

**Lizard and Snake**

**Resource 2**

Lizard and Snake

For this story, I have combined three string tricks and put them together. The three-part story as given here is my invention. The first of the figures is known as "Lizard" in the Torres Straits, as "Eel" in the Marquesas, and as "Lizard and Snake" in parts of Papua New Guinea. The second has no special name given in C. F. Jayne or in any other source I can locate. The third is often called "the German trick" in Europe, and "The Palm" or "Lizard on a Palm Tree" in Papua New Guinea.

The first segment looks deceptively simple, but unless the hand is turned exactly as indicated, it will not work. This was a favorite string trick used by the early Hawaiians to win bets from strangers passing through. Though sure they could do the trick after seeing it once, strangers usually ended up with their hands caught in the string rather than free.

Recommended string length before knotting: 54 inches (135 cm)  
 Recommended strand length when braiding yarn: 65 inches (165 cm)

Lizard liked nothing better than to sit on a rock in the hot sun. One day, Lizard found a nice flat stone and he went to stretch out in the warm sunshine, head down the way lizards like to lie. Even though his eyes were open, he was asleep. He did not see Snake creeping up closer and closer. "If I can get near enough, I shall swallow up Lizard and eat him, whole. He will make a fine morsel," thought Snake. Just then, Lizard woke up and tried to dart away, but too late! He was caught tight around his middle.

Prepare left hand by placing string over back of left thumb and fingers; hold left hand to one side.

Hold up right hand. Let it flop down loosely, as though it were Lizard settling on the rock.

Bring left hand close to right hand, wiggling the string to imitate Snake. Move right hand downward, with palm facing away from body, then in a circular motion toward you and up.

While moving hand upward, bring middle part of front hanging strand up and over right hand. Try to do it in such a way that the string ends up tightly wound around right wrist.



**Lizard and Snake (continued)**

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“Now I have you!” cried Snake. “I shall eat you up, and then have a long sleep.”  
 “I must get out of here quickly,” thought Lizard.  
 Now, lizards are very fast and tricky, and this one was no exception.

“You don’t have me yet, Snake,” he said. He darted to the other side of Snake.

slipped right through Snake’s coils—

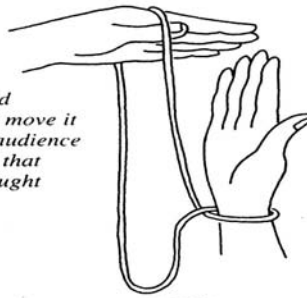
and was gone!

A few days later, Lizard was again sunning himself on his rock. In fact, he was sound asleep. He had not seen Snake around for some time, so he felt quite safe.

But Snake was hungry again and he slithered up from behind. “This time I will wrap my tail tightly around Lizard’s head and two front paws,” said Snake.

Snake wound his tail

*Point right hand straight up and move it to the side, so audience can clearly see that “Lizard” is caught tight.*



*Move right hand to the left, completely around left side of outer string, until back of right hand is facing body.*



*Bring right hand through loop and toward you.*



*Right hand is free.*



*Flop left hand loosely, fingertips downward. Keep right hand, with string, off to one side.*



*With right hand, bring string around to back of left hand and put it over left index and middle fingers, leaving the long loop hanging down behind left hand.*



*Place right index finger under string in the space between left index and middle fingers.*



**Lizard and Snake (continued)**

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down

and up and around Lizard's head and front paws.

At that moment Lizard awoke. "Oh, my!" he thought. "How can I get out of this?"

*Carl tip of right index finger over back string and*

*pull it through until entire loop is hanging down front of palm.*

*Make sure loop is not twisted and that string wound around left index finger is hanging to the left; string wound around middle finger must be hanging to the right.*

*Put left thumb over left hanging string and under right hanging string.*



He put his back left paw under Snake to see if he could push Snake away from his front paws.

Snake saw what Lizard was trying to do. "I must wind myself around Lizard's back paws," he said. So he unwound one of his coils, getting ready to squeeze it around Lizard's hind legs.

