

# Marlinespike Seamanship

By Ted Walsh

## French Spiral Hitching

It is likely that you have a number of places on your vessel where there is a round or semi-round handgrip, boat hook, oar loom, or even a tiller, that has the potential to crack.

One method of reinforcement or emergency repair is French Spiral hitching. Of all the forms of grafting, hitching or pointing, this is perhaps the easiest to master. It is easy to apply, easy to tension, and is extremely strong.

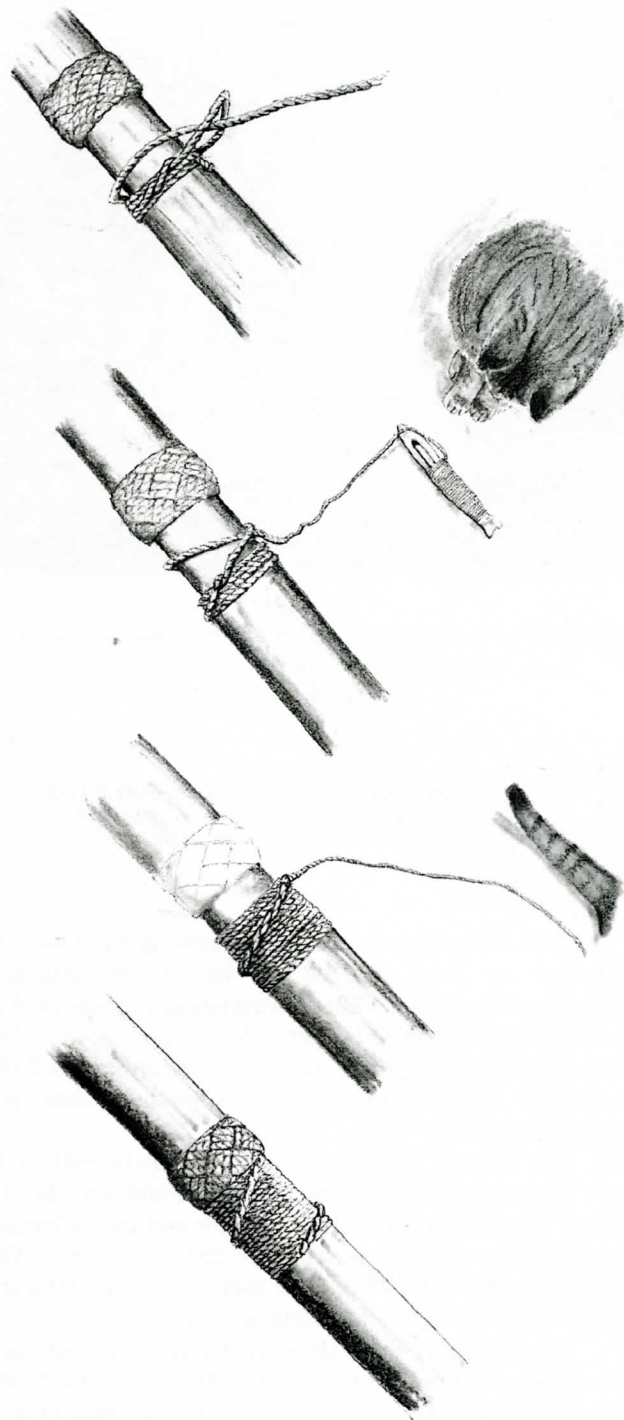
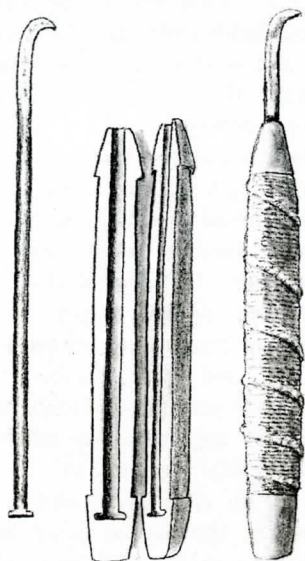
I had to extend the chafing protection on our long boathook and used French Spiral Hitching. The illustrations show the steps described below.

To determine how much line you will need, wrap line around the object to be covered with hitching and once the area has been covered, add about 10% more to be safe. To start, take one end of the line and tie a simple hitch around the object that you are working on by passing the line around the object and back under itself as shown in the illustrations. Pull the hitch tight and continue around again making the second hitch slightly ahead of the previous hitch and pull tight. As you continue hitching the line, the continual placement of hitches one ahead of another will create the spiral.

Here is a quick project using French Spiral Hitching:

### Seam and caulking puller

A twenty-penny nail is shaped with a plumber's torch and hammer. A handle is made out of wood from a split dowel, grooved and finish-shaped with files, and the whole bound together with French Spiral Hitching.



*The hardest part of a project like this is just keeping track of the line. It will want to snag on objects, tangle and even wander off.*