

Marlinspike Seamanship

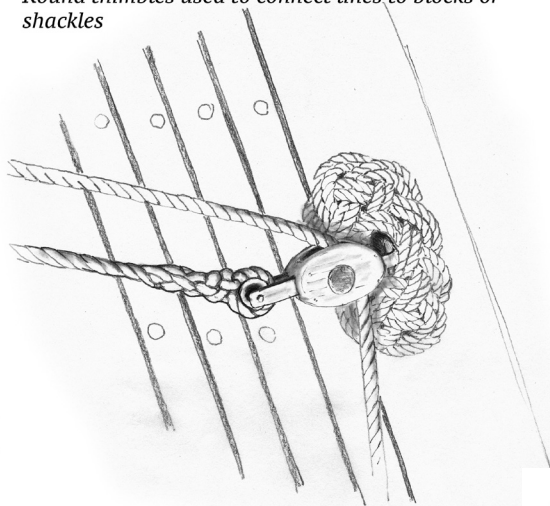
By Ted Walsh

Round Thimbles and lizards

One of the simplest components of a traditional rig is the round thimble. Typically used in sail making, they can be roped or stitched into a sail as clew, tack, or cringle, but round thimbles are found in many places of the rig itself.

Made of brass, bronze, or copper, round thimbles are inexpensive and can be purchased through marine chandleries and from sail-maker supply stores, and come in a variety of sizes. They can be used in many places to eliminate chafe and make a strong connecting point between a line and shackle.

Round thimbles used to connect lines to blocks or shackles



Lizards:

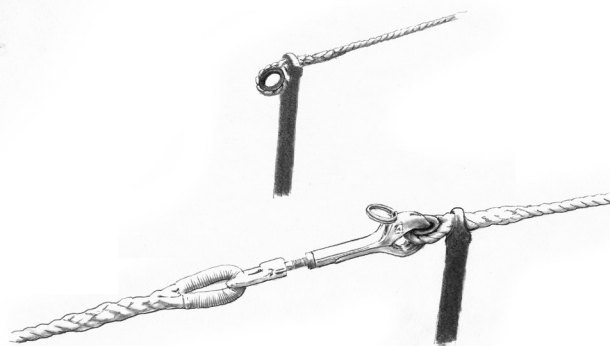
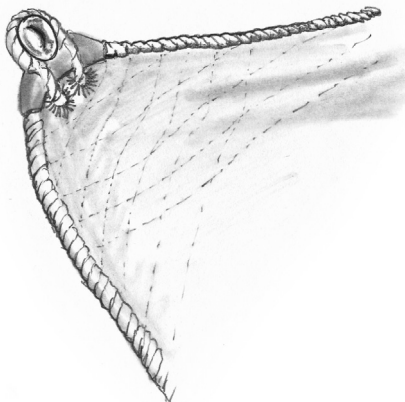
A round thimble spliced into the end of a line with an eye splice can also function as a kind of sheaveless block. This configuration is known as a lizard.

There are places in the rigging where a line might occasionally need to slide, as through a block, but where the load and the amount of slide is minimal and where the use of a block would be overkill. In this case a lizard might be used.

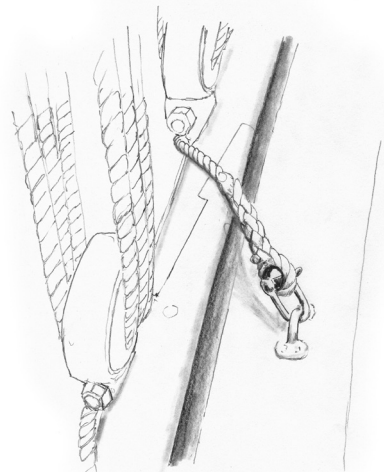
In some cases the thimble is made of wood (technically called a bull's eye) commonly out of an oily wood like teak or mahogany, and the line passed through the center of the lizard allowing the same function as a block without the size, weight, or expense of a block.

If you are looking for a versatile addition to your rigging bag, throw in a handful of round thimbles.

A thimble roped into the clew of a sail



A round thimble used as a connecting point for a pelican hook



Teak thimbles set up as lizards for lazy jacks

