

# Basic Kumihimo Braiding

by

Maggie T Designs

There are 3 basic moves to the spiral kumihimo braid also known as the kongoh gumi braid. Once you learn these moves, making a beautiful braid is just a matter of repeating them until the braid reaches the desired length.

Although there are numerous ways to begin, end and finish off braids this tutorial is designed to teach the braiding technique only.

**Note:** Although I use the Beadsmith 6" foam disk there are many other types of disks available which will also work well.

Tie an overhand knot in the ends of your 8 cords to hold them together. Hang a weight from the knot.



Hang your knot & weight down the center hole of the disk. Now place one cord on either side of the 4 large black dots on the disk.

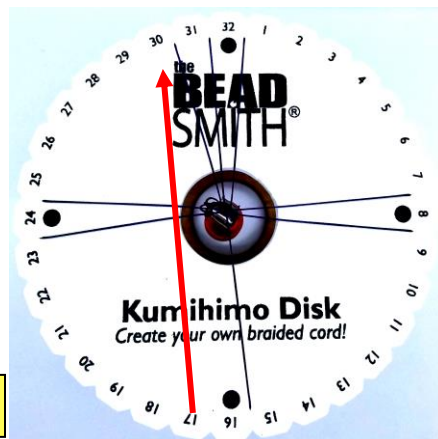
Your disk and cords should look like the picture at the right with the #32 at the top position.



Pic 1

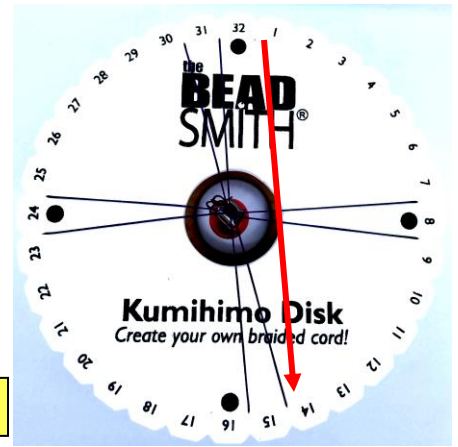
**Move 1:** Take the bottom left cord (positioned between #16 & #17) and move it straight up to the slot between #30 & #31.

NEVER cross your cords. If you begin on the bottom left your cord will remain on the left when you move it up to the top and left of #30.



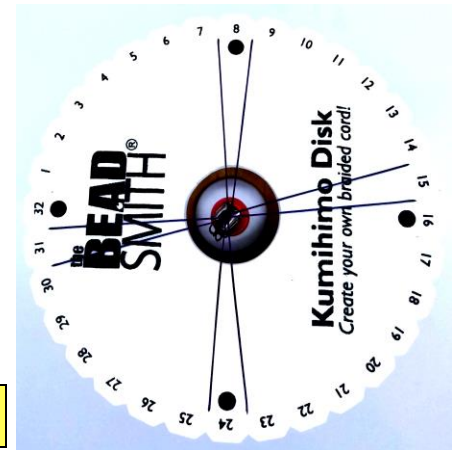
Pic 2

**Move 2:** Move the top right cord (positioned between #32 & #1) straight down to the slot between #15 & #14. Again, never cross your cords, keeping this cord to the right of #15.



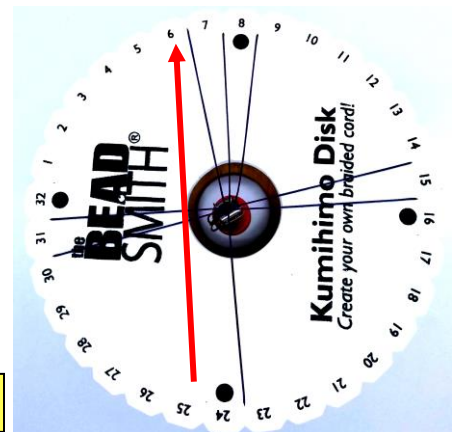
Pic 3

**Move 3:** Rotate your disk a quarter turn counter clockwise placing the #8 dot at the top position and #24 at the bottom.



