Paracord Zipper Puller

by **repeet13** on April 9, 2010

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I love doing projects and this site is great for sharing mine and finding new ones!

Intro: Paracord Zipper Puller

Hey all, this will be a quick and easy instructable, at a very basic/beginner level.

The main purpose is to replace a zipper puller due to a lack of one, or the irresistible urge (I am sure others feel it too) to upgrade an existing one with a more rugged, customized one. There are practically limitless knots and combinations of knots that one could incorporate into this application, so I will cover a few basics, and make a few suggestions, and leave the rest to your imagination.

Getting back to the point, I embarked on this quest to fix a problem (one of the most common reasons, am I right?). Simply put, my backpack broke (pictured below)! Being a Boy Scout, my first instinct was to grab the paracord, and get fixing.

Image Notes
1. That Sir or Madam, is a problem!

Image Notes
1. Oh Noes!

Step 1: Ingredients

1. Paracord....duh > 16 inches will do the basic set of knots that I used, although having extra on either end makes it easier to tie the knots.
2. Dental Floss > 1 foot will do here, it'll be used to fish the paracord through the eyehole, if you can't get it through yourself
3. Lighter, or Matches, or other Flame Source (don't hurt yourself...)
4. Sharp object for cutting the cord to length (again...don't hurt yourself...) I used a folding utility knife that takes razor blades that I got from (insert local name) hardware store.

Don't hurt yourself in the making of this, I am no way responsible for your mistakes. Also, the cost of materials and tools is very minimal in the case of this instructable, so I won't go wasting our time by listing it out.
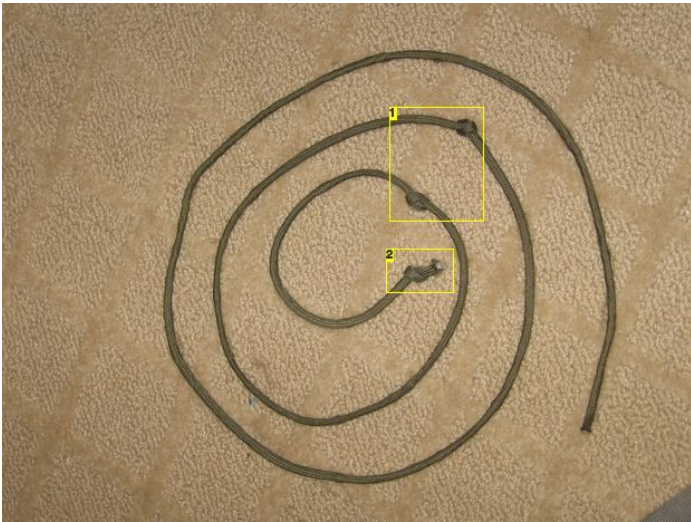
Image Notes
1. Along the spiral from knot to knot is about 16 inches
2. Paracord is cool

Image Notes
1. Dental Hygiene is a must

Image Notes
1. SHARP!!!

Step 2: Choose Knots and Prep Materials

In my case, I chose to emulate what I already have with a two knot setup. I liked the Overhand knot on a Bight (aka double overhand loop) coupled with the "more" decorative double figure eight knot. Don't be scared away by all these "doubles" and "bights" though, in lamen's terms they just mean two strands and a loop.

Now, you might need to fuse the end (if it isn't already, or if it is frayed) you will be working through the zipper. This is accomplished just how you would think, hold the rope just above the flame until it looks melty. Try to achieve a low profile blob on the end by holding the rope away from the flame, and bringing it closer slowly, so that it doesn't get out of control.

Another tip that has worked for me is to shift the sheath back, cut the inner strands down around 1/8th of an inch, and work the sheath back. When you go to fuse the rope, the end will be smaller.
Also, after fusing (~ 5 seconds or so) you can squeeze the end with pliers to get a flatter, smaller end, which may make threading your zipper easier.
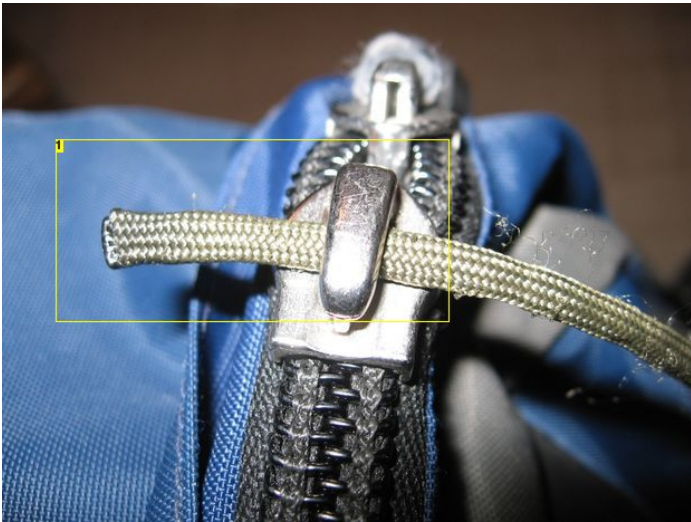
Image Notes
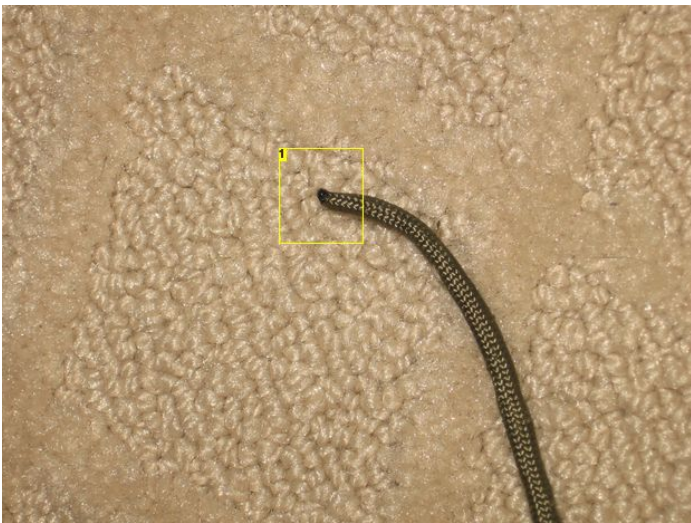1. Easy Peasy

