

# Making Survival Bracelets with Para-cord

This activity is all about learning some cool knots, doing some problem-solving as you learn, and then completing your craft and having a cool survival tool at the same time.

Para-cord, (short for 'parachute cord') has been associated with survival skills for many years, because it was used by military personnel who landed in difficult terrain to make all kinds of survival tools, shelters and crafts. They always had a lot of it, and it was very strong, and reliable and easy to work with.

Today, we still use it for a cord to use on the 'bow' part of making a fire with a 'bow and drill' fire by friction method. It is used for tarps, shelters, and lashing a raft or camp craft. It's used for tying down gear or for first aid use, like trying a splint on an injured leg or shoulder.

This bracelet uses about 9 feet of continuous cord, so if you needed to untie it and use it, you will have it if you ever needed it!

(Note: If you untie and it use it, you won't be able to retie it and have it look right later, because the ends you used to pull it tight will be cut off. But, you can save your bracelet buckle and when you get more para-cord, you can totally make a new one any time you like!)

Here's what's in your kit: A length of 550 para-cord, with a strong plastic buckle attached.

Here's what you need to complete it: A pair of **scissors**, a **lighter** or **matches**, and a **small stick**.



## Step One: Making the Girth Hitch

The girth hitch is a knot that is used to fasten rope or cord securely to a round pole or metal ring that is very quick and very strong. It was used to tie the 'girth' strap to the saddle on horses, so it's been used for a long time!

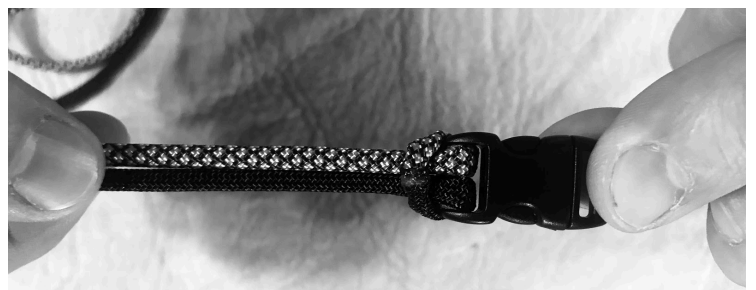
Uncoil the cord in your kit. Take your buckle off the cord. Note that the buckles are curved, to fit around your wrist comfortably.

Fold your cord equally in half, and slide **both** of the free ends through the **UNDERSIDE** of the buckle opening.

When you have them through, pull the string until there is a loop formed by the cord that is folded.

Slide the buckle through the loop, and pull on the cord to tighten the Girth Hitch.

You did it! You completed the first step in making your bracelet!

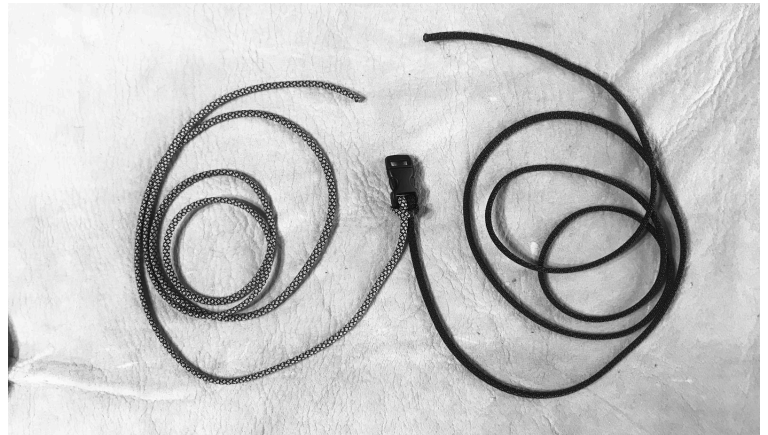


Side view of your girth hitch!

