Eight Element Kongo Gumi Kumihimo – *Fiber Only*

If you have never tried Kumihimo before or have just done a braid or two I **highly recommend** becoming very comfortable with fiber only before adding beads to a braid. You will find adding beads much easier when you do not have to concentrate as much on the movements of the elements! The following are directions for Eight Element Kongo Gumi using satin cord. Satin cord can be found in most any craft store or online from numerous sources like Amazon.com. I find that 1mm is the easiest to work with although 2mm seems to be more commonly found in stores.

Supply and Tool List

Supplies for Braid (Bracelet Length)

1. Round Kumihimo Disk
2. Satin Cord (waxed cotton or other uniform cord can be substituted), preferably 1 or 1.5mm
    a. 5.5 yards of one color, or
    b. 3 yards each of two colors
3. Kumihimo weight, see DIY Kumihimo Weights in the *Read Me First* file.

Tools

1. Scissors or X-acto knife

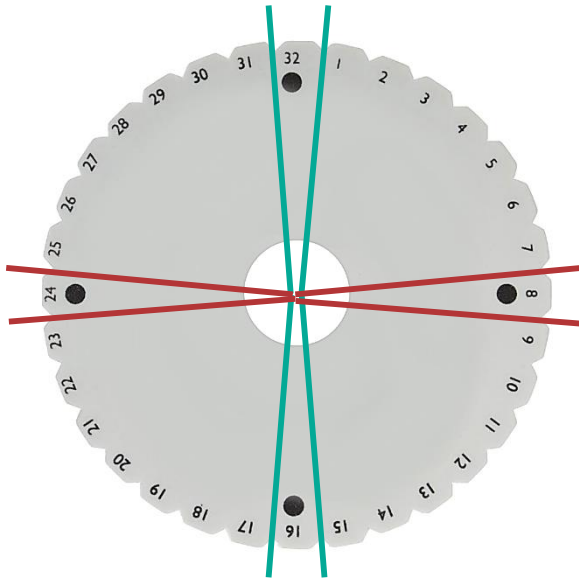## *Preparing the Elements*

How long should each element be?

- Each element should be 2-3 times the length of the desired finished braid length. For example, if you want 7 inches of finished braid each element should measure no less than 21 inches. <u>It is better to have leftover cord length as there is no known way to add cord seamlessly!</u>
- For an eight element braid you can:
    - Cut eight elements the desired length and tie an overhand knot at one end, or
    - Cut double the length of each element and fold them in half. Use a scrap piece of cord to tie them together in the middle.

Loading the Disk

1. Place the knot or middle of your folded cords through the top of the disk and attach your weight on the underside.

2. Position your threads in the slots of the disk according to the diagram:

The placement of one color in the North and South positions and another color in the East and West positions will produce a spiral pattern shown here.
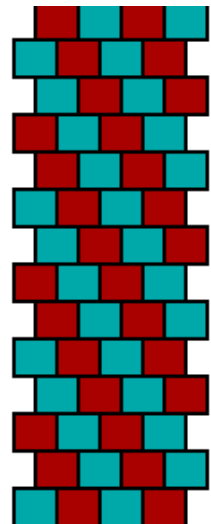
Moving the Elements

Step 1: Take the element in the **top right** slot and move it **down** to the slot on the right side of the two bottom elements. Then take the element in the **bottom left** and move it **up** to the slot to the left of the top element.

Step 1
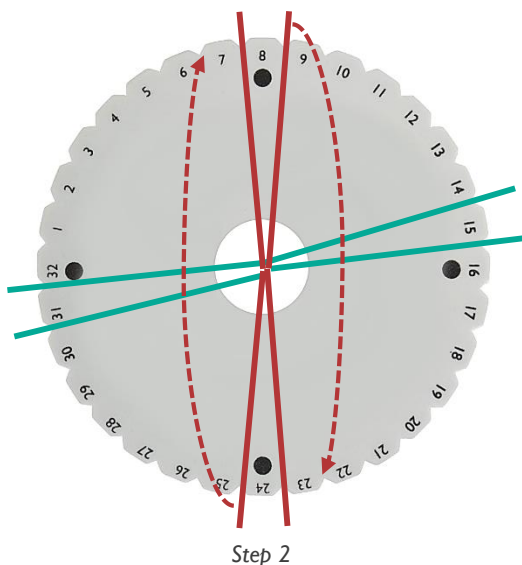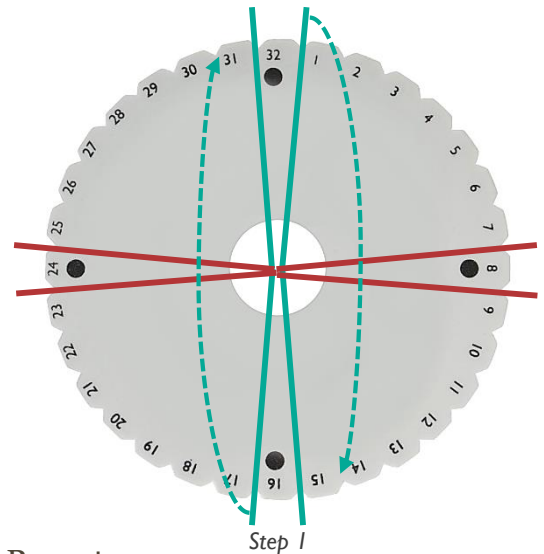
Step 2: Rotate your disk ¼ turn counterclockwise. Repeat, **Top Right down** and **bottom Left up.**

