



Kumihimo on a Disk

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Kumihimo is a Japanese Braiding Technique. It is typically done on a stand (Takadai or Marudai) using bobbins, or Tama, (a type of weight) to hold the tension. With the use of one of these stands, you can create a braid using far more strands than you can manage with your hands. A Takadai can usually hold up to 84 bobbins! Kumihimo on a disk is similar to kumihimo on a Marudai, however they have a completely different feel. Using a Marudai, you can move several strands at once with each hand and the braiding process becomes a beautiful meditative dance. Working with a disk, you move one strand at a time (your other hand holds the disk in place). It is a wonderfully portable way to braid; great for airplanes and road trips! A card is an easy way to learn and a great tool for teaching children. I learned the technique of braiding on a Marudai and on a card from Makiko Tada of Japan, and I am grateful to her for her kindness and generosity in sharing the wisdom of this craft with the world. If you are interested in learning more braids like this, there are some resources listed below or you can contact me for a private lesson at therese@ReikiWeaver.com or (503) 929-5309.

Some sources for braiding tools, books, materials & information:

Braidershand www.braidershand.com 360-678-4788, Toll Free 866-821-4613
Makers of quality Japanese style kumihimo equipment: marudai, takadai, and tama. Purveyors of books, kumihimo silk, biron, and metallic threads for braiding.

Berlinbraids www.shirleyberlin.com
Books, supplies, kits, tools, workshops

Weavershand web site www.weavershand.com
Kumihimo and other Braiding Galleries, Instruction, Sources, Braider's Websites

Makiko Tada's Website www.texte.co.jp/makiko

A word about yarns:

Experiment! Use thread, ribbon, yarns (plain or decorative), wire...whatever peaks your interest. Try combining one or more different types of materials. There are endless possibilities!



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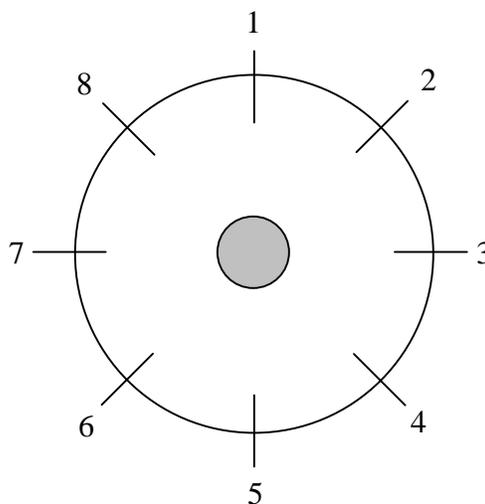


Seven Strand Braid

This is a great introductory braid. You can make your own disk by cutting a circle out of cardboard or craft foam. For this braid, you will need 8 slits cut around the edge of the disk (evenly spaced) and seven strands of yarn cut to your desired length. Also cut a hole in the center of the disk (shaded area shown at right.) For fun, experiment with using different color & texture yarns.

Tie an overhand knot in one end of the strands and place it through the hole in the center of the disk.

NOTE: If you want to make a bracelet, use three long strands folded in half plus one strand (half the length of the others) to make your seven strands. Fold them in half before tying the overhand knot so that it forms a loop that can be used as a clasp.



Place one strand in each of the slits (1-7), leaving slit 8 open. Hold the card with the empty slit towards you. (You don't need to keep track of the slit numbers, I just wrote them here to help with the initial set-up.)

From the empty slit, count three slits to the right. Take that strand and move it to the empty slot. Repeat this process until the braid is to desired length. It helps if you turn the card so that the new empty slit faces you after each strand movement. [For a numeric description, if the empty slit is #5, count three to the right and take the strand from slit #2 and place it in slit #5.]

To finish off the braid, do one of the following:

- Tie a knot
- Divide the tails in half and braid each half with a regular three-strand-type braid and tie off.
- Divide the tails into two sets of two and make cordage with each set and tie off.

With either of these last methods, you can tie your two ends through the loop to make a closure for a bracelet or necklace.