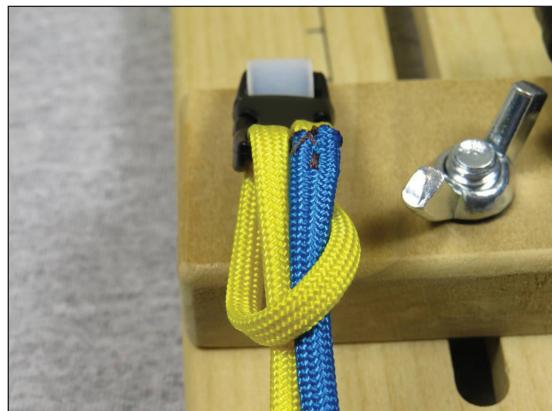
Step 1 – Start from the top and thread both ends into the bottom buckle.



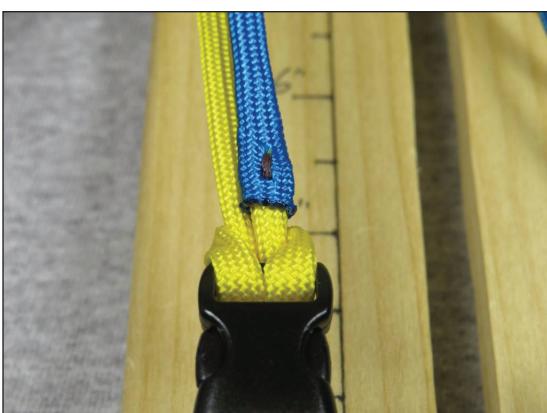
Step 2 – Pull the cord through and leave a one inch loop.



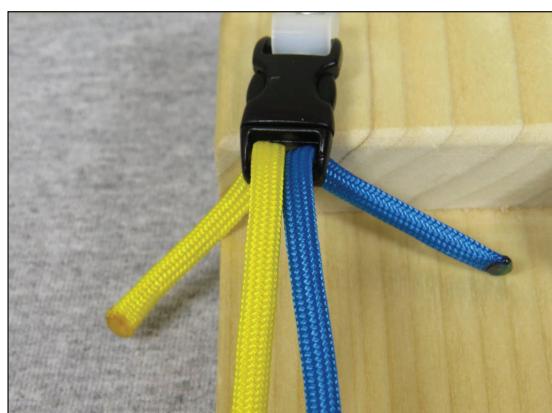
Step 3 – Thread the two ends through the one inch loop.



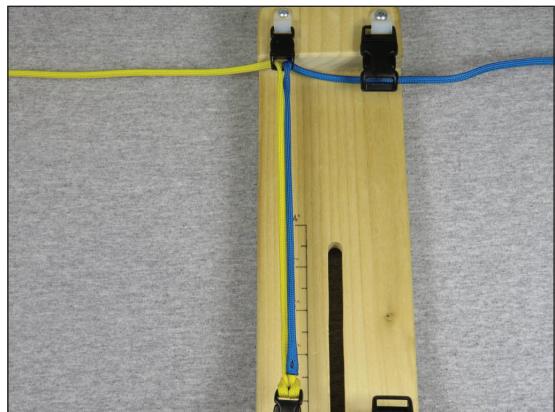
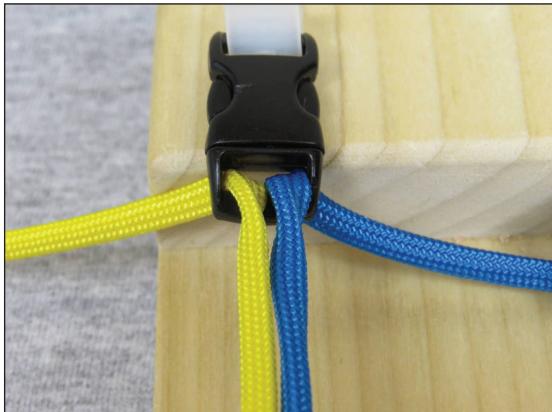
Step 4 – Pull the cord through.



Step 5 – Tighten the cord creating a Lark's Head Knot. Notice the loop is on the bottom. This will be used to tuck paracord to finish the bracelet.



