

The Serious Tackle Box

Experienced Fishing Advice To
Make Fishing Great Again

With Chris Gonzales

— Surgeon's End & Dropper Loop Knots 101 —

The surgeon's end loop is the easiest to tie of the monofilament loop knots. I think it's a somewhat overlooked knot and misused at times when it is utilized. When applied correctly, numerous uses throughout the water column come to mind, ranging from freelining near the surface to heavy single-drop bottom rigs.

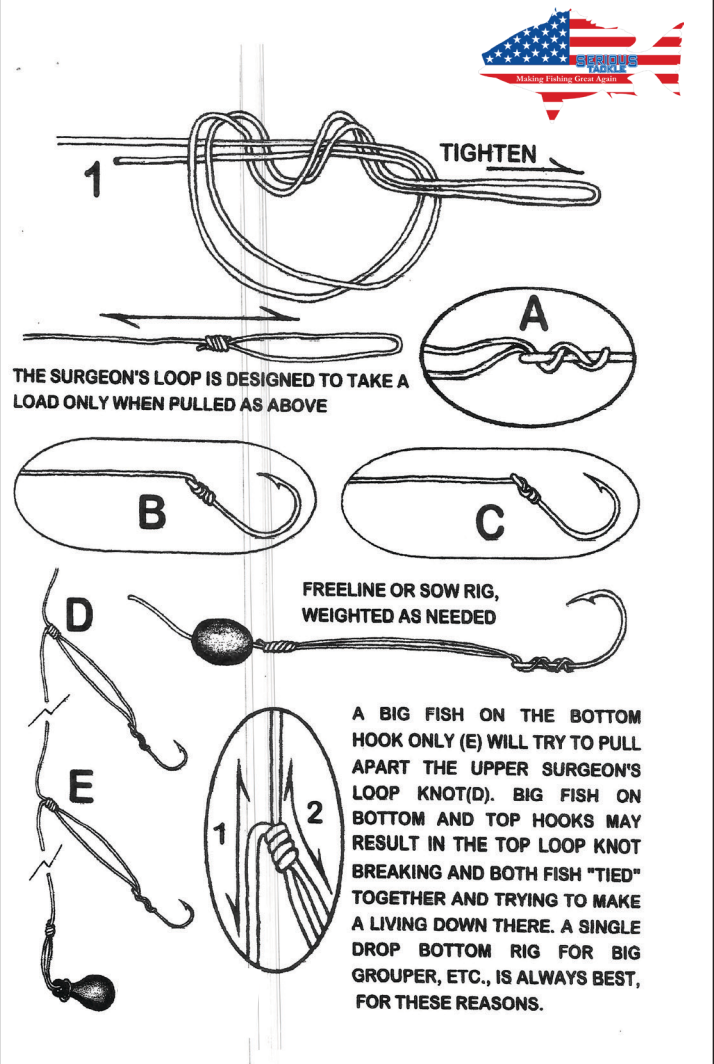
Knot strength is always something to consider when selecting any knot; this one is rated at about 95%. When talking about knot strength, remember - if your mono isn't I.G.F.A. Line Class rated, you can bet that it will overtest its stated pound test. What this translates into is that, with a 95% knot, it won't fail until somewhat over the stated pound on the spool.

The surgeon's end loop tying is shown at the top of the illustration. Form the knot as shown, hold both strands at 1, moisten the mono with saliva, and tighten evenly by pulling on the loop. It should now look like the illustration's second view, left. This is the basis for the rest of the rigs to be covered. They will be the correct loop to hook connection, and why; the freeline/sow rig variations, and the single drop bottom rig, and why.

The correct loop-to-hook connection is shown in oval "A". Get there by passing the loop through the hook eye from the "bend" side of the hook. Now, twist it and pass the loop over the bend side of the hook, twist it again and pass the loop back over the hook bend, then twist it and pass it over the bend side of the hook one last time. Evenly snug it up a bit and the wraps around the hook shank will look like those in oval "A". Oval "B" shows how the wraps look when tightened against the hook eye. What it also shows is the direct pull, in line with the hook point. Another great benefit is that, when the line comes tight at the hookup of your target species, the force applied to the hook causes its eye to be forced down; this rotates the hook point into faster, deeper penetration. Don't give away this hookup advantage by passing the surgeon's loop through the hook eye from the other side. Oval "C" shows the different hook point position in relation to the pull of a tighten line; this pull obviously won't rotate the hook point either. Carefully do this connection both ways and see the benefit for yourself, it's one of those little things that do make a difference.



Surgeon's End & Dropper Loop Knots 101



The freeline/sow rig difference is the use of, and size of eggweight that's used. This is about as simple as rigging gets, for just about anything without a lot of mono-slicing teeth. That would include ling, snapper, dolphin, grouper, and amberjack. With a nose-hooked, whole baitfish on the hook, use anything from no weight to, say up to a 12 oz. eggweight for depth control. Depending on the

depth of the target species and the strength of the current, varying the size of the eggweight will get you there.

The bottom rig shown at the bottom left of the illustration is a double drop version. I only show a double drop to clearly show the possibility of a breakout if a big bottom fish gets on the lower hook, "E". This would come from the pull on the bottom hook and the force it would apply to the top surgeon's loop knot, "D". The oval to the right shows this problem in closer detail. The pull from the bottom hook on the top surgeon's dropper loop is shown at "1". The pull on the top knot that is the correct loading on surgeon's dropper loop knot is shown at "2". This is why a single drop bottom rig is my preference when using a surgeon's dropper loop knot. It's guaranteed that one big-bottom fish at a time is enough on the other end of your line anyway. The surgeon's dropper loop is formed and tightened like the end loop, just with more mono on the back side to tie up the lower portion of the rig. A surgeon's end loop is at the bottom to attach the sinker, as shown.

The surgeon's end and dropper loop knots are some of the most versatile, easiest to tie, and have high strength...they are knots that will get the job done for you in a variety of situations — offshore and inshore. I've used them offshore with mono ranging from 30 to 300# for many years.

I'd almost bet that most fishermen haven't given the lowly surgeon's end

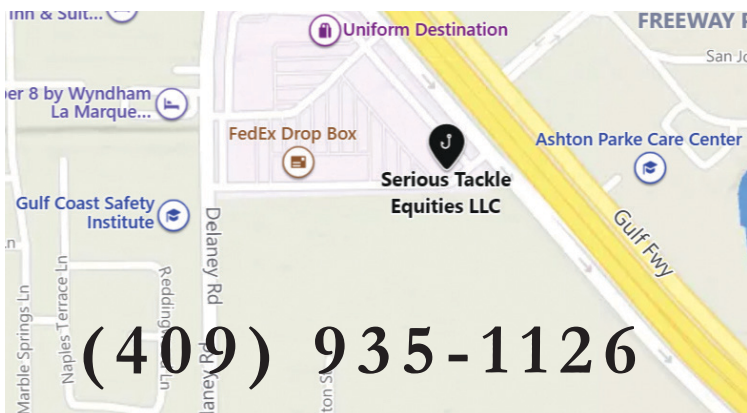
loop or dropper loop a lot of thought, I didn't until about 10 or 12 years ago. Maybe I've given it too much thought, but I don't think so. These simple connections have their good points; when properly tied and used, but like anything else, they can bring problems when they're not. Put the surgeon's end and dropper loop knots to use and you, too, will soon appreciate their simplicity, strength and multiple applications.

If you have any questions, stop by Serious Tackle or email me at chris@serioustackle.com

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