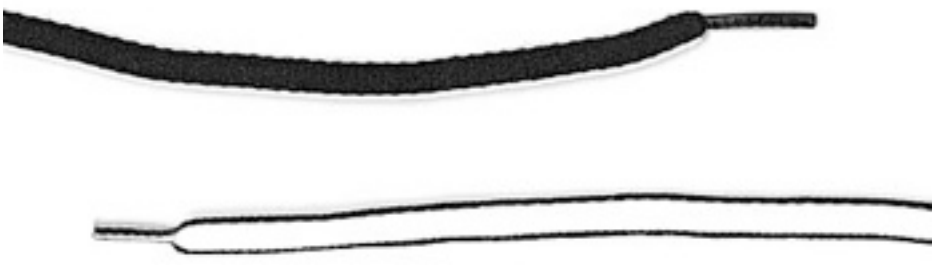
2.5. Create a sliding clasp: Fisherman's Bend (Fisherman's Clasp)

A **bend** is a knot that joins 2 cords together. The **single fisherman's bend** is created by using each cord to tie a simple knot over the other. If you tie a barrel knot with each cord, this is a **double fisherman's bend**. Using three wrap long knots, **triple overhand knots** or **double barrel knots**, gives you a **triple fisherman's bend**. And so on.

If your 2 cords are the 2 ends of a single decorated cord, then you have a **fisherman's clasp** and an adjustable pendant, necklace, or bracelet. Let us say that you are making a necklace. The more wraps on your knots, the more hold due to friction is generated. You will have to determine how many wraps you need depending on the slipperiness of the cord you are using, the weight of the pendant or other decorations involved, and the ease of adjustability that is needed. Usually, however, 2 or 3 wraps do the trick. When the sliding knots touch is your largest adjusted size, be sure that it fits over your head (or widest point of your hand) at this point. How small your necklace can get depends on the decorations fixed to the rest of your cord and the total length of the cord.



Your points of reference in construction here are the maximum length of your necklace and the desired symmetry (or not) of the loose ends. Don't forget to factor into your length calculations the amount of cord that will be used by the knots themselves

2.6. A few words about safety

If you work in an environment where snagging or grabbing might be an issue, if you will be giving an item made of cord to a child, if you are active in sports, or ... then you need to be thinking

about safety. If, as I have, you use a material such as cords that are used in mountain climbing, you really want the piece to break before your neck does (and no one wants to be wearing their own garrote). Even standard decorative materials are likely to have a breaking point that is far beyond sensible human endurance. What this means is that you want to build in a weak point into your design, a point that is **designed to break.**. In other words, when the piece breaks, the wearer should suffer little or no damage and, as a secondary consideration, the piece should break in a controlled way that allows easy repair or reconstruction.

Traditional jewelry construction wisdom says to use a jump ring somewhere in the construction of your item. A jump ring deforms and releases easily and is also easy and cheap to replace. Jump rings and fibre works don't always get along, however. Depending in the metal of the jump ring, it can discolour your cord and the cut edges of the ring can also weaken and abrade the fibres of the cord. An easy fix to this issue is, if you can find the right materials, to thread solid (no seams or rough edges) beads (or clasps or bails) onto your cord and join the beads with a jump ring.

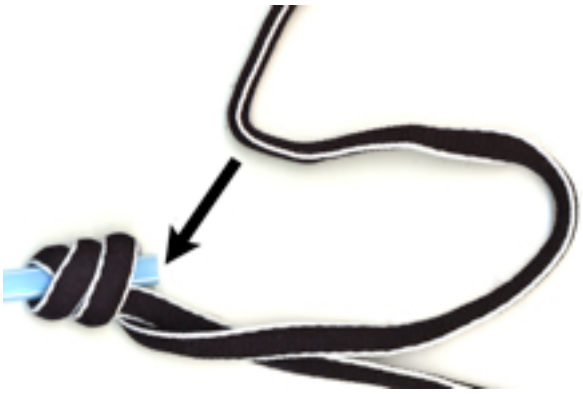
If you want an all-fibre solution or you can't find the desired beads and/or findings, here's a possibility. Create a thread "jump ring". Researching lanyard safety (you can look up information to do with printed security badge lanyards) it seems that the desired break point is 5lbs (2kg). How they determine that, I don't know, but what I did to test things is to attach a suitable weight to a necklace prototype, hang the necklace from a reasonably durable item, raise the weight as high as the cord allows and then see what happens when the weight is dropped.

Using all purpose 100% polyester sewing thread, I tried winding the thread around the 2 "clasp loops", finished off with a surgeon's knot. Three (3) winds broke at approximately 2 lbs (0.9kg), four (4) winds broke at 4.7lbs (2.1kg) and five (5) winds didn't break at 5lbs (2.3kg). To make life easier, of course, you can double your thread and just wind it twice around your clasp loops.

2.7. The Adjustable Safety Clasp (ASC)

The ASC is tied with barrel knot similar to the Fisherman's Clasp but the cord ends are **not**

attached to each other and you are pulling a loop through the knot. Being a sliding loop knot, it is important that the free end forms the knot and the necklace end does the sliding, because if the free end is the sliding part, it is easy for it to pull through entirely, leaving you with no loop. So, reversing what you did previously, wind the standing part (end leading to the body of the necklace) around the free end (usually the working end, but we're working the other part right



now...) and push a bight into your straw. Tighten the knot and double check that it is the necklace side of the knot that slides.

If you were planning the bead-and-jump-ring route, you should have pre-strung your bead and

pushed it through with your bight.

If you are using the “thread jump ring”, wind the thread around the 2 clasp loops, then tie the

thread using a surgeon's knot. Remember that the point of this particular clasp arrangement is to

have something adjustable, so don't tie the clasp loops so tightly that the cords cannot slide.

If the knot still makes you nervous, you could probably put some Fray Check on it. Either way, don't trim the ends of the thread too close to the knot.

Remember that if you use a different kind of thread (cotton, poly-cotton, rayon, jeans thread, upholstery thread, silk, etc.) then the number of winds to achieve the appropriate breaking point will be different. If you don't want to set up a test involving weights and such, you can guess that if the thread breaks given a firm tug you're in the right general area. If you need to strain to break the thread, then you're definitely using too much.