Image Notes
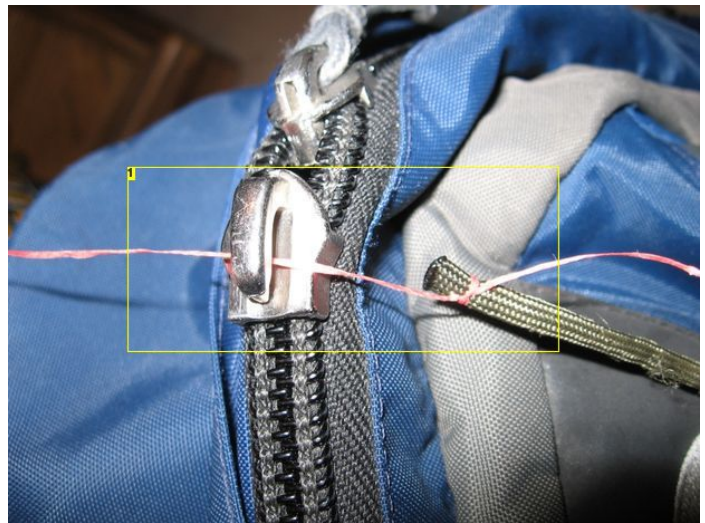1. FRAYED!!!!

Image Notes
1. Fixed :)

Image Notes
1. Floss help

Step 3: Thread and Tie the Knots

Now that the materials are prepped, thread the cord through your zipper. If it doesn't go easily, try threading the dental floss through first, tying it to the cord (an overhand knot will do), and drawing it back through. If it is your fusing that is preventing passage, carefully cut off the fuse, thread it, and re-fuse the end. At this point (after you get it through) you can cut off any large amount of excess if you want, to ease the tying process.

The FUN PART!!!

Tie the Knots:

Double Overhand Knot on a Bight:
1. Find the approximate middle of your length (the 16 inches), and position that point where the zipper is.
2. Take both strands, make a loop, and pass the free ends through the loop to complete the knot. If you need a more in-depth guide on that...check this link or google it.
Slide the knot (really you need to work it) up the cord as close to the zipper as desired and pull both ends to tighten.
3. Knot Complete (but it is!)

This one is a little bit harder, but I have faith in you!

Double Figure Eight Knot on a Bight:
1. Start the same way as before, with a loop.
2. Instead of crossing the lines once, as in the before knot, we need to cross them twice, so continue taking the end around another half rotation.
3. Pass the free end(s) through the loop to complete the knot. You'll notice that this knot looks like an eight (8) that has the cord going through both loops. Hence the name...For a more detailed guide, check this link , or again, google it (the procedure is the same, but with two strands).
4. Again, slide the knot up the cord until in the desired position and tighten.
5. Trim and re-fuse any ends to clean up the puller.

Voila! Your handy dandy new rugged and customized zipper puller is ready for use. Go ahead, Give it some test zips. Don't forget to vote for me in the Paracord Contest!

Image Notes
1. The Goal

Image Notes
1. Good form, now slide it up and tighten it.

Image Notes
1. Nice tightening
2. Its all nice like, just tie it like this ;-). Then tighten 'er up and trim off/fuse the ends.

Image Notes
1. The Goal

Step 4: Other Knots

Here is a sorely incomplete (due to the shear volume of knots out there) list of possible knots to throw on this bad boy:

-> Lark's Head / Ring Knot
-> Double Overhand Knot (on a Bight)
-> Double Figure Eight Knot (on a Bight)
-> Bowline
-> Taut Line Hitch
-> Two Half Hitches
-> Monkey's Fist

And on and on and on!

For more ideas on knots, there are plenty of resources on the web and in print. To start you off, try looking up some decorative knots, and see if you can incorporate them into the design. Also try checking out a book like "The Ashley Book of Knots", or something similar. If you have a favorite knot of your own, and feel slighted because I didn't include it, feel free to comment up a storm with your knots. Good luck and happy tying!

Image Notes
1. The Goal