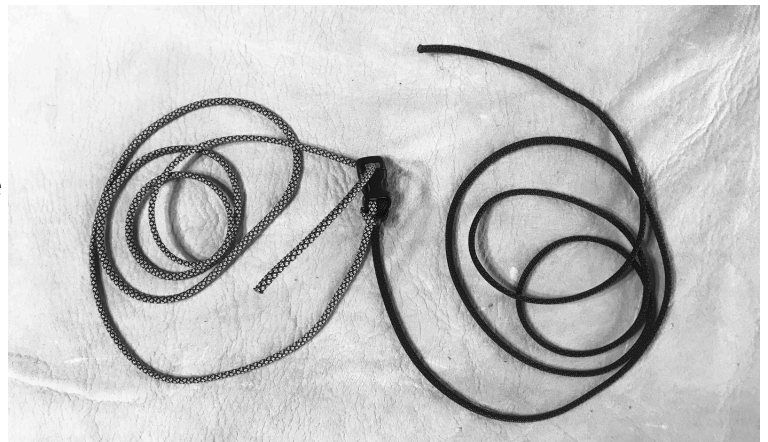


Step Two: Second half of buckle attachment

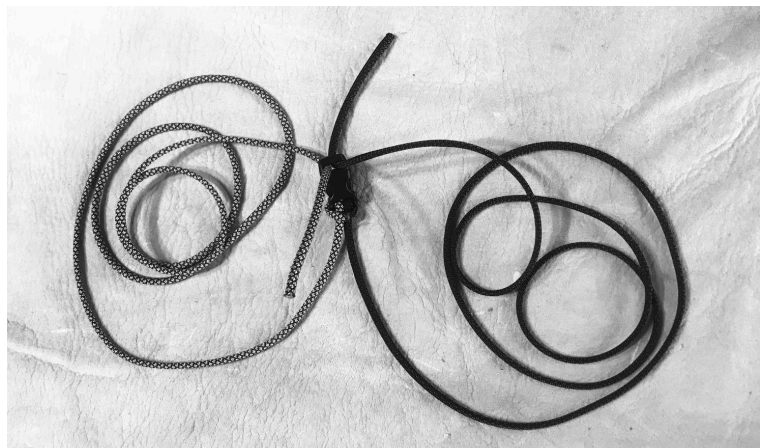
- Lay bracelet on table and spread strands of rope apart making sure each tail is on its respective side of the buckle



- Take one end and pass it through the top of the buckle



- Take the other end and pass it through the bottom of the buckle making sure the ropes stay on their respective sides of the buckle



### Step Three: Sizing

- Pull slack through buckle until there is a loop created that you can slip your hand through

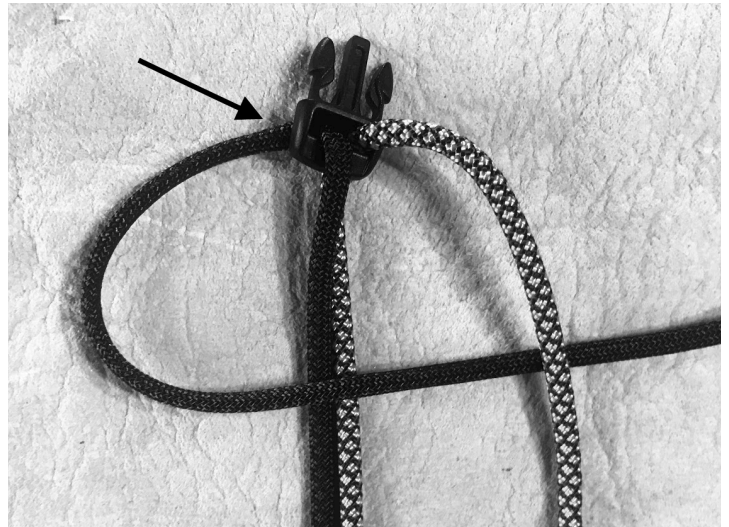


- Once your bracelet is snug around your wrist, loosen until you can fit two fingers between the bracelet and your wrist. This will determine how wide the bracelet will be, and if you are unsure, it's better to make it a tiny bit larger than smaller, just in case. If you find that it's too small, you can always undo the stitches/knots and unravel it all, and start over, making it a little bigger, so it's no problem. Unless you cut the ends. Then you can't make it larger. Smaller, yes, but not bigger!
- Test it before you cut the ends off!