Step 3: Rotate your disk ¼ turn counterclockwise. Repeat, **Top Right down** and **bottom Left up.** Repeat these step!

Step 2

Finishing the Braid

Removing the braid from the disk

1. Once your braid is the desired length braid just a little bit more! Remember with Kumihimo a little extra is always better than not enough.
2. Grab the top of your braid and hold it as you remove the elements from each slot. You do not want your braid to start unraveling!
3. Tie an overhand knot as close as you can to the end of your braid to secure it.
4. Follow the finishing directions for method in the Kumihimo Endings – Glue On and Attach a Cone file.

Examples of Finished Fiber Braids

2mm Satin cord, Glue on end caps

1.5mm Satin cord, Glue on end caps

1mm Satin cord, Cone ending: attach a wire loop

Beaded Eight Element Kongo Gumi Kumihimo

Supply and Tool List

Supplies for Braid (Bracelet Length)

1. Round Kumihimo Disk
2. #18 (.5mm) bonded 3-ply nylon cord. Brand names are C-lon or S-Lon. <u>Choose a color that matches or coordinates with your beads</u>
   a. 5.5 yards of one color, or
   b. 3 yards each of two colors
3. Kumihimo weight, see DIY Kumihimo Weights in the *Read Me First* file.

Tools

1. Scissors or Thread Zapper

Preparing the Elements

How long should each element be?

- Each element should be 2-3 times the length of the desired finished braid length. For example, if you want 7 inches of finished braid each element should measure no less than 21 inches. <u>It is better to have leftover cord length as there is no known way to add cord seamlessly!</u>
- For an eight element braid you can:
  - Cut eight elements the desired length and tie an overhand knot at one end, or
  - Cut double the length of each element and fold them in half. Use a scrap piece of cord to tie them together in the middle.

How many beads do I need?

Size 8/0 beads are the most commonly used with Kumihimo.

<p align="center">1" of beaded kumihimo = ~57 beads or 7 beads per element</p>

For example, a 6.5" braided section you would load 370 beads, about 45 beads on each element.

==Note: Size 8/0 beads can vary in size among the different brands, e.g. Toho vs. Czech.==

Loading the Disk and Beads

1. Place the knot or middle of your folded cords through the top of the disk and attach your weight on the underside.

2. Position your threads in the slots of the disk according to the diagram on the right.

3. String 40-45 beads on each cord, plus one stopper bead (See Figures 1 &2).

   TIP: Coat the ends of your cord with clear nail polish or FrayCheck and let dry. This will help make stringing beads much easier!

