

Instructions to make a Kumihimo braid



Prepare the strings. Make two sets of 4 strings each of the same length. About 24 inches is good for a first project. It's best to use contrasting colors for the two sets, particularly when you are learning. You can use cotton, wool, or any fiber.

Bundle together the 8 strings and tie an overhand knot on one end.



Push the knot through the disk so that it comes out the bottom. You may need to do a second overhand knot to hold it in place. You also can just hold the knot in the beginning to keep it in place if it is slipping back through to the top.

To start the braid, pull one string into a notch near the top of your disk. Using the same color (here it is pink), put a second string in the adjacent notch. Skip two notches. Now, using the second color (green here), do the same with strings in two adjacent notches. Skip another two notches and do the remaining two pinks. Skip another two notches and do the remaining two greens. Make sure you tug the strings firmly into the notch. It needs to have tension on it. You can keep tugging them as you go around. Leave the ends loose hanging untangled underneath.



Braiding:

Step 1: Position the disk with two strings of the same color on the top. Take the string in the right notch out and move it into the notch at the right of the two bottom strings of the same color -- pink to pink in this case. You will see only one pink at the top, and three pinks at the bottom (photo left).

Step 2: Take the leftmost pink string at the bottom and move it to the notch at the left of the pink at the top. The rule is: **right top to right bottom, then left bottom to left top.**

Tug at the knot on the bottom side of the disk to make sure you are braiding with some tension. The disk will now look like when you started.





Turn the disk one quarter turn to the right. The second color (green here) should now be in the top position. Repeat the two steps: Top right green goes to bottom right of the other greens. Bottom left green goes to top left. Pull or hold the knot to create tension. Turn the disk a quarter turn and keep braiding. It is important to always turn in the same direction, and to comb out the strings occasionally with your fingers so they don't get tangled.



The braid will start appearing on the knot (bottom) side of the disk. Make it as long as you want. To finish, take all the strings out of the notches and make an overhand knot on that end.

For fun variations try these things:

- Strings of different weights or different types of material
- 3 or 4 colors (this is harder for the beginner)
- Having the same color together (i.e. at noon and at 3pm as on a clock face)

Tip: If you stop braiding and then come back, and have lost your place, just look to see which strings were last crossed over others. The underneath color is the one to start on again.