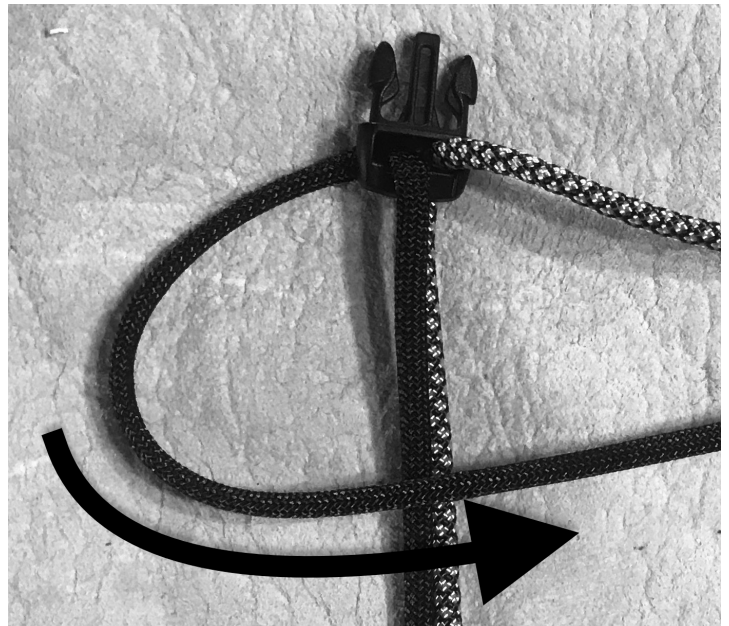


#### Step Four: **The first stitch**

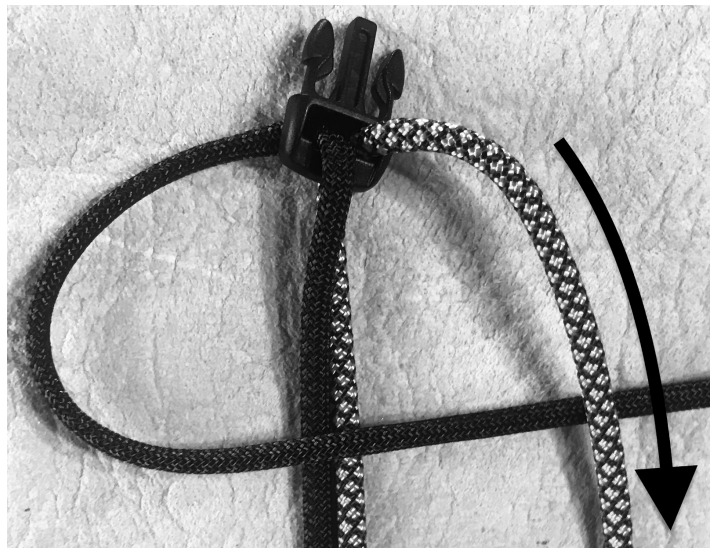
- Unclip your Buckle so your bracelet hangs loose.
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- Start with the side that has the rope exiting from the bottom of the buckle. (It's NOT the one with the Girth Hitch!)



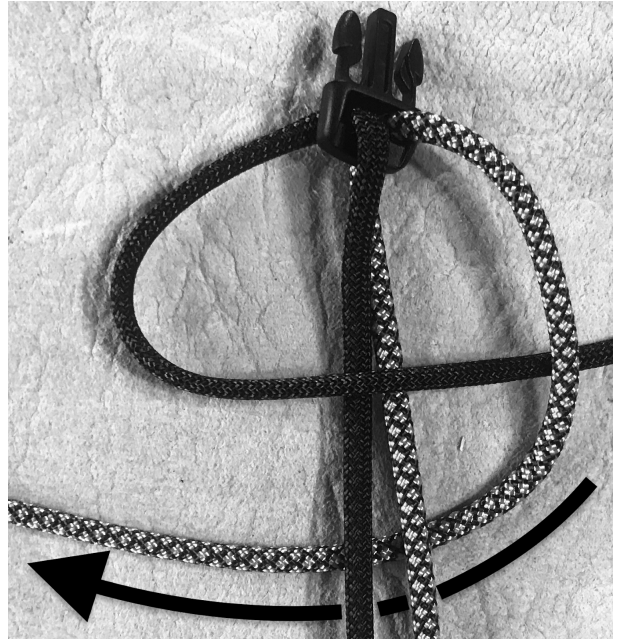
- Cross this side **over** the two center strands