   a. One bead color – load same color on all 8 cords

   b. Two color spiral – load 4 cords of each color
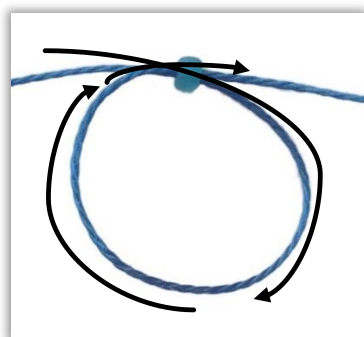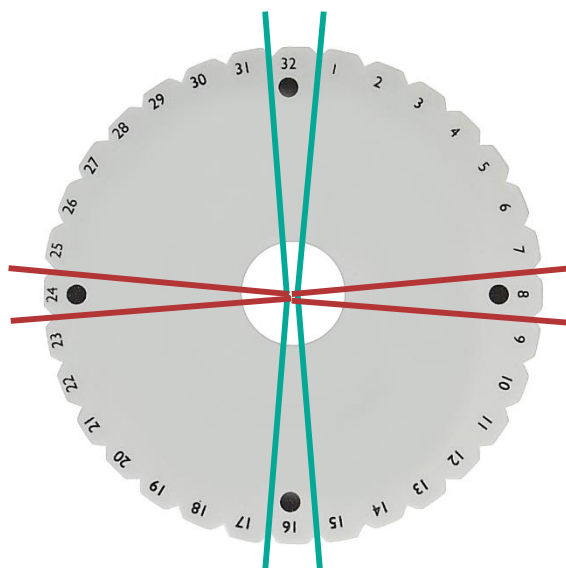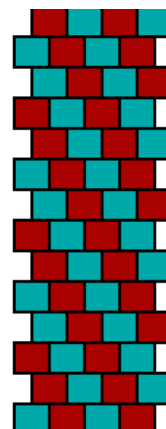

Figure 1 – Stopper Bead

Figure 2 – Stopper Bead

The placement of one color in the North and South positions and another color in the East and West positions will produce a spiral pattern shown here.

Bead Stopper

Bead Stoppers are a wonderful investment for Kumihimo and other beading arts! These can be used instead of a stopper bead on each element as well as for holding cones in place while glue dries! These can be found in many craft stores and though online retailers.
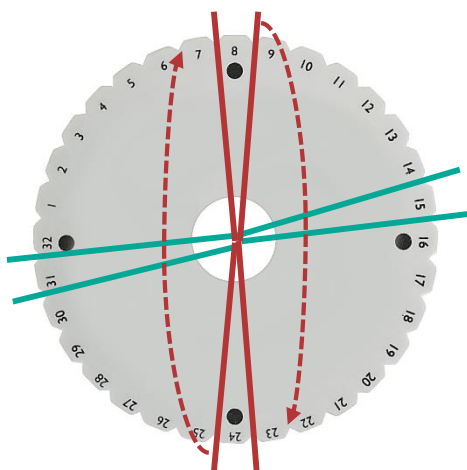
Moving the Elements

==**Braid at least ½ inch to 1 inch before dropping beads!**==

Step 1: Take the element in the **top right** slot and move it **down** to the slot on the right side of the two bottom elements. Then take the element in the **bottom left** and move it **up** to the slot to the left of the top element.

Step 1

Step 2: Rotate your disk ¼ turn counterclockwise. Repeat, **Top Right down** and **bottom Left up.**

Step 3: Rotate your disk ¼ turn counterclockwise. Repeat, **Top Right down** and **bottom Left up.**

Step 2
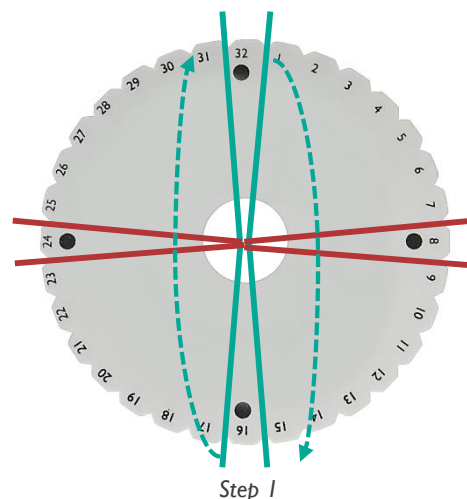
Adding Beads

When you are ready to start dropping in beads lift the top right element and let a bead fall towards the braid. **Tuck the bead** under the closest perpendicular element as you cross over. As you braid make sure the beads stay tucked under the elements. ==Check your braid often to make sure beads are not inside the braid or missing!== If you notice a "hole" in your beaded braid reverse the braiding steps to see if a bead has popped in to the center of the braid or if a bead was not dropped.

After adding first two beads

After adding first four beads

Finishing the Braid

Removing the braid from the disk

5. Once your beaded braid section is the desired length braid another ½ to 1 inch of unbeaded braid.
6. Grab the top of your braid and hold it as you remove the elements from each slot. You do not want your braid to start unraveling!
7. Tie an overhand knot as close as you can to the end of your braid to secure it.
8. Follow the finishing directions for either the Glue on End Caps or Cone Ending: Attach a wire loop

Examples of Finished Beaded Braids

Two color spiral beaded Kongo Gumi with Cone Ending: Attach a wire loop

One color beaded Kongo Gumi. Glue on End Cap technique using 4mm round crimp cord endings.