

Here's a quick how-to for the figure-eight method of storing rope. It's ideal for lengths of natural fibre rope up to 6mm diameter and about 9m long. After that you start wanting longer thumbs...

Start by getting any twists and kinks out of the rope and doubling it to bring the two ends together. Hold the ends in your left hand (this is written for right-handers), palm down, and the ends coming up between your thumb and first finger:



Hold the rope in your right hand between thumb and first finger, but going over the right thumb as in the photo.

Now pull the ends of the rope tight in to the base of your left thumb:



Now adjust your hands to level and 20 - 25cm apart. This may seem to close, but the distance increases as you go:



Now raise your right hand and catch the hanging rope inside your left thumb, and bring your right hand down to the level position:

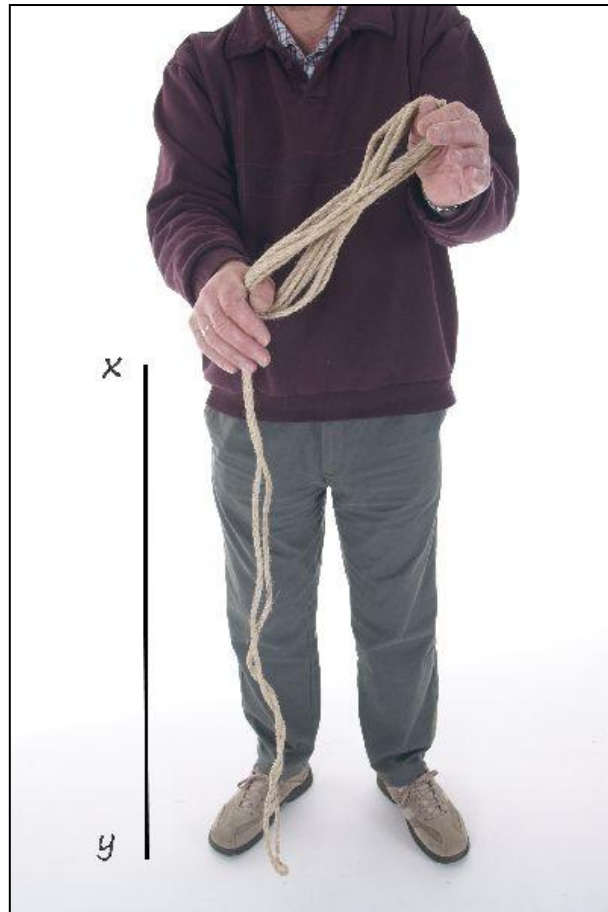


Note that the rope goes downwards on the inside of each thumb, and it forms an X shape in the middle as the figure-eight pattern starts to form.

Continue the pattern by alternating your hands up and down, trapping the rope between thumb and first finger each time:



Until you get to within something a bit less than a metre of the end (the bight), as shown by the line xy:



Now take your left hand out of the rope but keep your right-hand grip, and let the bight hang down alongside the figure-eight hank:



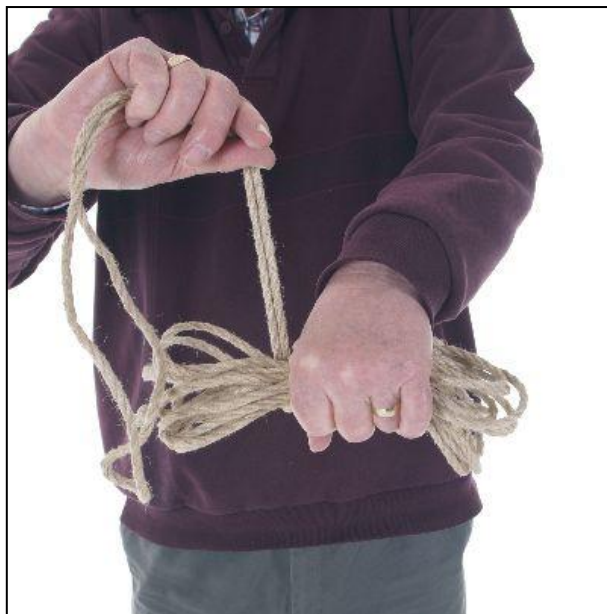
Take hold of the middle of the rope with your left hand, forming a ring around it with thumb and first finger:



And if necessary change your grip around so that you end up with the rope in your left hand, thumb and first finger forming a ring around it, and the bight coming out towards the right:



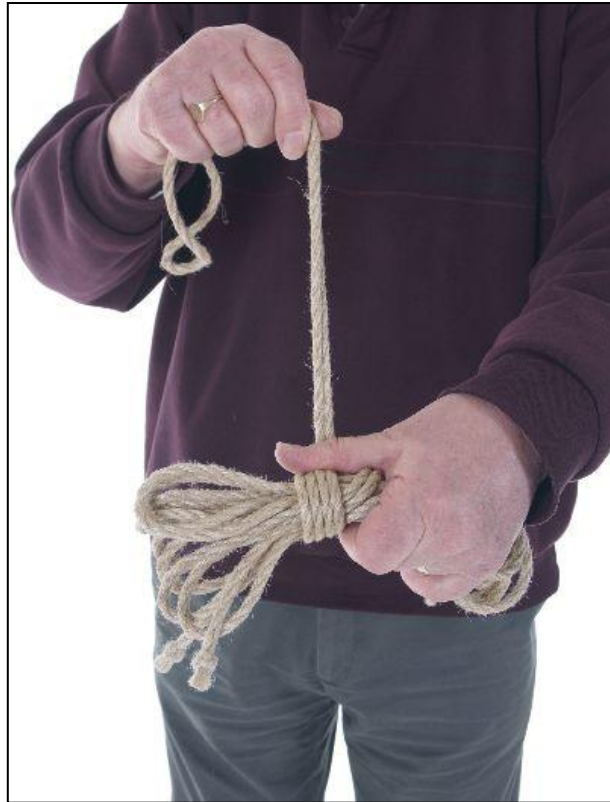
Take the bight in your right hand and start making a tight wrap around the hank, using your left thumb and first finger as a guide:



Continue the wrap by coming forward over the top and around again, working towards the left so that the rope crosses over itself. Loosen the tension a little as you make the second wrap:



Add another turn or two if you like, or if you have a bit too much bight left over. Then put your left thumb along the hank so that the next wrap - quite loose - goes over your thumb:



Use the first and second fingers of your left hand to keep the wraps in place:



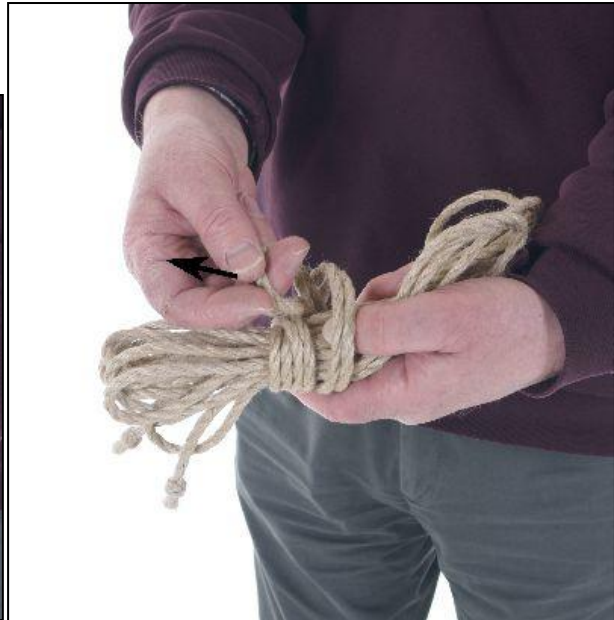
Now slide your thumb out from the last wrap, but keep your first finger (I) in place to control the wraps:



Slide the first two fingers of your right hand under that loose last wrap:



And use the "scissors" technique to grip both strands of the bight and pull them back under that wrap:



But make sure you don't pull the bight all the way through! Tighten things up and you should end up with a bight (single-strand loop) sticking out on one side of that last wrap, and a double-stranded loop trapped under the wrap and sticking out on the other side. Pull that up and it will stay in your rope bag without coming undone...

To release the rope, take the hank and insert a finger into the bight:



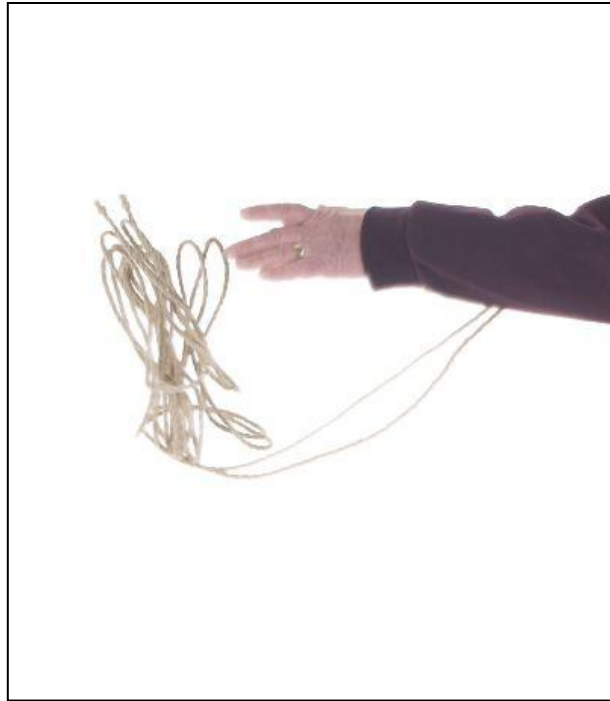
Pull on the bight so that it draws the double-stranded loop under the wrap and out, as in the photos:



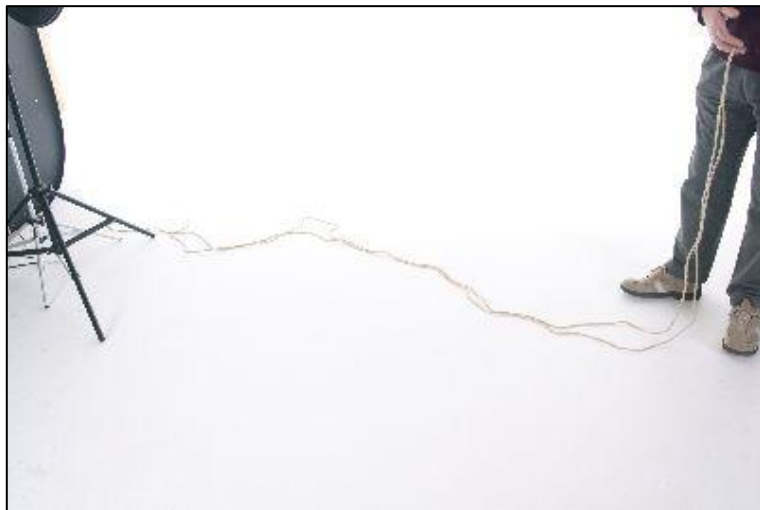
Slip the wraps off the hank:



Hold on to the bight and throw the hank away from you:



And it will all come free and lie out perfectly untangled, ready to tie. Every time, honest! And you've got the bight in your hand just where you want it:



Perfect!