

Shoe Tying

Shoe tying is a series of skills that must each be modeled and learned. Shoe tying requires:

- Executive function, to remember each of the steps, which also requires...
- Motor planning, organizing each physical step of grasping, tying, etc.
- Right/left orientation, and the ability to "cross over" from the right to the left hemisphere. It is a skill that is slow to develop in some children with disabilities.
- Fine motor dexterity and hand strength.

Structuring Instruction for Success:

For a child with disabilities, shoe tying can be a particularly frustrating skill to learn. By breaking it into constituent parts, it is more manageable. Rewarding success at each step will insure that they move on to the next step.

Prepare special shoelaces and shoes for practicing. You can purchase flat wood or cardstock facsimile's for teaching tying, but the child's orientation (we do not face our own shoes when we tie them) is wrong, and the artifacts do not look like real shoes. Generalization is critical for skills acquisition when learning functional skills -- the more like the real activity the more it will happen.

Beginnings: The over and under for the foundation of the shoe knot is fundamental. This first step needs to be isolated and repeated over and over until the child learning shoe tying can do it independently, without prompting.

Model for the first attempt. See if the student will be able to imitate it after you have modeled it. If so, don't rush to the next step, but give them lots of opportunities to prove they can complete step.

If modeling doesn't work, begin with hand over hand. Decide whether you will fade the beginning or the end of the step: i.e., will you put the string over and have the student pull it under, or will the student put the string over, and then you pull it under.

From <http://specialed.about.com/od/Transition/ss/A-Certificate-For-Shoe-Tying.htm>

Shoe-Tying Methods

Tips:

- ♦ Provide fundamental lacing and beading activities as a child develops, so there is familiarity with manipulating string and laces.
- ♦ Flat laces are easier to handle than round laces.
- ♦ Use long laces when first learning to tie, until the knots are able to be made tighter with practice.
- ♦ Use two different colored laces to aid in learning.
- ♦ When making the starter knot, looping the lace through two times before pulling the ends makes the knot tighter so it stays in place better.

The Squirrel and the Tree

This is a fun method that utilizes a kid friendly story and movements that help kids understand and remember the basic steps to shoe tying.

Tell the child to create "tree roots" by making a starter knot.

Make a tree with a long thin loop; hold the loop in one hand.

With the other hand, take hold of the lace and tell him that a squirrel runs around the tree and jumps into the hole under the tree and comes out the other side (he'll need to switch hands at this point which can be difficult for some kids).

Many parents prefer this trick because it teaches the kid to tie shoes with the single loop method.

Loop It and Swoop It

This is a less childish, but still memorable way of teaching a child to tie in the traditional single loop method. Teach your child to tie his shoes using the standard tying method, but as you go through the motions say, "loop it, swoop it, pull." Do this over and over while repeating the same three, simple instructions until your child is able to tie his shoes on his own. Encourage him to say "loop it, swoop it, pull" each time he attempts tying his shoes until it becomes second nature.

Bunny Ears

Tell the child that he needs to make his shoe laces into "bunny ears." First, he needs to secure a knot for the bunny's head. Take the laces and cross them over to make an "X".

Then, pull one ear through the bottom of the "X" and pull tight.

Say, "Now we need to give bunny some ears." Loop the laces into "bunny ears".

Tell the child that now we need to "make the bunny ears tight so they don't fall off".

Then make another "X" using the "bunny ears", slide one "ear" under the "X" and pull tightly.

Elastic Laces

1) Buy plain white 1/4" elastic, thread it onto a yarn needle if needed to push through the holes, and lace up regular shoes. Tie them, and knot the bow, and the shoes can be pulled on and off without having to untie.

2) Purchase replacement bungee-type laces that tighten with a toggle and do not need to be tied.

[Sample of a product that is an alternative to tradition shoe laces.]



Why LOCKLACES™?

LOCK LACES™ is the elastic shoelace and fastening system that you truly have to try to believe! With your very first step, you will feel the difference with LOCK LACES™. Made for competition, LOCK LACES™ is the only patented performance lacing system engineered to meet the demands of endurance athletes like runners, triathletes, marathoners, walkers, and other sports and fitness activities like hiking, gym class, biking, aerobics, and dancing. Unlike other products, wearing LOCK LACES™ sustains simple compression across the top of the foot increasing the amount of oxygen available to the muscles to help manage fatigue. LOCK LACES™ are perfectly designed to eliminate any tight spots, banding, and pressure points. The lightweight locking system and elastic laces are the perfect combination of strength, stretch and stability. LOCK LACES™ are fast, convenient and secure, so you can-- Win. Never tie.

Who can benefit from LOCK LACES™?

Everyone who wears lace up shoes!

Runners love LOCK LACES™ because LOCK LACES™ accommodate the changing terrain and foot fatigue.

Triathletes love LOCK LACES™ because of the quick transition ability from bike to run.

Seniors enjoy not having to bend down or fumble with laces and easily slipping on and off their shoes. The elasticity allows expansion to accommodate swelling feet without loss of stability.

Travelers appreciate the way LOCK LACES™ make going through airport security quick and easy. LOCK LACES™ even work great for any kind of boots!

Parents love LOCK LACES™ because they offer security of shoelaces never coming undone. Great for outdoor play and bike safety.

Kids love LOCK LACES™ simply for the ease of not having to tie shoelaces, and because having the right colors make your shoes look great.

Available: Dunham's, Sports Authority, Dick's Sporting Goods and elsewhere.