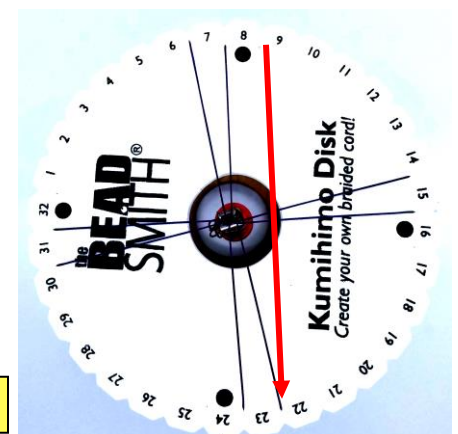
Pic 4

**Repeat Move 1:** Move the bottom left cord (between #24 & #25) straight up to the slot between #6 & #7. (Basic Kumi 5 pic)



Pic 5

**Repeat Move 2:** Now move the top right cord (between #8 & #9) straight down to the slot between #23 & #22.



Pic 6

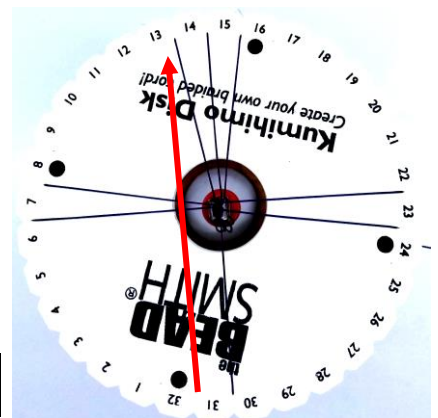
**Repeat Move 3:** Rotate your disk a quarter turn counter clockwise so the #16 dot is now at the top and #32 is at the bottom position.



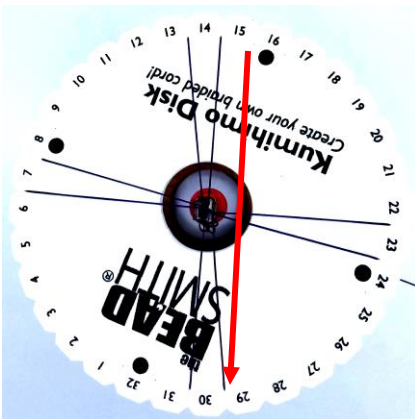
Pic 7

Repeat **Moves 1 - 3** until #30 is at the top of your disk and #14 is at the bottom. I refer to this as "one complete round of braiding" and usually begin my braids this way. It sets your cords up so the beads drop in place more easily.

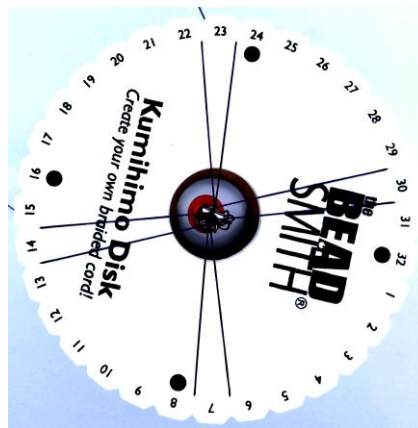
If you're braiding with cords only continue repeating Moves 1-3 until you reach your desired braid length.