Lizard saw his chance. "Now I can get away," he said. He gave a flick of his tail

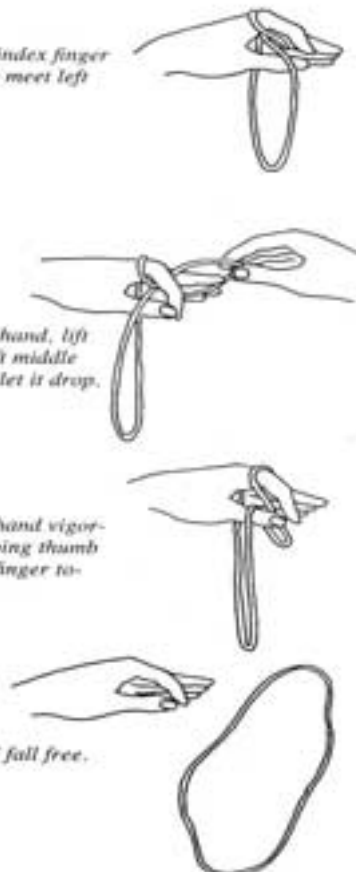
and left Snake lying there, wondering what had happened.

*Bring left index finger forward to meet left thumb.*

*With right hand, lift loop off left middle finger and let it drop.*

*Shake left hand vigorously, keeping thumb and index finger together.*

*String will fall free.*



**Lizard and Snake (continued)**

**Resource 2**

One day Lizard found a nest of eggs. He ate those eggs one after another until he could eat no more. Then, his belly swollen with food, he slowly climbed up on his rock to sit in the sun.

This time when Snake came upon Lizard he said: "I am going to wind myself around his fat middle,

then around his front legs,

then around his back legs,

then over his head,

and around his front legs again."

Lizard woke up and nodded his head. He shook his back paw.

"Caught again!" he thought. "Don't think you can get away this time," said Snake. "I will take these loose coils and wind them tightly around your neck.

"Now I have you fast and tight."

*Flip left hand down. Keep string in right hand, off to one side.*

*With right hand, wiggle string close to left hand and put string over it, leaving thumb free.*

*With right hand, pull the string forward from the back, so that the top strand is between index and middle fingers and bottom strand is between ring and little fingers.*

*Bring both strands around thumb, making sure that the top strand on thumb is the one that passed between index and middle fingers and the bottom strand on thumb is the one that passed between ring and little fingers.*



*Move string to back of left hand again, making sure each strand goes back between the same fingers it was pulled through in the first place.*

*Bring string back to front of left hand by looping upper strand around and over index finger and lower strand around and under little finger. Let string fall over front of left fingers.*

*Wiggle left middle finger. Move left thumb.*

*Take loops off thumb and pull them back tightly through space between left middle and ring fingers.*

*Close space tightly.*



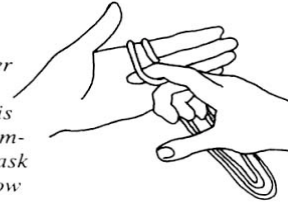
**Lizard and Snake (continued)**

**Resource 2**

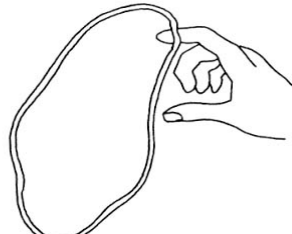
Out of the corner of his eye, Lizard saw his daughter. “Come quickly,” he whispered. “I think if you pull Snake from around my middle he will come loose. It has been a long time since I ate those eggs, and now I am not so fat.” Lizard’s daughter poked her paw around Snake, right at the spot where he was wound tightly around Lizard’s waist.

She gave a sharp pull—and Lizard was free! He and his daughter scuttled away to hide under the rocks. If you see Lizard some day, sitting on a rock and warming himself, watch closely and you may soon see Snake coming along.

*Curl right index finger under string running across left palm. (This may be done by a member of the audience; ask if someone in front row wishes to be Lizard’s daughter.)*



*Pull sharply. String falls free.*



Source: Pellowski, A. & Sweat, L. (ill.) 1984, *The Story Vine*, Collier Macmillan, London.