

Project Name

The Ancient Art of Cordage with Saorise Byrne

Featured Image



Photo Credit: Photo and Cordage by Saorise Byrne

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1_d0fPU_hipoaFtDFRqi9oC4uk4d9B485?usp=sharing

Project Description

MCD welcomes artist, designer, and crafts-person, [Saorise Byrne](#) for a mindful and meditative introduction to the age-old art of cordage.

Humans have been making cordage for at least fifty thousand years. It is how we have shaped the world around us, using fibers to adapt and thrive. This MCD@Home is an invitation to explore the ancient process using meaningful fabrics and to let our minds wander as our hands find the rhythm of the making.

Cordage is accessible even to those who would not consider themselves artists or crafty. The process is simple and repetitive in a way that leaves room for conversation, laughter, and contemplation.

Learn how to turn the materials in your life into beautiful and useful lengths of cord, whether to

wrap a gift, hang as a garland or to wear as a necklace.

Recommended Age Level

Recommended for ages 7+ with adult supervision.

Materials

- Fabric | We recommend woven fabrics such as those in button-up shirts, quilting cotton, or bedsheets.
- Fabric scissors
- Water

Image Gallery | [Photo Folder](#)



A pile of sage green fabric strips

Right-Hand Dominant | Folded Fabric Process and Splicing



A hand holds the midpoint of a fabric strip between thumb and pointer finger.



A partially cordaged fabric strip, ending in about 1.5 feet of loose fabric.



An even more cordage fabric strip with about 3 inches of loose fabric ends.



A zoomed out image showing the initial splicing process. Thumb and forefinger nestle the midpoint of a yellow fabric in the vertex of the green fabric strip.



A closer image of the splicing process with the yellow strip's midpoint nestled in against the green fabric.



The cordage has been spliced. The beginning of the cordage is sage green, the middle integrates yellow and green fabric strips, and the hanging fabric strips are yellow.



The completed cordage project with a knotted end piece and two points of splicing indicated by both yellow and green strips in the cordage.



The end points of the cordage are tied together - creating a circle that could be used as a necklace.

Left-Hand Dominant | Tied Fabric Process



A hand holds the midpoint knot of a yellow fabric strip and a green fabric strip tied together.



This image shows the initial cordage process - yellow and green fabric strips are partially cordaged together.



Most of the yellow and green fabric strips are cordaged, ending in 3-4 inches of loose fabric ends.



The piece is completely cordaged. An overhand knot has been tied to end the cord. This knot has been stuck through the original fold to create a circular loop.

Material Mindfulness

Source fabric intentionally. **Identify** a piece of woven fabric that holds meaning to you but no longer serves in its current form.

Instructions

1. **Cut** or **rip** fabric into uniform strips. Strips should be either 1 inch or $\frac{1}{2}$ inch wide and at least 1.5 feet long.

Note: The wider the fabric strip, the thicker the cordage piece will be.

2. **Dampen** fabric strips with water.
3. **Fold** your fabric strip in half lengthwise OR **tie** two pieces together to make a long fabric piece.

Note: Folded process is shown with right-hand dominant photos. Knot process is shown with left-hand dominant photos.

4. **Hold** fold/knot with dominant hand between thumb and forefinger.
5. Using nondominant hand, **twist** one strip away from you.
6. **Bring** twisted strip *towards* yourself to **cross** over the hanging strip.

NOTE: This may feel awkward at first but eventually your hands will find a motion that feels natural. *Be sure to twist the strips individually in one direction and flip them together in the opposite direction.*

7. **Adjust** your grip with your thumb and forefinger of your non-dominant hand to cover where the strips overlap.
8. Take the strip that was not twisted in step 5 and use it to **repeat** steps 5 and 6

NOTE: Alternate between fabric strips each time you twist and flip them.

9. **Repeat** steps 5-8 continuously.
10. **Stop** about 3 inches before the end of fabric strips.
11. If happy with length, **tie** an overhand knot to secure cordage OR **move** on to the next section - splicing!

Splicing | Making Cordage Longer

12. **Choose** another strip of fabric and **dampen** it.
13. **Fold** the new fabric strip in half.
14. **Nestle** midpoint of new fabric strip at the point where the previous cordage overlaps.
15. **Repeat** steps 5-8, this time twisting together one new strip with each shorter, original strip.

16. **Repeat** steps 10-13 indefinitely until happy with the result.

NOTE: Typically cordage won't unravel. Feel free to take a break and pick up the process later.

17. **Tie** an overhand knot to end the cord. The knot can be stuck through the original fold in step 2 to make a loop.

Creative prompts for more...

- Go on a cordage treasure hunt! See how many places you can find cordage during your day.
- Cordage is all around us. What will you use your cordage for?
- What was your mind doing as your hands were working?
- Expand your practice! What other materials could you cordage? Try the same technique using natural fibers, old newspapers, or plastic bags.

Related Resources

- Learn more about [Saorise Bryne](#) - her story, inspiration, and practice.
- Natural fiber cordage holds rich historical and cultural value for Indigenous communities. Check out NativeTech's [Native American Cordage](#) to learn more!

