

## A Five Strand Braid

By Meroe M. Cahill (Rohese de Fairhurst)

In the last article we explored what could be done using four strands. Here we are going to add another strand and make a flat five strand braid. We also introduce adding a jump ring and clasp.

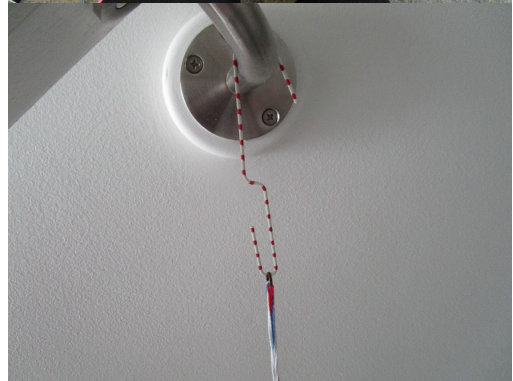
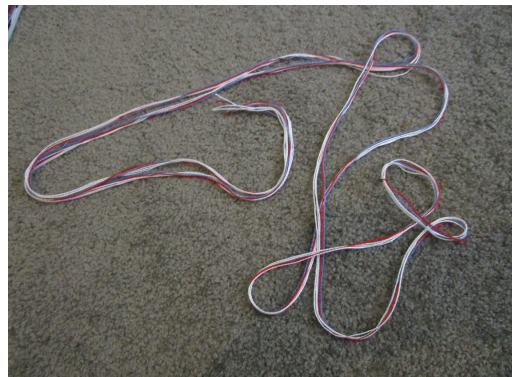
### Equipment:

- Thread (I used Milford Satin 2 ply Perle no.5)
- Scissors
- 1 large paper clip
- 5 empty cotton reels/weighted tama(bobbins)
- 1 jump ring
- 1 lobster claw clasp
- Approximately 10cm of thin thread
- Approximately 10cm of thicker thread
- A helper cat (optional)

### Setting up

For this cord, I used doubled strands so that it was easier to see them in photographs. There are three strands of white and one each of red and blue.

- Measure out your threads. I started with lengths of approximately 2.3m.
- Thread them through the jump ring.
- Separate the blue thread and tie the ends to a bobbin. I used tama (weighted bobbins for kumihimo) with a leader strand tied onto them, however Gutermann brand empty thread bobbins will work very well because they have grooves to lock the threads in. If you don't have access to any of these, you could use pieces of cardboard with slots cut into them to secure the threads (like the ones used for embroidery threads). Because I use tama, I wrap the threads around them and secure them with a hitch knot, which allows me to easily unwind them as I braid.
- Here we see the Number 2 Helper Cat. This is not her most flattering angle.
- Continue this for all five doubled threads.
- Take a large paperclip and bend it into an S shape. Hook it through the jump ring and use it to suspend the threads from a stable object. In this case I used the stair bannister, but I often use a chair or clothes rack.



## Doing the braid

1. Start with the white threads in the middle, and the red and blue threads on the outside.
2. The mnemonic for this is right, left, over and out.

3. Start by focussing only on the three centre threads. Move the RIGHT thread over the middle thread into the centre (like in a three strand plait).
4. Now move the LEFT thread over the middle one and into the centre.

