# Drawing Celtic Knots

This method, like most, begins with drawing the grid. Of course you could use graph paper, but that would limit the size of your finished pattern to the sizes of graph paper that you happen to have available. What size should you make the grid? Well that depends on what size you want your final pattern to be. If you are making a pattern for leatherwork, for instance, you would want to draw the pattern to be the size of the final project; say - wallet size. How many squares should you make? That is a tougher question. The number of squares depends on the pattern that you are going to make. The problem is that we often don't know what sort of pattern we want at this stage. So what do we do? Guess? Pick out a pattern that someone else created and copy it? We just have to pick a number of squares that fits into our final size and forge ahead hoping that the resulting pattern will look good and that we aren't wasting our efforts. This grid is 4 squares tall and 6 squares wide.
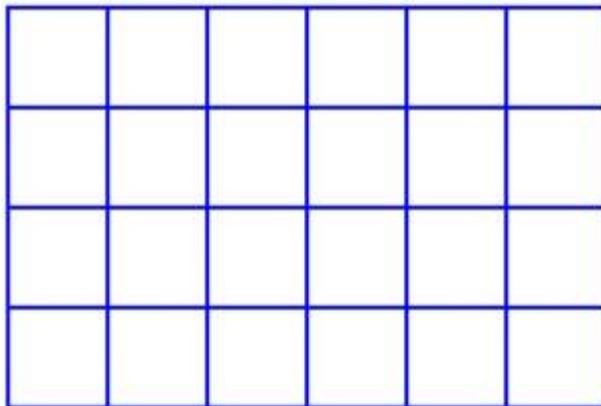
The second step is to draw in the diagonals. These lines will be the path followed by most of the knotwork. The diagonal lines must be drawn starting from the middle of the sides of the grid squares. In other words, don't draw the diagonals from the points of the grid squares or you'll end up with loose ends sticking out at all four corners.
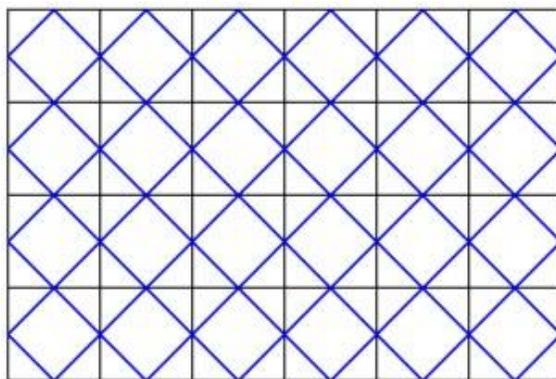
Next draw in the connecting curves that will become the edges of the knotwork. I make these curves tangent to the diagonals. In other words they connect smoothly to the diagonal lines.
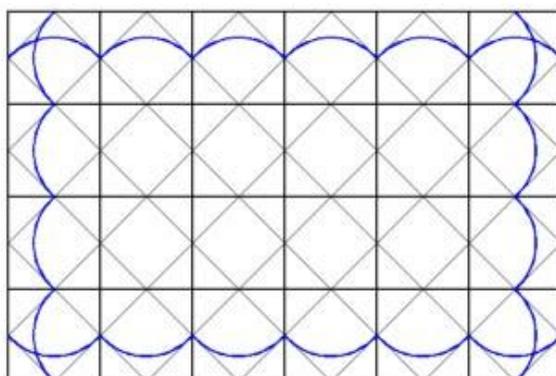
This is the step that most people have the most trouble with: deciding where to "Break the Grid". The thing that makes Celtic knotwork unique from the plaiting (or weaving) seen in many other cultures is the introduction of "BREAKS" into the weave. I've always found it to be rather fascinating: that Celtic knotwork is defined more by where the pattern ISN'T than where the pattern IS. It is a design form made of empty spaces within an otherwise solid object.

So, where do we put these spaces to make an aesthetically pleasing design? A person with extraordinary visualization skills could probably imagine what a knot will look like, but for the average person it is a "try-it-and-see" sort of operation. Here we find the biggest single problem with ALL of the traditional Celtic knot work construction methods: you have to know what your knot is going to look like BEFORE you design it!

1). Copy what I did here (or someone else's designs from a book).

Or

2). Make some breaks by trial and error and see what happens. If you are lucky it will look good. If you aren't lucky you will waste a bunch of time drawing an ugly knot and have to erase it all and start over, or get disgusted and quit. The red lines on our grid show where I am going to make my breaks.
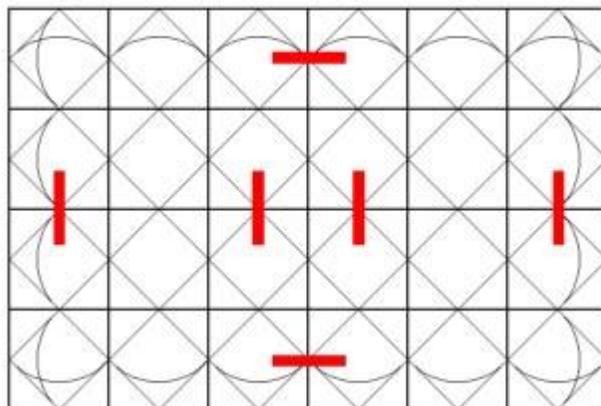

