



Getting Started with Kumihimo

With Michelle Phipps

Michelle is starting us off with a Kumihimo style called the Kongoh-Gumi. This is an 8 element beaded braid with blunt ends.



Ingredients:

- 1 5mm Round-Opening Glue-In Clasp
- 1 Spool 0.4mm Chinese Knotting Cord (CKC)
- 2-3 Colors 8/0 Miyuki Round Rocailles
- 1 Tube Zap Jewelry Gel
- 1 Kumihimo 32 Slot Disk
- 8 Bobbins (number with permanent marker 1 thru 8)
- 1 Kumihimo Weight
- Thread Snips
- *From home:* A fine-tip marker, a toothpick, and a 5" long scrap piece of string or cord folded in half and knotted

You'll start with four lengths of CKC - Each cord will be 6 times the length of finished project plus at least 6" extra. For example, a 7" bracelet cord will need four lengths of 48" each.

Tip: A minimum cord length is 30". Anything shorter and you will struggle with putting cords in slots as you get towards your desired length.

The first few times doing Kumihimo you are better off to overestimate your length of cord until you get familiar with your tension control. You cannot add cord throughout the braiding process, so the more "extra" you add to your length to start, you will have a more useable piece of leftover cord when you are finished.

This handout follows the pattern for a three color way (Land of the Living Skies):

- Nylon Knotting Cord (CKC) 0.4mm - Teal
- 8-4514 Picasso Seafoam Green - **A** (main)
- 8-4696 Fr. Op. Glazed Rainbow Dk. Red - **B** (dots)
- 8-1233 Matte Op. Mustard - **C** (dots)

Cord Layout:

Top position of disk is the furthest away from your body and is referred to as the North position (dot 32). East/West (horizontal) cords are placed over the North/South (vertical) cords. This placement of the cords will make an enclosed blunt end for one half of the clasp to be attached to.

Place cords as shown, making sure cords are evenly centered over the disk. (Fig. 1)

North / South positions

- Cord 1 left slot of 32 (N) and left slot of 16 (S)
- Cord 2 right slot of 32 (N) and right slot of 16 (S)

East West positions

- Cord 3 slot above 8(E) and slot above of 24 (W)
- Cord 4 slot below 8 (E) and slot below of 24 (W)

Then place the scrap cord loop under all of the cords on the disk and put the knotted end thru the loop, pull to tighten around all of the cords to make a larks head knot. (Fig.2) Then attach the kumi weight to the scrap cord. (Fig.3)

Warps:

Wrap each cord on to the coordinating numbered warp bobbin. Start at the cut end of cord, fold over the curved bobbin edge to secure cord.

Starting Position:

- Warp 1 (left of 32 N)
- Warp 2 (right of 32 N)
- Warp 3 (left of 8 W)
- Warp 4 (right of 8 W)
- Warp 5 right of 16 S
- Warp 6 left of 16 S
- Warp 7 left of 24 W
- Warp 8 right of 24 W

Before you begin to braid, measure and mark the inner depth of your clasp on a flush end of a toothpick so you will know how long to make blunt end that goes inside one part of the clasp. Make sure to measure both pieces of clasp as the depth may vary. (Fig. 4)

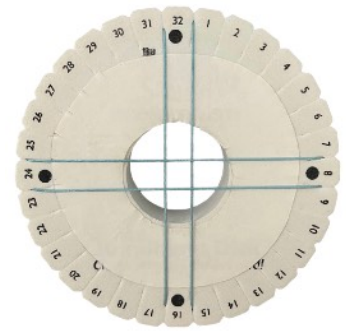


Fig.1

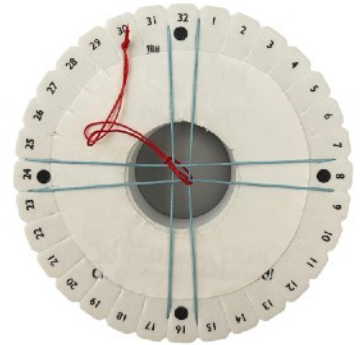


Fig. 2

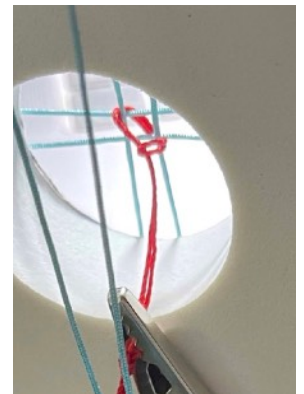


Fig. 3

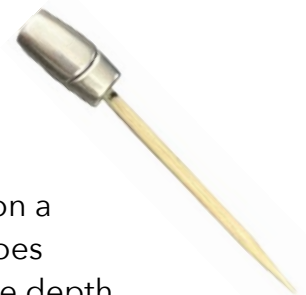


Fig.. 4

Begin Braiding with No Beads:

Start with disk at North position, then begin to braid. Sit up straight and make sure the bobbins and weight are freely dangling.

One complete movement consists of two cords being moved and a quarter turn to the left.

Bottom left (warp 6) up to top slot left of 31, top right (warp 2) down to bottom right slot of 15 then rotate quarter turn to the left.

Kumi Mantra:

Bottom left up to top left, top right down to bottom right, then rotate disk quarter turn to the left.