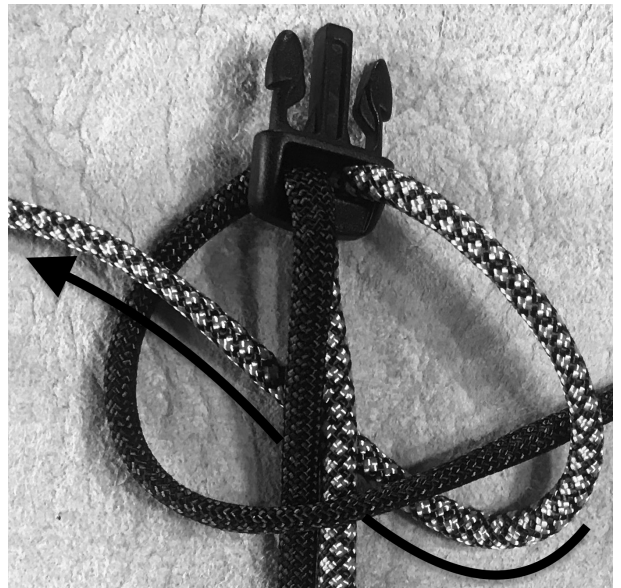
- Cross the other side **over** first strand



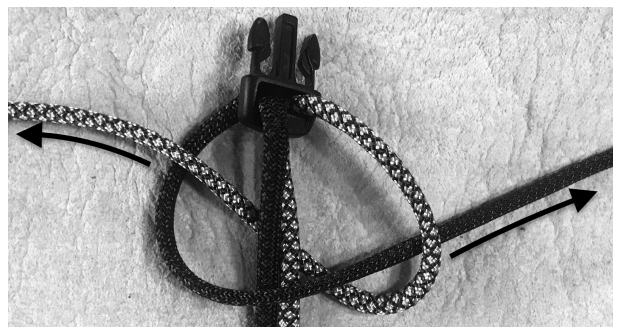
- Cross this strand behind two center strands