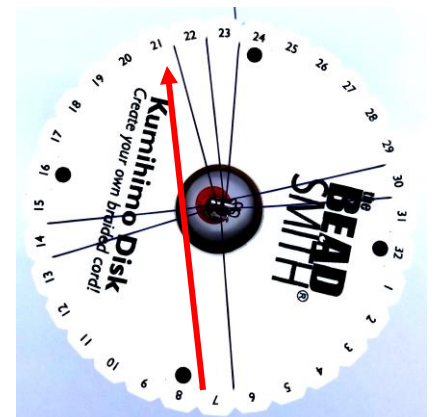
Pic 8



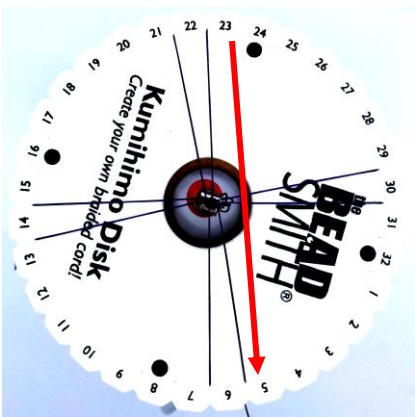
Pic 9



Pic 10



Pic 11



Pic 12



Pic 13

If you're braiding with beads continue on with the next section "Braiding With Beads".

## Braiding With Beads

**Step 1:** Do one complete round of braiding without beads in order to set your cords up so your beads will "drop" neatly into place.

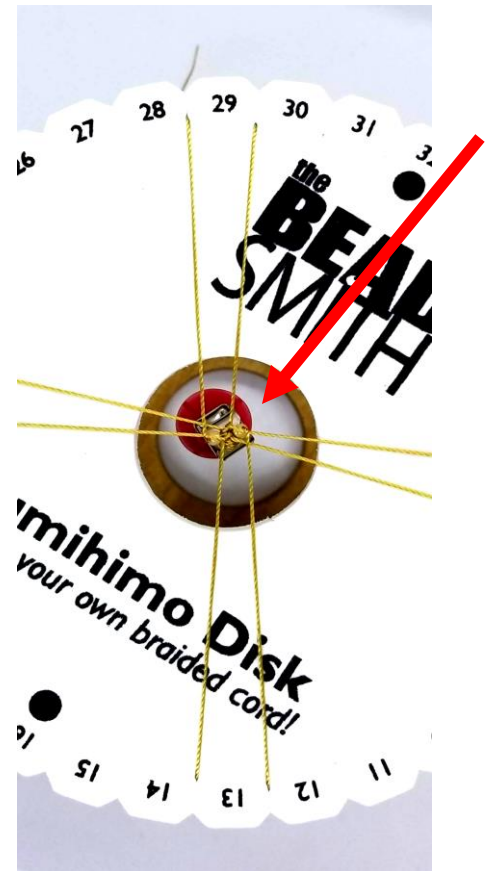
This will bring #30 on your disk back to the top position.

The same 3 moves as above still apply except now you're going to drop a bead on each cord before moving that cord to the new position.

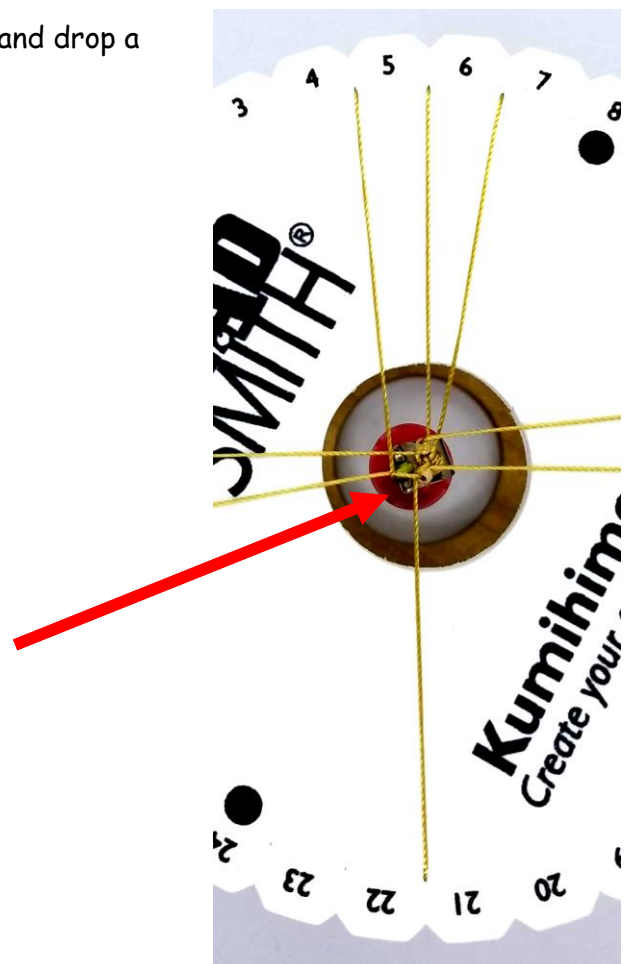
**Step 2:** Pick up the bottom left cord as usual (between #14 & #15) and tuck one bead underneath the cord adjacent to the left (located between #21 & #22) as you move the cord up to its new position between #28 & #29. (see red arrow for location of bead)



