

## Val's Kumihimo Braiding Tips

### Kumihimo routine I use

*Left Bottom Strand **Up** to top left position, Right Top Strand **Down** to bottom right position. Gently tug and secure yarn in the slots. Comb your fingers through the loose hanging yarn strands so they don't tangle. Turn your disc **Clockwise** to the next group.*

- Before measuring, pull your yarn to make sure it's strong and won't separate during braiding. You'll also be able to feel how stretchy it is (*elastic or stretchy strands can be cut a little shorter than the other strands*).

- Using a strand of elastic in your braid is a great way to make a wrist band or bracelet that won't need a fastener. Just make sure it has enough give to get over your hand, onto your wrist.

- You will get interrupted while braiding. Keep track of where you left off by completing only half a sequence (*e.g. move the "bottom left up" and stop; your next move is always a "top right down"*). Even if your sequence is different, just stop after the first cord is moved. This will leave no doubt about your next move.

### Deciding how long to cut your strands

Take the desired **finished length** of what you're making, **double that & add 4-5 inches**. Since your strands will be folded in half, you'll want to **double that number** to determine the length you need to cut your strands.

- Use yarns that are similar in thickness. The slots on your foam disc will stretch over time, especially if you braid with thick yarn. You may want to have a couple discs and use each for one size or type of yarn.

- I love to use exotic animal yarn (*hand-spun*) and vintage yarn. I have found that some hand spun yarn easily separates when pulled, so be gentle. And vintage yarn can also be fragile.

- Write down the pertinent info every time you make a braid. Write down the name of yarn used, color, where I got it, length and position of your strands, how you finished the braid, etc., so you can duplicate it when your friend asks you to make another one. I usually take a photo with my cell phone of the materials, the disc before braiding showing how I set up the strands, and the finished braid to help me remember.

- I like to start my braids on a large O-ring, later tying a hook on at the end.



- If you are making a longer braid and want to have a changing pattern, all you have to do is change your braiding sequence at counted intervals (*keep track of how many sequences to ensure an even pattern*). You could take your left bottom strand diagonally across and up to the right instead of straight up to the left; then take your right top strand diagonally across and down to the left instead of straight down to the right. Just be carefully you don't forget where you are in the process. Then go back to your original sequence for the same number of strands, etc.

- A finished braid will stretch out, but not back. Before finishing a braid for a bracelet, it is best to pull the cord to stretch it out fully. If you don't, the cord will stretch over time and become too large.

- Be careful where you leave your disc while braiding. Cats (*and dogs*) may steal your braids to play with.

- There are many creative ways to finish your braid. Most people add end caps with a hook & eye or magnetic clasp. Adding end caps or other fasteners will add length to your finished piece

- Use WELDBOND glue for attaching end caps to finished braids. It dries clear in an hour and cures in 24 hours. The longer it is left, the stronger the bond. WELDBOND is available on Amazon or at your local ACE Hardware store.

- To keep the tips/ends of your yarn from fraying you can use Fray Check or something similar.

- I prefer to use a loop with a button or extra long fluffy dangle to tuck through the loop for a more artsy whimsical look.

- Experiment with different yarn, cords, fibers and colors for different looks.



If you want inspiration and ideas of new color combos, you can subscribe at: [Design-seeds.com](http://Design-seeds.com).