

Occupational Therapy Strategies

Tying Laces

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Name:

Tying shoelaces can be a tricky task for some young people. The child may require support and lots of opportunities to practice, in order to master this skill.



Things to consider...

Environment

- Practice tying laces in a calm and quiet environment to reduce distractions.
- It may be easier to practice the technique on a shoe placed on a table, rather than bending to the feet.

Materials

- Use long, wide shoelaces or pipe cleaners to make it easier for the child.
- Using different coloured laces can be helpful as they provide more visual cues. They can also be motivating for young people to work with.
- Try using other materials including a tissue box with punched holes or an egg box with holes in.
- Encourage the child to engage in other creative activities that involve threading and string/lace. This will give the child time get used to the techniques and materials involved in tying laces, in a fun and motivating way.



Technique

- Allow time for the child to watch you tie laces.
- Break the activity into simple steps.
- Use backward and forward chaining principles to help the child learn the steps involved with tying laces. This means you, the parent/carer, will do the first few steps of the task and the child will do the last one. In this way, the child has the sense of task completion. Increasing motivation and self-esteem will encourage the child to attempt the task again.
- Each time, increase the number of steps the child has to complete until they are able to do the whole task independently.
- Talking through the activity whilst doing it, can help to reinforce the process.
- Try teaching the stages gradually over time, rather than trying it all in one go. If the child is stuck or frustrated, leave it for a while and come back to it when they are ready to try again.
- Learning can continue from day to day; as they wear their shoes, encourage them to participate in tying their laces, by doing the stages they have already mastered.
- There are several different ways of tying shoelaces and this booklet demonstrates a few of them. The child may find one easier than the others. Whichever method you use, it is important to be consistent and give the child lots of opportunities to practice on a regular (daily if possible) basis.

Have a look on the internet and YouTube for more tips and tricks!

- <http://www.fieggen.com/shoelace/tipsforchildren.htm>
- <https://www.ot-mom-learning-activities.com/how-to-tie-shoelaces.html>
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LsFKxEllr_A – Learn To Tie Your Shoes from Lots To Learn”
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IkxRkgG07C0> – “Occupational Therapy Shoe Tying” Alternative
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o4q2vKlvuXM> – “Shoe Tying Tutorial”
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JKFu-2gjj00> – “How to tie your shoes”

Method 1 – Working Backwards

1. Parent ties the laces up to the final stage of pulling both loops tight.

AIM: The child pulls both loops tight.

2. Parent ties the laces up to the last but one stage: making the second loop.

AIM: The child wraps the lace around the loop then pushes the lace through the inner circle with their thumb, making the second loop.

3. Parent ties the laces up to the stage where the lace is wrapped around the first loop.

AIM: The child wraps lace around the first loop.

4. Parent ties the lace up to the stage of making the first loop.

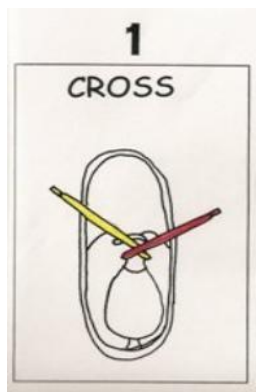
AIM: The child makes a loop with the left hand lace.

5. The child brings top lace over and under other lace to make a half knot.

6. The child independently ties the laces into a bow from beginning to end.



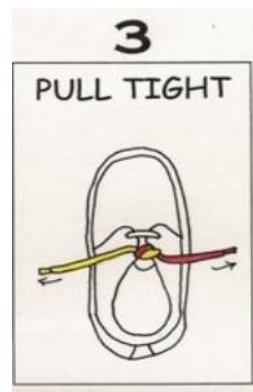
Method 2 - Lacing Story



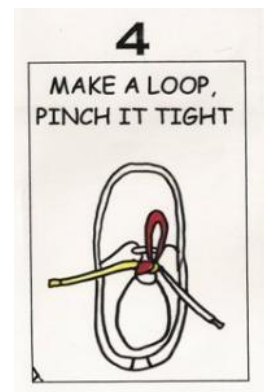
X marks the spot



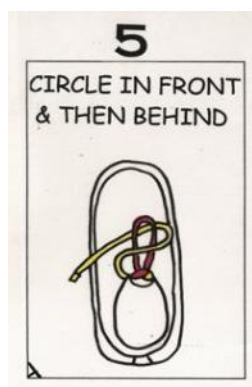
Bunny out of his burrow



Close the door tight behind him



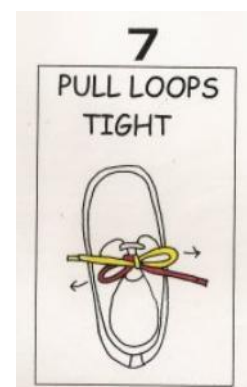
Bunny sees a tree



Bunny hops around the tree and into his burrow



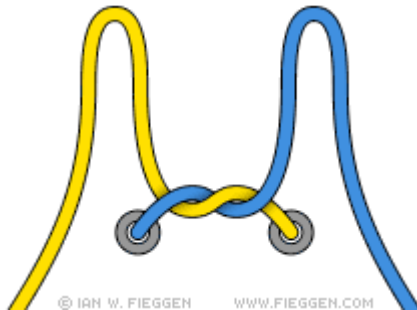
Bunny has lots to eat and comes out of his burrow full and fat



Bunny has a nap. Tuck him in tight

Method 3 - Two Loop Shoelace Knot

This method is also known as the "Bunny Ears" shoelace knot (due to its two loops) or as the "Bowknot." This involves making a loop with both ends, then simply tie a knot with them.



