



# HOW TO TIE A BOW TIE

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## Getting Started

- If you have an adjustable model, insert the hook on one end of the strap into the slot on the other end corresponding with your neck size.
- If your shirt has a turndown collar, flip the collar up just as you would before tying a long necktie.
- If your shirt has a bow tie loop remember to slip the tie through the loop before starting.

## The Practice Technique

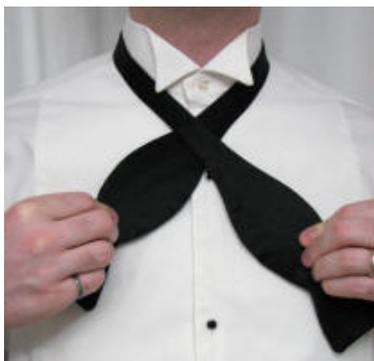
A bow tie is actually tied just like a shoe lace so the sooner you can visualize that concept the sooner you'll master the technique. This sounds simple enough except that shoe laces are not tied under the chin; a knot easy enough for a child to tie becomes a very different endeavor when one is forced to execute it in a mirror. To familiarize yourself with the process without having to rely on a reflection, tie the bow tie around your thigh instead of your neck because it has roughly the same circumference but is situated within your line of sight. You can use the printed instructions below but rotate the illustrations upside down to better reflect how the process will feel when executed under the chin later on.

## The Standard Technique

**The photographs below show what you will see in a mirror when you follow the instructions.** Obviously, the instructions will also work if you consistently exchange “right” for “left” and vice versa. (In fact, this is what the model did so that the photographs would appear properly oriented when viewed as mirror images.)



1. Drape the tie around the neck with the left end about an inch and a half longer than the right. (One end has to be longer because it will be used to create the knot between the two wings.)

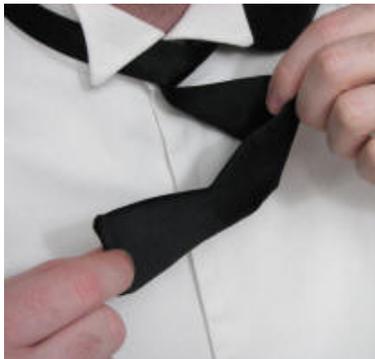


2. Cross the longer end over the shorter end.



**3.** Tie a simple knot by wrapping the longer end up behind the shorter end. Flip the longer end over your shoulder to keep it out of the way for now.

Advanced Tip: tie this knot tightly (and keep it tight during the subsequent steps) in order for the finished bow to sit snugly against the throat. Unlike a long tie, you can't slide a bow tie knot tighter to the neck after the fact.



**4.** Fold the shorter end at the widest part of the curve. This will create the front wings of the bow. (Make sure the fold is on the right side of your chest.)



**5.** Hold the front in place by pinching the center of the wings together.

The thumb behind the bow must rest on top of the fabric that extends from the neck (not underneath it) because that piece of fabric will become the bottom half of the loop created in step 6. (Note that close-up is photographed as if you were facing your *right* shoulder to the mirror).



**6.** While holding everything in position as close to your neck as possible, place the longer end of the tie over the front of the bow. This is the first step in creating the bow's knot.

Note that as the longer end goes over top of the bow it also goes over top of the thumb behind the bow, thereby forming the top of the loop that was begun in step 5 (see close-up of loop in step 7).



7. Use your right hand to shove the middle of the longer end through the loop behind the bow from your right-hand side. Obviously you will need to retract the thumb or finger that is holding the loop open (note that close-up is photographed as if you were facing your *right* shoulder to the mirror).

Advanced Tip: As you create this second knot, try to place it directly over the simple knot you created in step 3 (which should still be tied snugly against your throat).



8. Once the longer end is pushed far enough through that it can be released it without falling back out (it will form a folded wing), simultaneously pull it and the folded wing on the right side of the front bow to tighten the knot. You have now created a bow (albeit a very lopsided one).

Advanced Tip: If the back part of the tie is rather skewed after being squeezed through the back loop (and it often is), twist it so it is parallel to the front part before you tighten the knot.



9. To finesse the bow, hold the knot tight with one hand and use the other to adjust the wings so that they are all an equal length.

Note: If you are using an adjustable bow tie and the finished bow ends up with a bigger rear half than front half, or if the neck band fits too loosely, adjust the tie size up or down accordingly and try again.



**Congratulations - you've graduated to the big leagues.**

For additional material including full-sized versions of the above photos, demonstration videos, special instructions for other tie shapes and further tips and tricks (including an easy way for adjustable models to be pre-tied without the need for a mirror), visit [www.blacktieguide.com](http://www.blacktieguide.com).