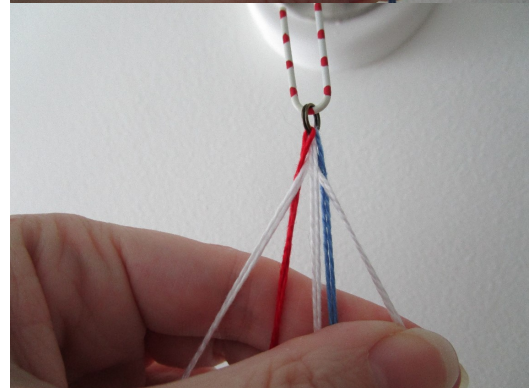
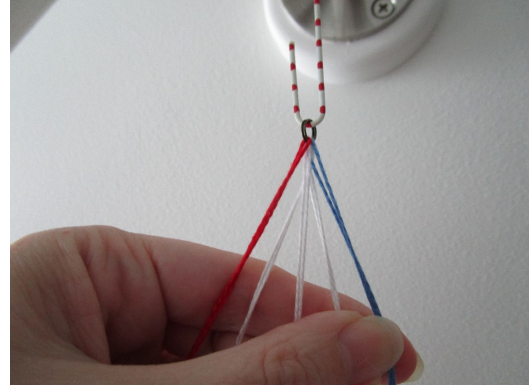
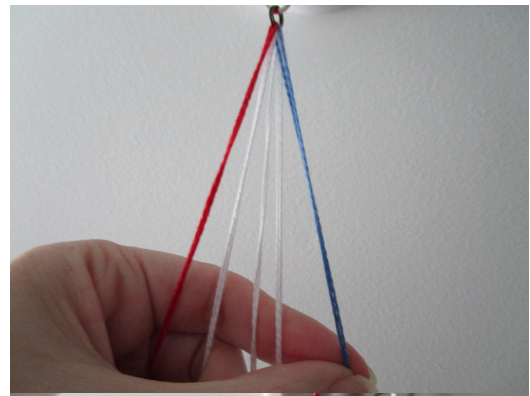
5. Now move the right of the middle threads OVER the blue thread.
6. Next move the left of the middle threads over the red thread to the OUTside.

7. Repeat steps 3-6.

8. When you need to, let more of the threads out from the bobbins. As the braid gets longer, you will have to move further away from the paperclip – I move further down the stairs.

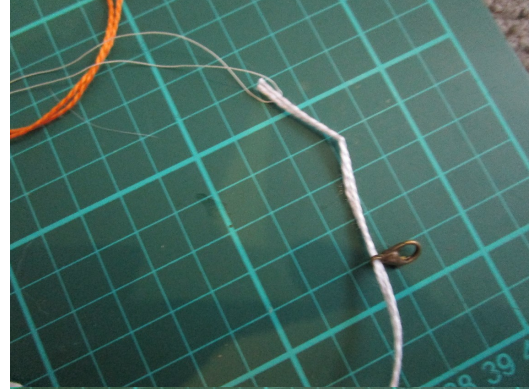
## Finishing Off

- When the braid is long enough, remove it from the paperclip.
- Remove one of the white strands from its bobbin. Make sure that you have about 15cm of length to work with.
- Thread the selected strand through the hole of a lobster claw clasp. There is a secret trick to this – use a 10cm length of thin thread. Fold it in half. Thread the ends of it through the hole of the





clasp. Then put the white strand through the loop of the thin thread. Pull the thin thread through the hole of the clasp, and Tah Dah! You've threaded the strand through that tiny hole.



- Cut off the rest of the strands about 5cm from the end of the braid.
- Fold them back towards the body of the braid.
- Now take the 10cm length of thicker thread. I am using the bright yellow thread here. Place it behind the braid, as in the photograph.



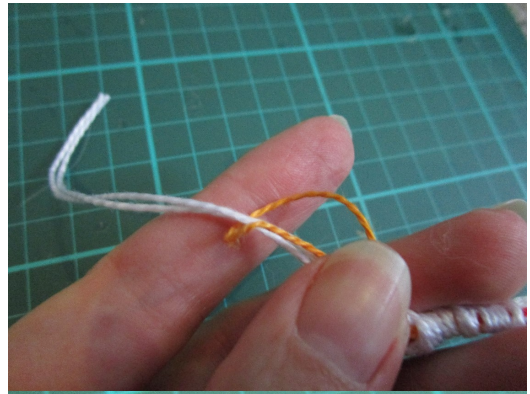
- Now take the long thread with the clasp on it. Do a half hitch knot around the braid, as shown in the photograph.



- Firmly wind the long thread around the braid and other threads, working your way towards the end of the braid with the clasp.



- Pass the end of the long thread through the loop of the yellow thread.



- Pull on the tails of the yellow thread. This will pull the end of the long thread under the whipping, securing everything.



- Trim off the ends of all of the threads. If you want you can secure the whipping with a dab of glue.

