
Make a Macramé® Keychain with Emily Katz

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Overview

- My name is Emily Katz, and I'm a macrame artist, designer, and teacher from Portland, Oregon. You may remember macrame from your grandmother's bathroom, plant hangers in jute, and other funky rope colors. I take a modern sensibility with macrame, and my work has been featured in many Japanese design magazines. I've taught macrame to students from all over the country. At Urban Outfitters, at design studios in New York, and in my own studio in Portland. We're going to start with a great beginner project. I like to call it the bird's eye tassel. If you're new to macrame, this is a great beginner project. I'll show you some basic knots, we'll work into a diamond pattern, and then, I'll show you how to finish the piece off with some fringe. Once you're finished, you'll have a great keychain. You can use it as a tassel to hang off of your leather bag, or hang in your wall as a beautiful object to add texture to any space.

Chapter 2 - Materials

Materials

- You can get all the supplies you need at the hardware store. I like to use cotton rope. It's really great for beginners. It's easy to see all of the knots as you're working, so that's really good for beginners, and it's easy on your hands, which, as you will find out, is really important. I use three 16ths-inch, two lengths that are 48 inches, two lengths that are 32 inches, and then I use a brass toggle, but you can use anything that you'd like, a brass ring or another object that suits your fancy. You're going to need to have some tension to work on this project. I have a foam board covered in fabric, and I use some pins for tension. Lastly, you're going to need a pair of scissors for the fringe at the end.

Chapter 3 - Make the Keychain

Creating macramé® with square knots

- To get started, I'm anchored my brass hardware to the foam board with this pin. It's really helpful to have the anchor, because the tension is really important. Next I'm going to take the two lengths of rope. The longer ones, the 48 inch ones. And I'm going to place them through the inside of the bottom of this toggle. I put both of the loops through the toggle. You might want to put your finger on there to hold it down. And then I'm pulling it through. You want to make sure that the ropes are straight on the inside. If you have to make a few little adjustments by twisting them around so that they are not overlapping and then just pull it nice and tight. We're gonna be using a square knot for this project. It's the knot that's most common in all of my projects. To begin, you take the two outside ropes. I like to start on the left side, but you're welcome to start on the right, it's just a preference, it's easier for me for some reason. And you cross the left side over the two center. And then you take the right side and you cross it over the left, from there you take the right rope and you go under everything and through the loop that you've made with the left. And you can kind of see as you pull them straight that it looks like a little pretzel. So then you want to pull them taught, and it's easy to do that if you hold on with your middle finger and your thumb to the center ropes. You can sort of alternate so that you can really make that tight and pull with even tension. As you can see, the tension is really important to get a great, clean straight knot. Next, you're going to do

exactly what you did, only on the other side. You're going to take the right side, cross it over the two center, take the left side, cross it over the right, you sort of have a sailboat shape here. And then you take that left side rope, you go under the two center ropes, and you go through the hole that you've made with the right rope and then again, pull them evenly and make it nice and taught. And then there is your very first square knot. Ta-da! The next step, we're going to divide these two middle ropes to join the outside ropes to make two new sections. Then, I'm gonna start on the left side. I'll take the next rope here, one of the smaller 32 inch ropes that I've cut, and I'm going to put it underneath, and then take the two sides and flip them on the inside. Then, I'm going to start another square knot. I have the left side and the right side and the two centers. So again, starting on the left side, I'm going to cross over the two center ropes with the right, cross over the left rope and then go up and under and through and then pull tight. Next, you cross over the right rope. The left over the right, and then you take it underneath and pull those through. And there's your second square knot. Create two more square knots on the left side. If you need to adjust the tension of the center rope, simply pull them like you're adjusting your shoe laces. Again, I'm alternating working on the left side and then working on the right side. So here again I'm going on the left. And working here on the right. That gives you three square knots on the left side. If you get confused while you're working on this and you can't remember if you started on the left or started on the right, a good way to remember that I use is by looking at these vertical lines. When I start on the left, the vertical line is on the left. When I need to start on the right, the vertical line is on the right. So that's just a little trick that I like to use that helps remind me in case I get confused. Move to the right side of the key chain and you're going to continue like so, doing three more square knots on that side. To make the piece look really balanced and nice, this time I'm going to start with the right side instead of the left side to do my square knot. It makes the vertical lines show up on the other side, which I think looks really nice. And the only thing that's different about that is that you start with the right rope first instead of the left. So now I have three square knots on both sides. And what I'm going to do next is I'm going to combine them in the middle to make a diamond cutter. The way that I do this is, I separate the ropes again, I'm going to take the two outside ropes on each side and take the two inside ropes and bring them together. And then I'm going to make another square knot to combine this into a diamond shape. Again, starting with the left. And you bring it all the way up to the top. And then with the right. So that's one square knot. And then I'm gonna do just a few down here. Maybe two. We've now completed the macrame portion of this piece. If you're really on a roll, you could add a few more lengths of rope and keep going, but I really like this diamond shape so we're gonna stop here and I'm gonna show you how to finish the edges.

Adding fringe and finishing

- To finish this piece, you have a few options: you can cut the rope long and unwind it to create fringe; you could cut the rope a little bit shorter and apply a little bit of glue and then it'll be a little bit more precise; or you can cut the rope after you've tied it in to a little knot and that way the fringe will be more small. I like to do it with a lot of fringe, so I'm gonna show you that way. If you want the shorter look, just make sure that you don't cut too close to this knot so that the rope doesn't unravel. But since we're going for the longer tassel version, I'm going to cut on a diagonal, starting at about maybe three or four inches from the macrame and then also down here. So I'm just gonna cut these on a little bit of an angle. Mirror that on the right side for balance. You can always adjust it later. And then I'm gonna go back over on the left. These ones are a little bit shorter. And on the right again, the same. I like the two in the center to be the longest. So I'm gonna cut those

the longest. And then you get to start unraveling. It's pretty simple. If you kinda twist the rope at the top, it does the job for you. And sometimes at the end, I'll cut the rope again just to kind of give it a little bit of a bang trim so to speak. If you twist the rope at the top counterclockwise, it undoes the tangle twist that they have going on. And it makes it easier. So twist the rope counterclockwise. You don't have to worry about the macrame coming undone especially when you have this much rope down here. It will fray a little bit more over time, and it'll just develop its own personal patina. You could get really playful with this piece. And you could use a different color rope for the two side ropes. Or you could dip it in dye. I really do like using just the simple cotton. I think it has a nice elegant and modern feel to it. You can put it on your wall by your bed. You can hang it on a door or attach it to your bag. There are so many ways to make it your own.