Follow the diagonals until you come to a red line. When you get to a red line, add a curve so that your line continues into the other line that is broken at the same place. Adding these curves completes the path of the knotwork. Darken this line so that we can see the path clearly for the next step.
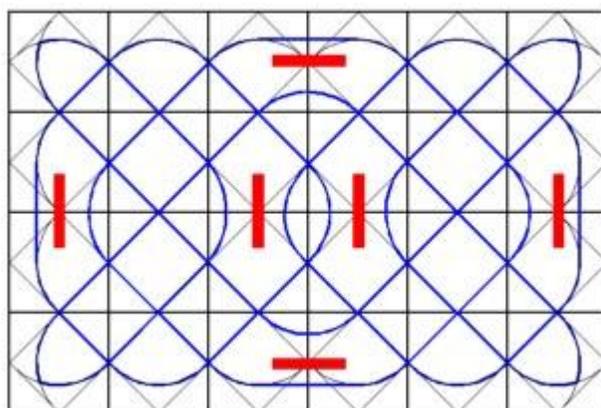
OK, now that you spent all of that time drawing the grid, the diagonals and the breaks, erase all of it except the knotwork path that we darkened in the last step. Here is what it should look like.
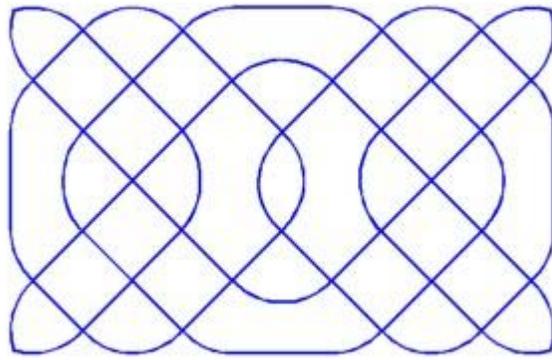
For this step a computer graphics program comes in real handy. We need to make a new outline all around the entire knotwork path. You'll have to eyeball it. Draw a line all the way around the knotwork path and inside all of the little holes in the pattern. The new line should be offset from the original path by 1/2 of the desired width of the finished knotwork cord.
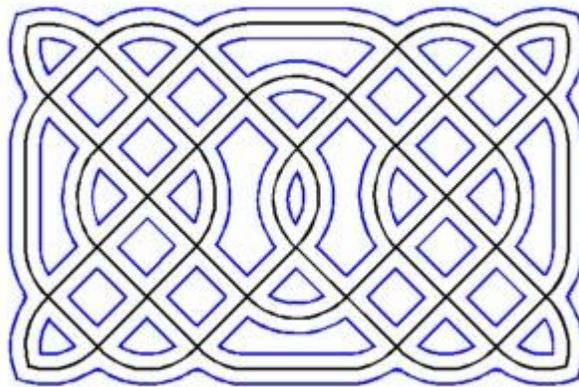
When you are done with doubling the line, erase the original knotwork path so that all that is left is the outline.
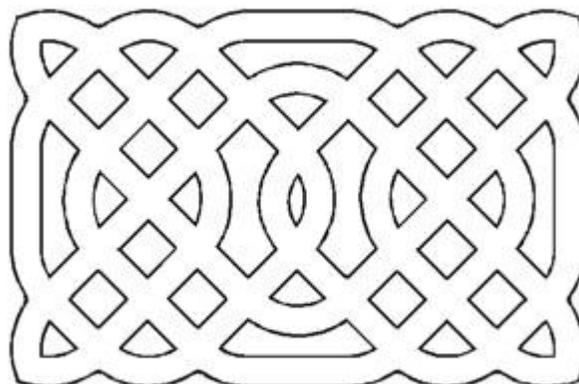
We're almost there! Hang in there just a little while longer and we will have a knot!

All that is left is to figure out the "Over / Under Thing". You can start anywhere on the path of the knot and make 2 little lines at each intersection. Be sure to alternate one way and then the other, over and under, until all of the intersections are done or until you run into an area where you find that you went OVER-OVER, or UNDER-UNDER. In which case you erase lines until you've eliminated the ones that are wrong and do it over. Look at the next illustration and you can see what I mean. Of course if you had used the Celtic Knot Font you wouldn't have to

worry about the "Over / Under Thing" because that has been done for you already.
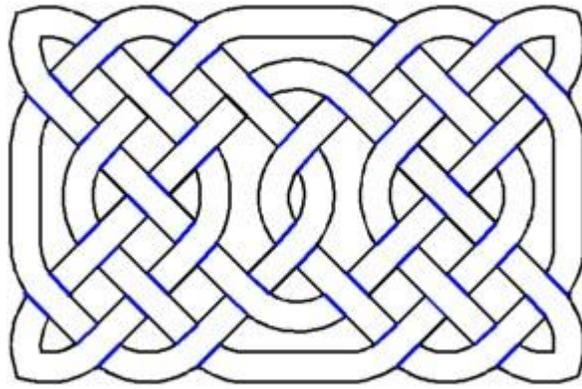
So, there you have it, a completed Celtic knot! It looks pretty good. Of course I'm a professional graphic artist who has done this sort of thing for a living for over a decade, so your results may vary. Because I am fairly proficient at this, it only took me about 2 hours to make this knot for this tutorial.
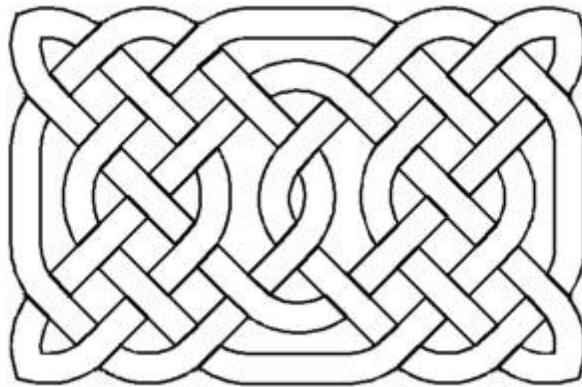
From:

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The second way to do this would be to go to *Clan Badge* and download the Celtic Knot font and just type your knot. - http://www.clanbadge.com/tutorial.htm