Step 1:

Tie a left-over-right starting knot as shown above. Then make both ends into "loops" by simply doubling them back onto themselves. People often refer to these as "Bunny Ears".



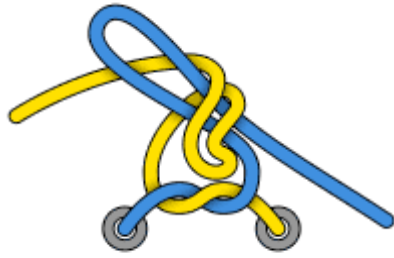
Step 2:

Cross the two loops over each other so that the right (blue) loop ends up in front and the left (yellow) loop ends up behind. The yellow loop is now the right loop.



Step 3:

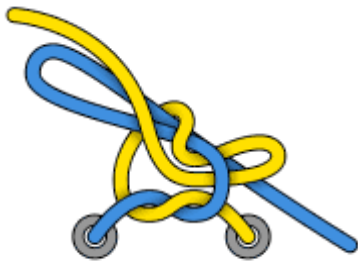
Begin to wrap the right (yellow) loop around the left (blue) loop to end up in front.



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Step 4:

Start to feed the right (yellow) loop into the "hole" that has just been made. This is really the same as if you were tying a regular shoelace knot, except that you are working with a loop instead of a loose end.



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Step 5:

With the right (yellow) loop now through the "hole", grab hold of both loops and start to pull the knot tight.



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Step 6:

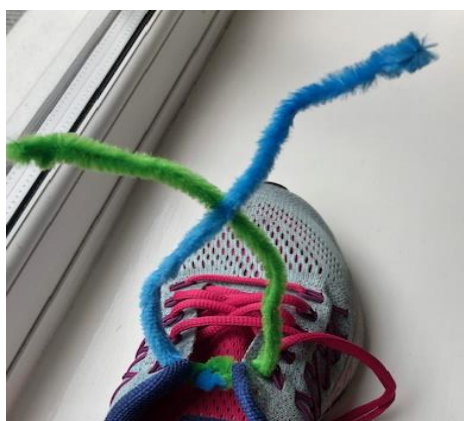
Notice that the loose end of the right (yellow) loop drops back down to the front left, making the finished knot exactly the same as if you'd used the regular one-loop method.

Method 4 - Learning to Tie Your Shoe Laces with Pipe Cleaners



Step 1:

- Use two different coloured pipe cleaners
- Pick your favourite colour and lead with this pipe cleaner!
- I've picked green.



Step 2:

- Make a 'cross' 'X' with the pipe cleaners
- Notice how the blue pipe cleaner is on top of the green pipe cleaner



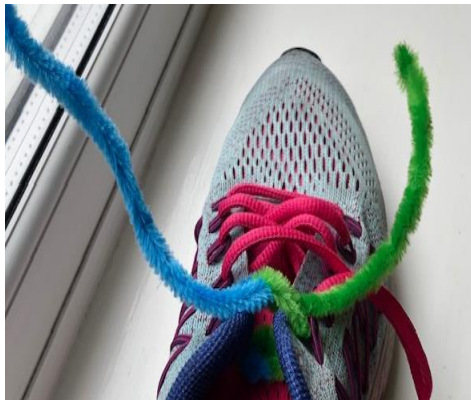
Step 3:

- Bend the bottom (green) pipe cleaner towards you.



Step 4:

- Push the (green) pipe cleaner through the gap, away from you.



Step 5:

- Pull the both pipe cleaners at the same time.



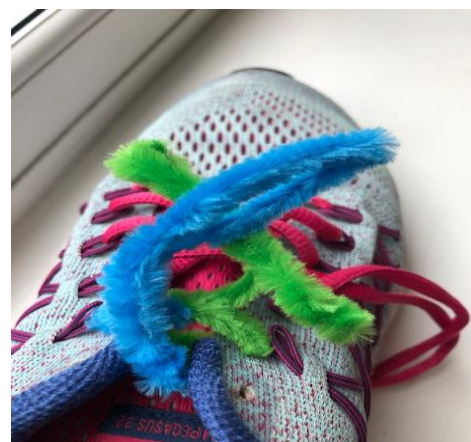
Step 6:

- Make a bunny loop with one (green) pipe cleaner and then the other (blue) pipe cleaner.



Step 7:

- Squeeze green pipe cleaner loop together.
- Squeeze blue pipe cleaner loop together.



Step 8:

- Make a cross and 'X' with the loops
- Repeat steps 3 and 4.



Step 9:

- Bend the bottom (green) pipe cleaner towards you
- Then push it through the gap (away from you).



Step 10:

- Pull the both pipe cleaners at the same time

Method 5 – Using the top lace hole to help!



Put the end of the laces into the two top holes (see opposite). This makes two bunny loops. Cross the two bunny loops as demonstrated in the method above (*Method 4 – steps 8 – 10*).