

17 Amazing Survival Uses For Paracord

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Paracord is quite simply one of the most amazing and versatile survival products out there. It has so many potential uses that it's hard to keep track of them all; it's one of many products that have transcended their initially designed uses and spawned dozens of alternate uses.

Originally developed during World War II, as its name implies, paracord was initially developed, quite simply, to attach parachute canopies to harnesses. Engineers were looking for light yet strong cordage that could support lots of weight and stretch very little. They wanted a synthetic material that would resist rot or decay while being stowed within parachute packs.

What emerged is known as a "kernmantle rope" — essentially, a compound rope consisting of an outer sheath (the mantle) and inner strands (the kern). GIs soon found that this new cordage was far more useful than for just parachutes, and soon enough it began popping up all over the place to bind, repair, create and augment in a dizzying array of applications. As with any good thing, paracord transcended the military; veterans started using it for a myriad of applications, and it caught on in the civilian world, where it is now a firm staple, in the multiple use hall of fame with other abundantly useful items like duct tape.

Paracord is sometimes colloquially referred to as 550 cord – the 550 standing for the break strength in pounds of the cordage, which is remarkably strong considering the diameter of the material. Today, it comes in every color imaginable, and is available by the 100 foot roll at a very reasonable price – it's quite literally an item no serious survivalist should be without. It also is available as a bracelet and as a lanyard.

Perhaps you weren't aware of some of the more eclectic uses for paracord; sure, you can obviously tie things with it, but paracord brings much more to the table than simple knots. Here are a few examples of what can be done with the amazing kernmantle rope known as paracord.

1. The internal strands (the kern) are fine enough to be threaded into a needle to make the strongest sewing thread you've ever used for emergency repairs.
2. A 100 foot roll of paracord can double as a makeshift tow strap. Make a 10 foot loop of paracord, then wrap around nine more times to make a 10 foot tow strap with five lines on each side (ten lines total). At 550 pounds per line, this little tow strap can pull a 5,500 pound vehicle for short distances!
3. A length of paracord makes a handy strap to tie your food from and suspend from a tree branch to keep bears away from your camp.
4. Why bother with shoelaces? Replace them with paracord in a color of your choosing – cut them a little longer than your normal laces, then burn the ends shut. This allows you to keep two good lengths of paracord on your person at all times.
5. The kern from paracord is fine enough to be used as dental floss. In a survival situation, keeping your teeth clean is a priority to avoid abscesses or infections.
6. Paracord is great for fishing line. Remember, besides the sheath, paracord has seven internal strands. Each of these strands is composed of three finer strands – therefore, you have 21 fine strands of line available within your average length of paracord.

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7. A length of paracord strung around your campsite can act as an early warning system if you attach some bells or cans to the paracord.
8. A combat knife lashed with paracord to a pole or stick makes an excellent spear.
9. Paracord's mantle burns extremely easily, making it a great fire starter in a pinch.
10. Tie your horses or dogs to a tree with paracord to keep them close by at night; lash yourself to your partner with a length of paracord to keep you both on a trail during driving rain or fog so no one gets lost.
11. Paracord mantle can make a great improvised strop to sharpen a knife or scalpel.
12. Paracord can replace a broken pull string on an outboard engine or chainsaw.
13. Find a drip or damp spot on the side of a rock face? Put a piece of paracord line where the dampness is strongest, then place the end of that line inside a water bottle to collect the water.
14. Paracord makes great lashing material for tying the legs of a kill to a tree for easier lashing.
15. Looking for an improvised impact weapon? Take a length of paracord, tie a half pound rock on the end, and swing away.
16. Paracord's mantle makes a great silencer for dog tag chains.
17. Tie one of your gloves with paracord, then loop it through the inside of your coat and out the other sleeve. Next, tie your other glove on. You won't lose your gloves this way and they'll be right there when you need them.

A book could literally be written about the multitude of uses for paracord, but we think you get the point. Get a roll of paracord real soon, and add it to your survival bag of tricks!