



Photos courtesy of @holden8758

How to Tie Unusual Tie Knots

by Mike Holden, professor of chemistry

The Van Wijk Knot

1. Start with the wide end of the tie on the right and the narrow end on the left.
HINT: The tip of the narrow end should be half the length of the wide end.
2. Bring the wide end over the narrow end to the left and wrap it around once.
3. Place your index finger on the area where the wide end and narrow end of the tie overlap.
4. Wrap the wide end once around the finger to create an opening, then go up higher and wrap a second time, and finally, go up a little higher and wrap around the finger a third time.
5. Take the wide end of the tie up through the middle.
6. Pull the wide end of the tie through the three loops that you have created.
7. Tighten the knot by pulling down on the wide end, sliding the knot up and adjusting accordingly.
8. Enjoy the beauty of what I call “the greatest tie knot ever invented.”



We were pleased when Holden accepted our invitation to swing by the *Dickinson Magazine* offices to show us his skills in person. Check out Dickinson.edu/magazine for the resulting videos.



Carl Socolow '77

Professor of Chemistry Mike Holden has been teaching at Dickinson since 1989, and for years he was notorious for never wearing a tie. They just weren't his style. But when he realized that a number of occasions surrounding his son's wedding would require more formal attire, he decided to get creative. Like a true academic, he did some research, discovering knot theorists from Cambridge University who posited that there were 87 different ways to tie a tie. It got more interesting when he dug a little deeper and found game theorists from Scandinavia who claimed there were actually 175,000. So he started teaching himself how to do them, and during the spring 2018 semester, he sported 37 different tie knots in class. He also tweets pictures of the occasional #tieknotoftheday to @holden8758.