

Use your boat hook to catch the docking cleat or piling

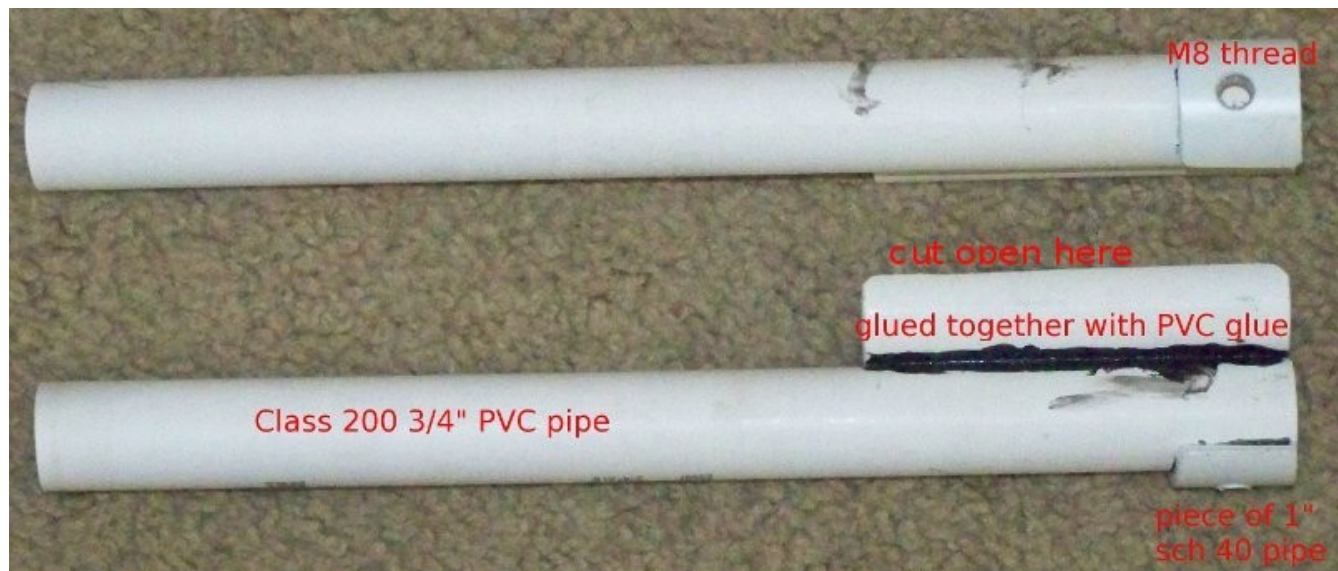
There's a nice product out on the market for this: <http://www.dockingstick.com/boat-hook-adapter.html> but for me it had a few disadvantages. Very expensive, doesn't fit my el-cheapo Walmart \$10 boat hook (22mm diameter but telescopic and floating), only for 1/2" and 5/8" lines (I use 3/8) and who can wait a week or two until it shows up????

What's better than just DIY it? The first try went wrong as I used 3/4" schedule 40 PVC pipe I had on hand but it was close to impossible to get the clamps off again. In addition the ID of the schedule 40 pipe was a bit too small. For <\$3 I got a class 200 3/4" PVC pipe, 10ft long, at the local home improvement store. A 10cm piece cut open at the side and a 30cm piece will make one unit which means I can get 8 of these out of the \$3 material.

The 3/4" class 200 pipe is just a tad too much in diameter to grab onto the boom of the hook but that's easy to solve. Heated up with a hair-dryer or heat-gun and then held closer together while it cools down and it has the perfect opening! What a logic, a 3/4" class 200 pipe has OD=1.050" and ID=0.930".....

To have a bit more "meat" for the thread required to hold the screw for the rope-lock a small piece from a 1" schedule 40 pipe was glued to the bottom of the pipe, drilled with a 6.5mm hole and tapped with M8. This is enough for an SS or Nylon M8*25mm bolt. Naturally you can use an imperial thread too if you really have to.....

As quite a bit of PVC glue has to be applied it is important to let it cure for some time before use. 2 days is what I waited.



To protect the PVC from UV rays you can spray them with Rustoleum Plastic spray or Krylon Fusion. Both adhere well to PVC.

The M8 screw is just there to clamp the rope slightly into the pipe to prevent that it gets pulled out.

If you have a boat hook with a different diameter first check which pipe size will fit best over it. Always keep in mind that the "official diameter" has nothing to do with the real diameter of PVC pipes!



This is the perfect application for PVC glue which started to dry in the can and got a bit too thick for regular use! Much easier to get a thicker layer between the two pipe pieces!



View from rear



Set up to use



Closer view of "bowline knot"

For a total of ~\$5 and ~1.5h of work I now have eight of these. OK, it would be more if I would buy my metric bolts in the US where they cost a fortune. I always import them when I have a flight to Europe. The chance of someone dropping one into the drink is so much lower this way, my crew is good at that (!), and if/when it happens it wasn't much money.

If you are not into DIY and/or like more "shiny things" you can just buy the original.....

WARNING: Do not try to cut the 10cm pieces of pipe open with a table saw! The material is pretty brittle and your fingers will be too close to the blade! It's better to use a cutting blade in a Dremel tool to make the cuts. I did it on the table saw with large pieces of wood to get my fingers away but ruined 2 pieces as they were pulled into the blade. The last 4 pieces I made with the Dremel.....

Bowline knot:



We use the device a bit different than the inventor suggests. The dock-line is attached as usual to a cleat on the boat. Then we catch the dock-cleat or piling with the loop and pull the boat close. The dock-line is shortened by temporarily winding the excess line over the boat-cleat. Once everything is hooked up we go onto the dock and release the wound up line from the boat cleat. The end of the dock line is then attached to the dock-cleat as usual and the docking aid just dangles free at the end.

UPDATE 1: Finally painted thanks to a rattle can of Rustoleum Plastic spray



Oops, one bolt is missing.....

UPDATE 2: After some usage of the above system I had to come up with a better mousetrap. Sure, it works well but having a PVC pipe on all dock lines which then may be in the way when you attach the line more permanent isn't the best solution for my taste.

After some thinking and trying a very similar looking method came into life. This version doesn't need any screws or knots, is very small, easier to make and better to use. The entire part consists of a 2" and a 4" piece of PVC pipe glued together. Both pieces of PVC are cut open lengthwise. The shorter piece snaps onto the boat hook and is supposed to NOT come off which is the reason I made the cut-out much narrower.



Clamp. Sorry, not painted yet



Use. If one end is wrapped once around the boom it works even better.

The rope goes through the longer PVC pipe which is cut open wide enough that the rope goes through with ease. Usage is easy. Attach the dock-line as usual to the cleat on the boat, feed the line through the 4" piece. Hold the

bitter end of the dock line together with the boat hook. Reach out to the dock-cleat or piling and get the rope around it. Pull the line out through the slot on the top side of the fixture and pull the dock line tight then attach to the cleat on the boat. You can even “twist” the line around a dock cleat this way. With this method you can even make the boat lose from the dock when everyone is already on board. Release the end of the dock-line and pull it in from the other side. For this attachment a slightly stiffer rope is actually better as it forms a better loop.

The only difference for this method is that you need dock lines which are at least twice the length of your boat hook plus a bit. If you ever toss one of the clamps into the drink it has only cost you a quarter + some elbow grease.....

Happy boating and always catch the cleats and pilings!

Jürgen

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