**Step 3:** Repeat for the top right cord between #30 & #31. Place it in its new position between #12 & #13 after tucking the bead underneath the cord to the immediate right (located between #5 & #6). You've now got your first 2 beads braided.



**Step 4:** Rotate your disk a quarter turn counter clockwise and drop a third bead as in step 2 (bottom left cord moves up).



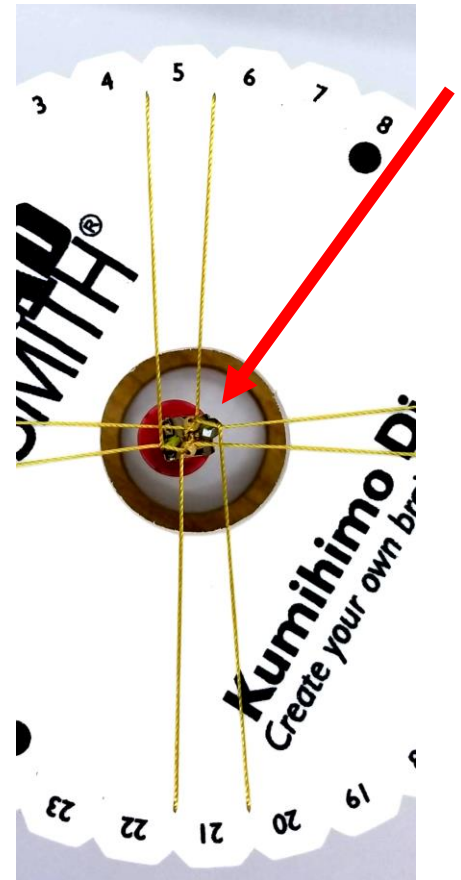
**Step 5:** Now drop your 4<sup>th</sup> bead by moving the top right cord straight down. These first 4 dropped beads should look like the picture at the right.

Notice how they form a "square". This is how your braid should look before you do each quarter turn.

Continue with the basic braid, tucking one bead underneath as you go.

It takes a bit of practice but soon you'll find the sequences with both cords and beads will become second nature.

**Happy Braiding!!**



## Tips & Tricks

\*Be sure to keep your tension taut and even.

\*Your cords should be centered in the hole and level with the top of the disk. If they start to sag in the middle, pull gently on your bobbins to tighten them.

\*If you get interrupted while braiding, simply move the bottom left cord to the top position and leave it there. This will place 3 cords at the top position letting you know exactly where to begin when you resume your project. This is what I call **"3 in the tree"**. Complete the step by moving the top right cord down. Now make your quarter turn to the left and continue as before.

\*If your Superalon cords are very curly, lightly steam iron them to straighten. It'll be much easier to string on your beads and wind your bobbins.

\*I recommend dipping the cord ends in Instanneedle® to stiffen them. Let them dry then cut the tip at a 45° angle. I've found this works better even than stringing beads with a Big Eye needle.