

Kumihimo Braiding

'Kumi' means to braid or gather and 'himo' means string or cord.

Threads

Any thread, yarn or cord can be used as long as it will fit into the slots in a braiding disk.

Preparation

Cut threads so they are twice as long as the finished cord plus about 6"/15cm.

If making a very long braid wind the threads onto a piece of stiff card and stop it unravelling by cutting a slot in it - this becomes a bobbin. Proper Kumihimo bobbins can be purchased (see **Suppliers** below). You also need a piece of fixing thread about 6"/15cm long in a different colour.

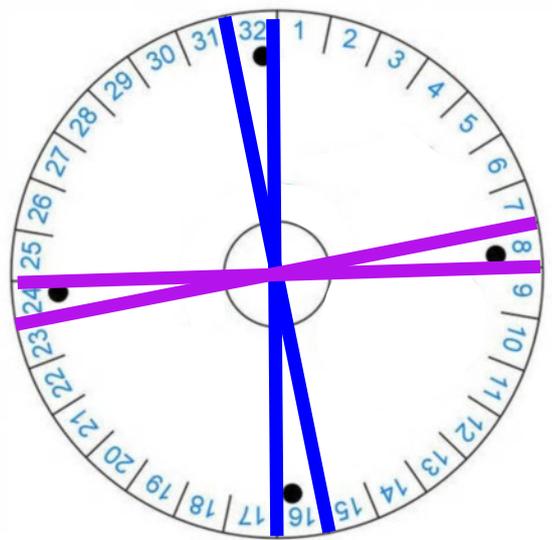
Your First Braid

Cut 8 lengths of thread - 4 in one colour and 4 in another. Knot them together near the end.

Slip the extra piece of differently coloured thread immediately above the knot or through the knot using a needle. Tie this thread into a loop. You will hang a weight from this thread to help with tension.

Put the knot and fixing thread through the hole in the centre of the disk and arrange the threads as shown.

Hang a weight on the bottom of the fixing thread. This is especially useful when using fine threads. Use heavy beads tied onto thread as a weight or use tablecloth weights if available.

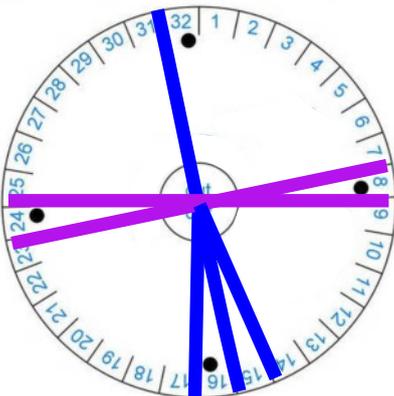


Braiding - Spiral Braid

This is the easiest braid as each move is repeated.

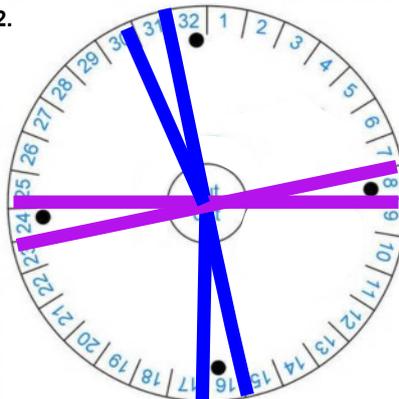
Ignore the numbers on the braiding disk and hold it so that one set of threads is at 12 o'clock. Move as follows;

1.



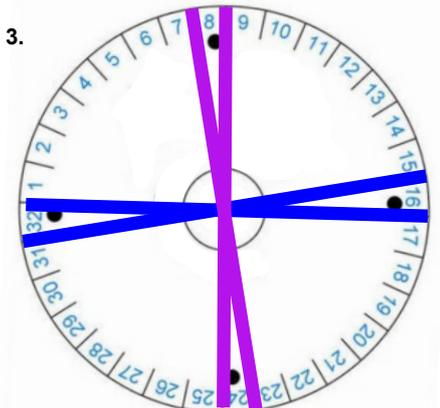
Move top right down to bottom right

2.



Move bottom left up to top left

3.



Rotate disk a quarter turn anti-clockwise

Repeat these moves rotating the disk a quarter turn each time until the braid reaches the desired length.

Remember: top right down - bottom left up - quarter turn
top right down - bottom left up - quarter turn

Kumihimo Braiding (continued)

Finishing your braid

There are a wide variety of ways to finish a braid. It's a good idea to tie another knot at this end - it will match the knot tied at the start and also stop the threads unravelling. If using thick cord then wrap the end of the braid tightly with thread and fix firmly by going through with a needle several times. Trim the end of the cords.

To turn the braid into a bracelet tie a knot then trim the loose threads off leaving about 1cm after the knot. Neaten the loose threads by either wrapping thread round or by wiping some PVA glue over the loose threads and leave to dry.

End Caps

There are a few suppliers of Kumihimo end caps around but the one I've found most useful is Nosek's Just Gems.

Different types of end caps



Barrel end caps



Silver plated magnetic end caps



Gold plated toggle clasp



Kumihimo hook & eye clasp

Attaching the end caps

Fixing the finished cord into the end caps is easy.

First check the length of threads left after the knot and check that it will fit inside the end cap. Trim if required. The next bit has to be done quickly

Squeeze a little Super Glue into the open end of the end cap then put the end of the braid inside and hold firmly until stuck - this should take 15 - 20 seconds or so.

That's it!

Avoid using too much Super Glue as it may soak into the threads and be visible outside the end cap.

Suppliers - cord and end caps

Nosek's Just Gems	www.noseksjustgems.com
The Bead Shop	www.the-beadshop.co.uk
Spoilt Rotten Beads	www.spoiltrottenbeads.co.uk

When buying end caps make sure you check the diameter carefully - the supplier often uses the same photo for each size.

Books

Beautiful Braiding Made Easy - Helen Deighan

Any book by Jacqui Carey - totally inspiring! Beware she uses diagrams that are quite different to mine and to the ones in the Helen Deighan book.

Online Braid Planner Tool

There are some online tools that let you plan your 8-strand braid before starting. They allow you to pick your colours then show you what the braid will look like. The one I use can be found on the Lytha Studios website at www.lythastudios.com/123bead/kumiplanner.