Repeat Mantra until you have reached desired length. Occasionally stop and check your braiding and length. Use the marked toothpick as a guide for the length of the braided end. (Fig. 5)

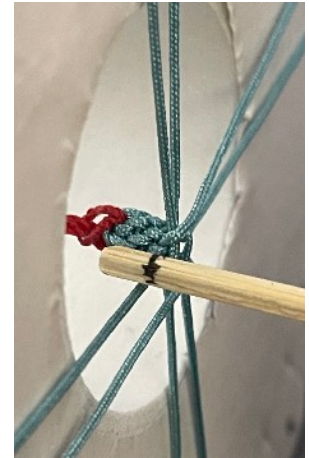


Fig.. 5

Move 24-28 movements more or less which will make about 1/4" braided end. (Fig. 6)

- This may vary depending on the type of cord and the depth of clasp you are using.

Reposition:

Once you have your braided end to the desired length you will need to reposition cords back to their starting positions (as mentioned above) by moving cords around the disk (not braiding). Warps 1 & 2 will be on either side of 32 N.

If you don't reposition warps back to starting position it will affect the bead pattern in the braid.

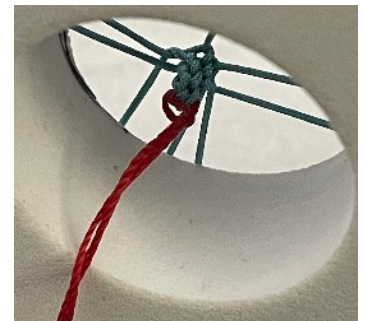


Fig.. 6

Stringing Pattern: approx. 40 - 50 beads each cord for 6-7-inch bracelet

- Warp 1 & 5 (dots) - B
- Warps 3 & 7 (dots) - C
- Warp 2, 4, 6, 8 (main color) - A

Tie a knot at the end of each cord before wrapping around bobbin.



bobbin

Braiding With Beads:

Follows the same Kumi Mantra, only now you will be dropping a bead on the cord you are moving.

- Start braiding by sliding a bead (blue) up the cord of warp 6 towards the center of the braid, tuck bead under the horizontal cord (warp 7) then slide warp 6 into slot left of 31 (Fig. 7)
- Slide bead (pink) on cord of Warp 2 down towards the center of the braid and tuck bead under the horizontal cord (Warp 3) then slide warp 2 into slot right of 16 (Fig. 8)
- Rotate disk a quarter turn to left, now the top position will be dot 8 (Fig.9)

Be aware that your top position will always be changing from the North, South, East, and West dots as your complete each movement and rotations.

Occasionally stop and check your braiding for beads that may have popped out from under the cord and to check your length.

Keep braiding with beads until you reached your desired length.

Repeat Kumi Mantra until you reached *almost* the desired length.

Keep in mind as you are braiding with beads that you always want to be measuring as you go and will have to braid a no-bead section to fit into the other half of the clasp. So, you will have to stop braiding with beads short of the inner depth measurement of the other half of clasp. From that point braid a no-bead section longer than your clasp measurement as it will be easier for preparing the raw cords and braided end for gluing on the other half of the clasp.

Finishing:

You will need to tie off the cords.

Take the two cords that would be your next move (they should be kitty corner to each other) and tie them together with a double overhand knot (surgeon's knot). (Fig. 10, next page). Pull tight and place the cords back into slots.



Fig. 10

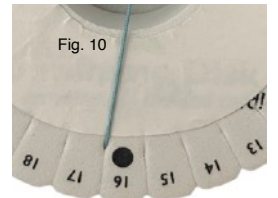


Fig. 7

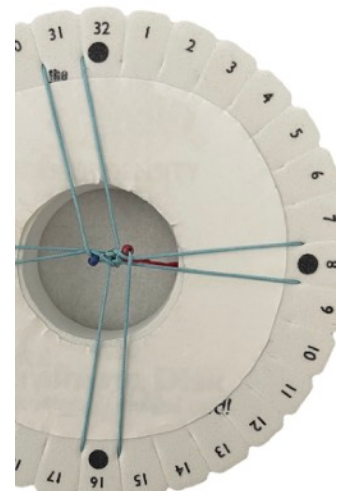


Fig. 8



Fig.9

Next rotate disk a quarter turn to left and tie the next two cords. Do this until all cords have been tied.

Now that all the cords are tied, it is safe to remove your braid from the disk. (Fig. 11)

Take all cord and tie in a knot. (Fig. 12) Now you are ready for the clasp.

Gluing On Clasp:

Remove the weight from the blunt end. (Fig. 13)

Put some Zap Glue on a baggie and with a toothpick thinly spread some glue on the braided blunt end. Apply the glue on all sides of braid from just before the beads.

Use the toothpick to put some Zap Glue on the inside of clasp as well, and then slide the braid in the clasp. (Fig.14)

Wait a few minutes until you can feel that the clasp is attached to the braid before continuing to glue the other end.

Apply the glue on all sides of braid with the knot from just before the beads to the knotted end. (Fig.15)

Let glue cure/dry for a few hours or overnight. This is to ensure that the braid does not come apart when cut.

Once cured you can safely cut the braid to the length of the inner depth of half of the clasp. Use the toothpick that you marked as a guide. (Fig.16)

With a toothpick, put some Zap Glue on the inside of clasp and then slide the braid in the clasp. Make sure to check that the clasp is going in the correct direction and closes correctly.

Do not connect the clasp ends of the bracelet together. Leave flat to cure overnight before wearing.

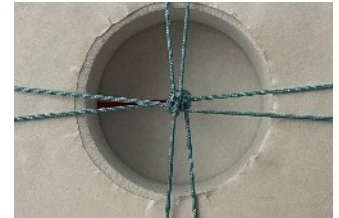


Fig. 11



Fig. 12



Fig. 13



Fig. 14



Fig. 15



Fig. 16