- Feed this strand up through the loop left by first strand



- Tighten by pulling on both tails

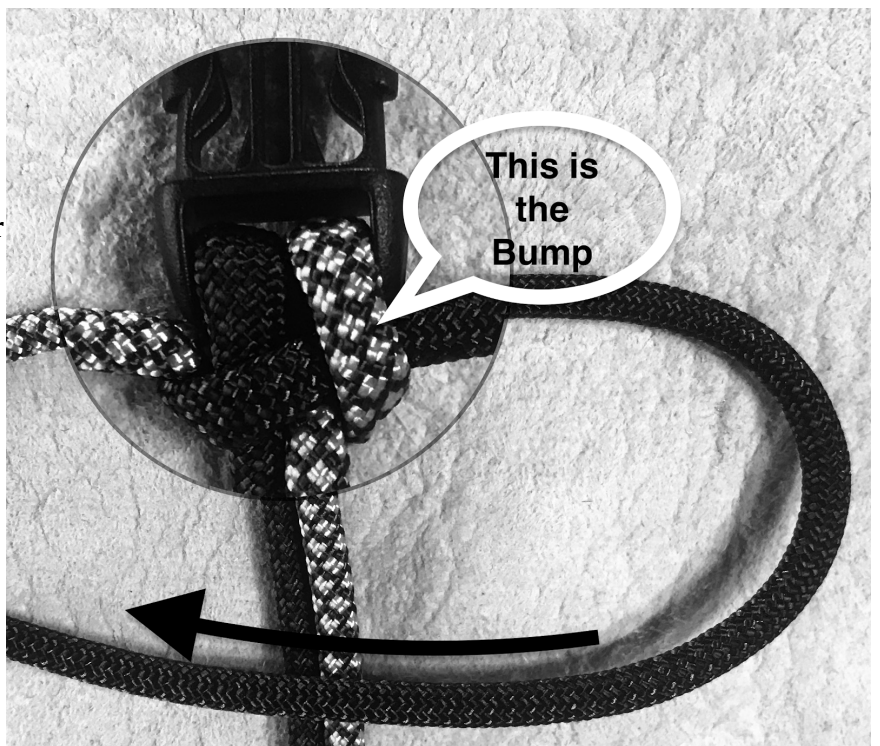


Your finished,  
tightened first stitch  
should look like this.

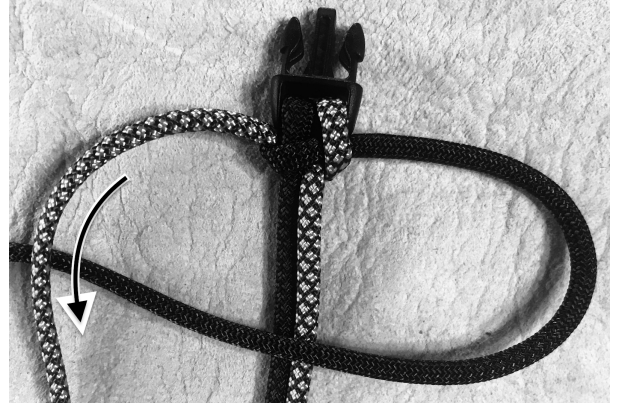


Step Five: How to continue

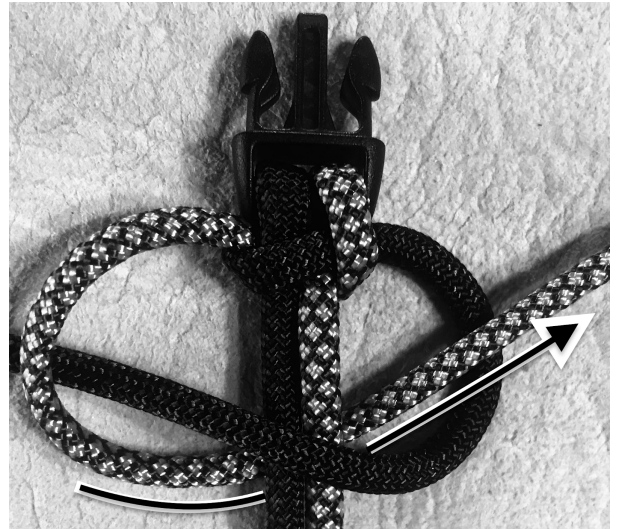
- Cross over the two center strands. Make sure you always start on the side with the bump!



- Cross opposite strand over first strand



- Cross behind the two center strands and out through the loop on the other side. Then pull it all tight!



- Repeat, but be sure to start on the side with the bump



Step Six: Finish the Bracelet! Make as many stitches as you can and pull them tight each time you do it, until you can't do any more stitches and you are at the Girth Hitch side of your bracelet.

- Once you have reached the end of your bracelet you will need to decide if you melt the ends of your bracelet or use the friction method
- Make sure to test your bracelet to be sure it fits okay! Once you cut it you can't make it larger!



#### **Melting method**

- Pull last stitch tight and cut as close as you can without cutting your bracelet
- Use the lighter to melt the end of the rope



- Press your small stick or the side of your scissors against the melted end of your cord so it will flatten out and not come undone.
- Repeat on the other strand.