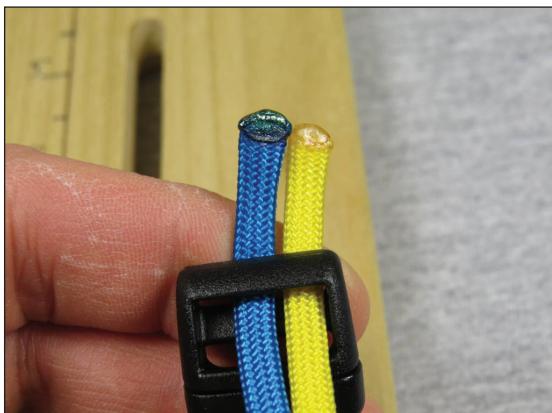
Step 6 – Start from the top and thread both ends into the top buckle.



Step 7 – Tighten the cord to reduce slack.

6 – How to Thread a 5/8 inch Buckle

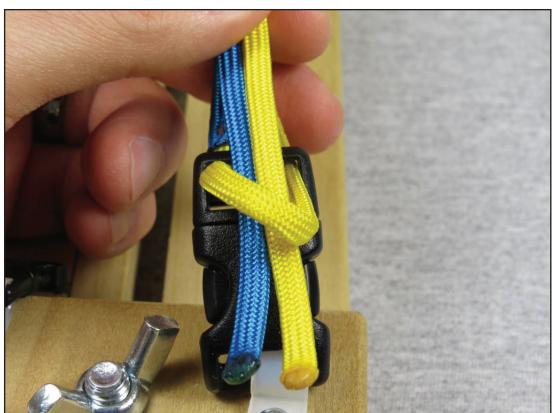
There is more than one way to thread a 5/8 inch buckle. This method optimizes the amount of paracord stored for future use. This threading method starts similar to the 3/8 inch buckle.



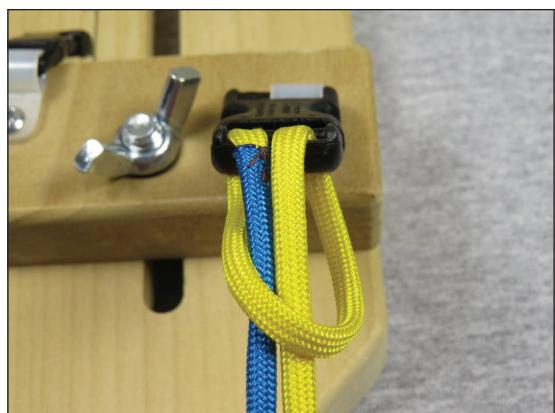
Step 1 – Start from the top and thread both ends into the bottom buckle.



Step 2 – Pull the cord through and leave a one inch loop.



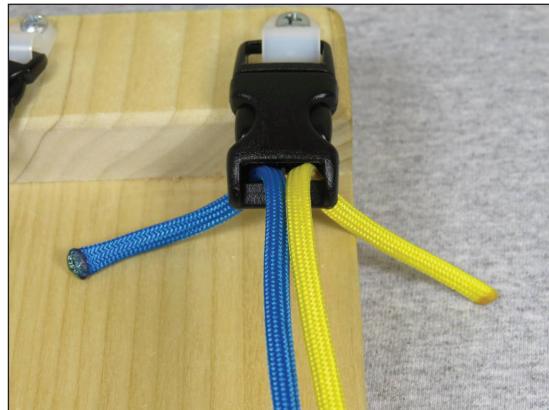
Step 3 – Thread the two ends through the one inch loop.



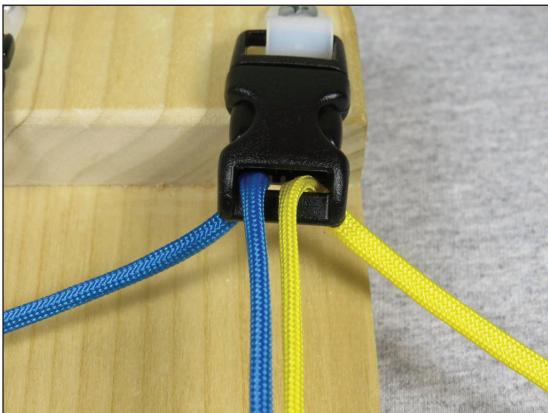
Step 4 – Pull the cord through.



Step 5 – Tighten the cord creating a Lark's Head Knot. Notice the loop is on the bottom. This will be used to tuck paracord to finish the bracelet.



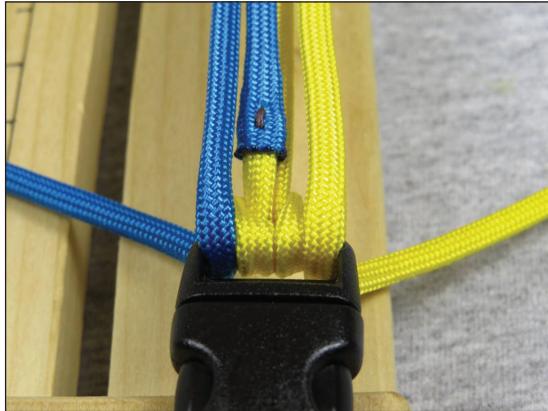
Step 6 – Start from the top and thread both ends into the top buckle.



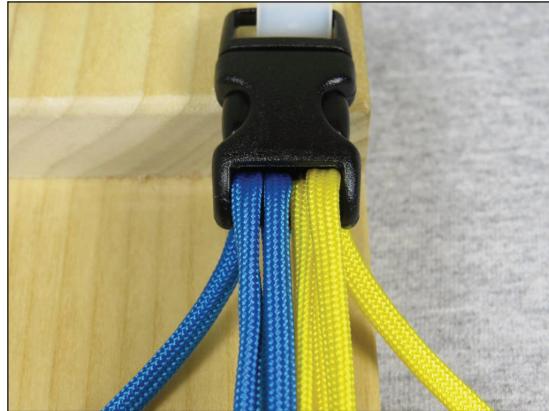
Step 7 – Tighten the cord to reduce slack.



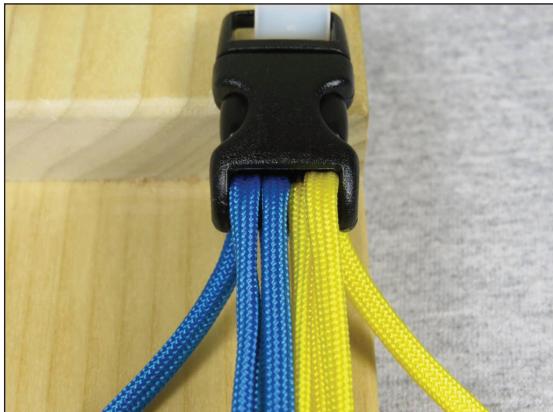
Step 8 – Start from the top and thread both ends into the bottom buckle.



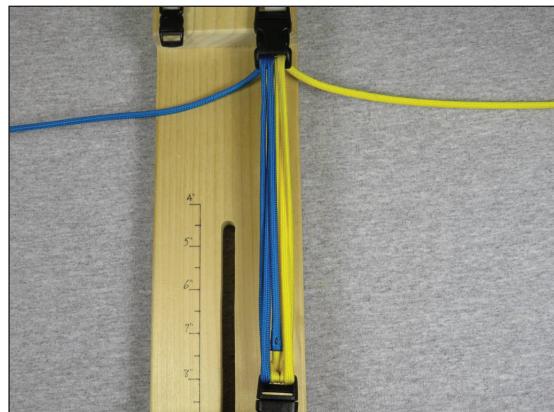
Step 9 – Tighten the cord to reduce slack.



Step 9 – Start from the top and thread both ends into the top buckle.



Step 10 – Tighten the cord to reduce slack.



Step 11 – Start at the Lark's Head Knot and tighten all cords to increase tension.

7 – How to Finish the Paracord Bracelet



Step 1 – Use forceps or needle nose pliers to thread the two cord ends through the Lark's Head Knot.



Step 2 – Tighten the cord. Try on the bracelet to guarantee a good fit before the next step!



Step 3 – Estimate 3/4 inch from the Lark's Head Knot and cut.



Step 4 – Melt the ends with a lighter and flatten the melted cord with flat portion of the needle nose plier's claw.

8 – Fashion versus Survival

There are several misconceptions about paracord bracelets in general. Several individuals tend to think that if a bracelet is made of paracord, then it must be a survival bracelet. This is incorrect!

If a paracord bracelet, Figure 1, is either singed to finish the bracelet or tucked in the Lark's Head knot, then it cannot be quickly unraveled. The bracelet is basically made for paracord storage and can be categorized as a Fashion Bracelet. Most buckle bracelets and knot-loop bracelets can be called Fashion Bracelets. Why? The knots that create the design cannot be quickly undone.

The other category is the Survival Bracelet, Figure 2. They can also be called Quick Deploy, Rapid Deploy... etc. You get the picture. They usually have a stopper knot on one end and a loop on the other end: knot-loop bracelet. A true survival bracelet should be designed to quickly unravel once the stopper knot is unknotted or cut off. Only a few basic knots will rapidly come undone once a force is applied: half hitch, slip knot, and zipper sinnet. Some crochet and spool knitting weaves will quickly unravel.



Figure 1 – Fashion Bracelets.



Figure 2 – Survival Bracelets.