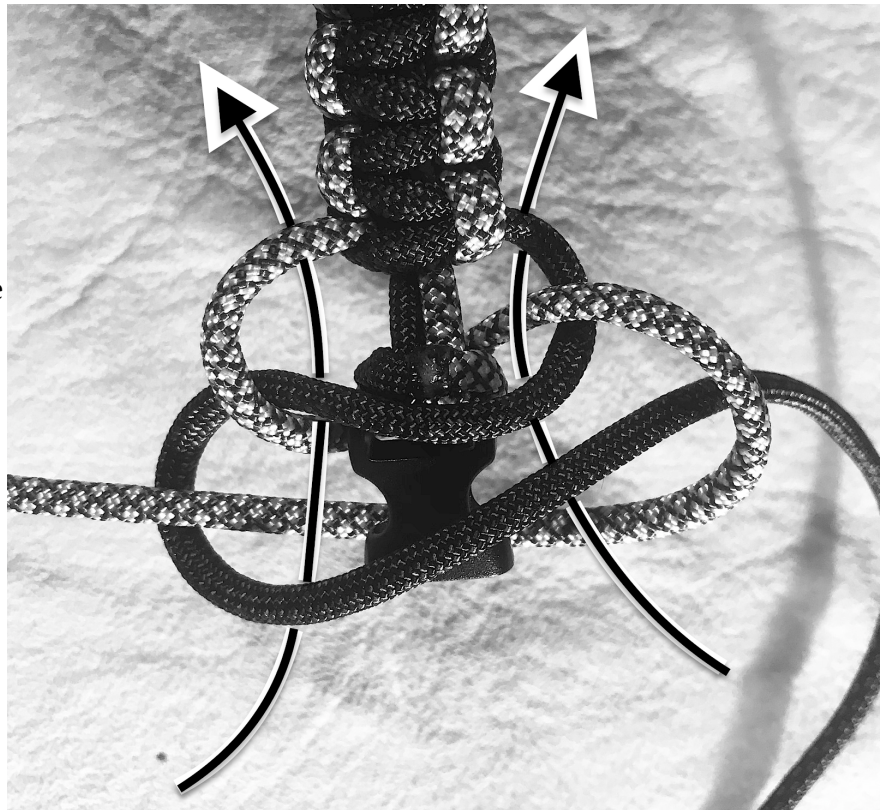


## Friction method

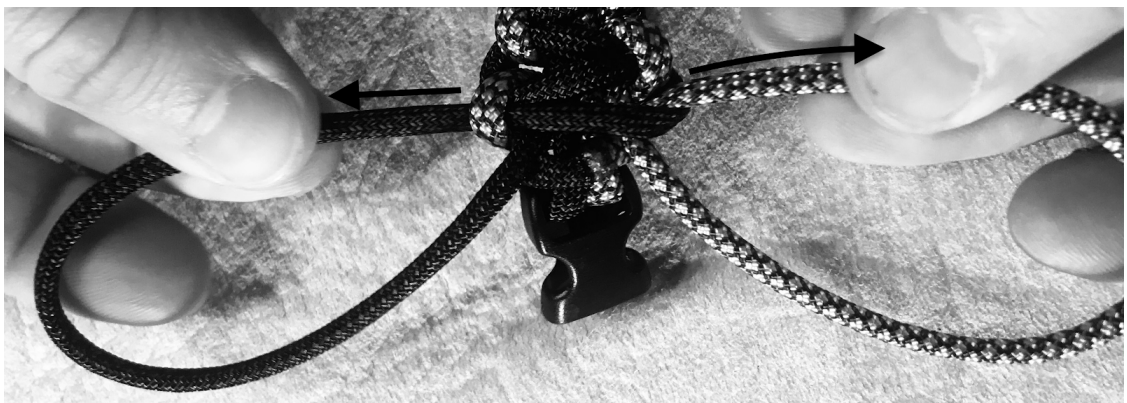
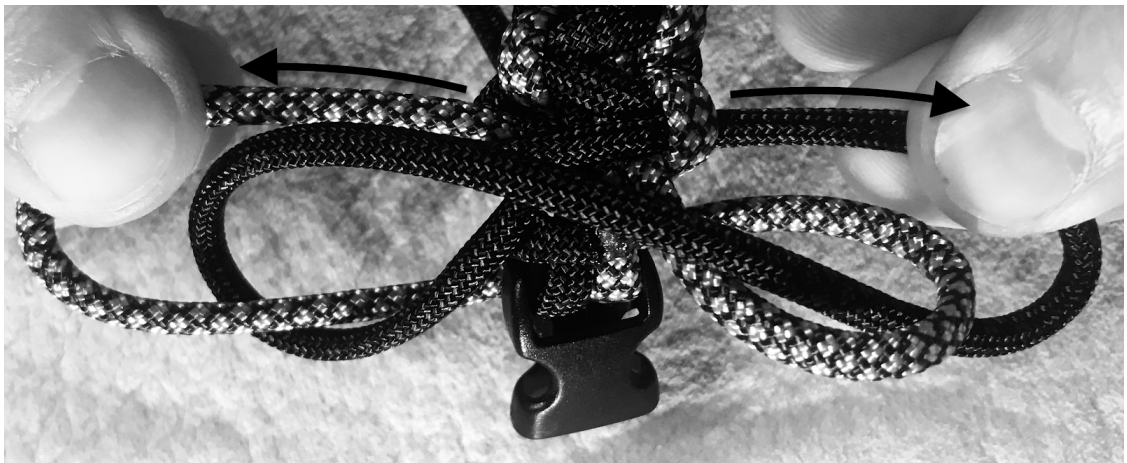
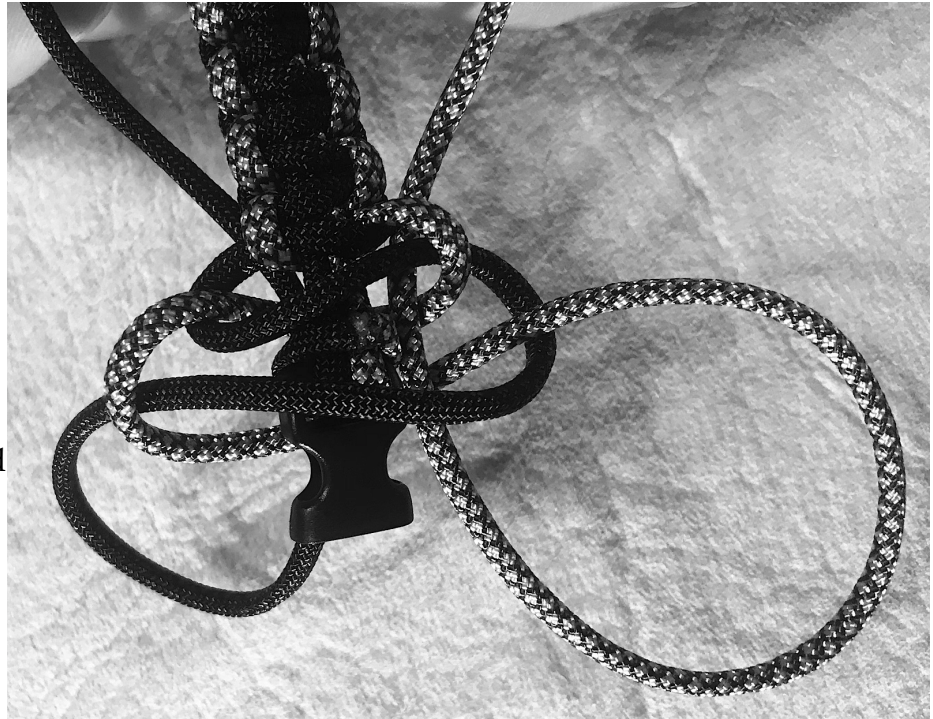
- Loosen the last two stitches



- Take the end of one strand and feed it back through the two loose stitches making it exit to the underside of the bracelet
- Repeat with other strand



- Once both ropes are fed back along the center strands and exit on the bottom side of your bracelet, tight the first stitch, and then the second leaving two end loops



- Tighten down end loops by flipping over your bracelet and pulling on the two strands that emerge from the bottom two stitches down.



- Once the two loops are gone and the last stitch is tight, cut the tails about an eighth of an inch long. The tails will fray, but the friction of the last two stitches will hold them in place!



