

# Fingerloop Braiding

## A sampler of four braids on 8 loops and 2 colours

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### 1 Setup

#### 1.1 Materials

- Two 8m embroidery floss skeins in contrasting colours, one light, one dark. Enough for 2 samplers.
- One paper clip. This will hold the end of the braid, and the loop connected to the tie up point<sup>1</sup>.
- One tie up point. Can be a c-clamp, a table leg, etc. Key point is that it should be stable and won't move if tugged on.
- Some extra string to make a loop that connects the paperclip and tie up point.

#### 1.2 Measuring the loops

1. Carefully cut each embroidery floss skein in two equal pieces, each measuring 4m (approx 4.35 yards).
2. Do the following for one length of each colour.

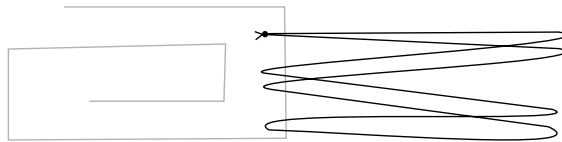


Figure 1: loops wrapped around a (very square) paperclip.

- (a) Fold in half and tie a half knot close to the ends, creating a loop 2m long.
- (b) Pull the paper clip through both the knotted and the unknotted ends of the loop, creating two loops.
- (c) Pull the end point of the two loops through the paper clip. Now you should have 4 loops as in Figure 2.

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<sup>1</sup>Technically the paperclip is optional and you can connect the braid directly to the loop, but the paperclip is immensely convenient. This is not Clippy.

3. Tie a loop of string to your tie up point and pull it through the paperclip.
4. You should now have 8 loops on the paperclip, which in turn is connected to the loop anchored to the tie up point. Gently separate and tug on the 8 loops until they are all the same length.

For a cleaner start tie a half knot around all eight knots, right next to the paperclip. This fixes the loops in place and keeps the lengths of the loops from changing.

## 2 The First Round Braid - 8 loops



### 2.1 Starting Position

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| ● | ● | To start braiding, place a light coloured loop around each finger on the left hand, and a dark coloured loop around the fingers on the right hand. |
| ● | ● |  |
| ● | ● |  |
| ● | ● |  |
- In this braid all the work is done by fingers on the right hand, while the left hand holds loops in place.

### 2.2 The move

There is one move, repeated many times, involving an active finger on the right hand and a passive finger on the left hand. The two fingers hold loops of opposite colours.

Using the active finger

1. place its loop on the passive finger, so that the active loop passes over the passive loop and is closer to the left hand.
2. slide underneath the passive loop and pick it up. (This reverses the loop that was on the passive finger, so that the low<sup>2</sup> and high sides of the loop are exchanged. This is called a reverse pickup.)

### 2.3 The braid

The round braid has a 4 move repeat.

1. Exchange the right index and left pinky finger
2. Exchange the right middle and left ring finger
3. Exchange the right ring and left middle finger
4. Exchange the right pinky and left index finger

After each repeat, the four loops on each hand should have the same colour, but colours have switched from side to side.

The easy way to remember this is that the the active loops start at the top and work down, and the passive loops start at the bottom and work up.

This pattern is easily adapted for 6 and 4 loop braids, using the same "active starts at top, passive starts at bottom" approach.

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<sup>2</sup>When holding the hand vertical, the low side of the loop is the side that passes underneath the finger holding the loop, and the high side is the side passing over top of the finger.

### 3 The Square Braid on 4 loops



The square braid is usually braided on 5 loops, but there is a 4 loop variant which segues nicely into the barleycorn braid, so that's the one we're using today.

#### 3.1 Starting position

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| ○ | ○ | On each hand, move the loop from the index finger to the middle finger and from the pinky to the ring finger. You should now have 2 double loops on the middle and ring finger of each hand. For simplicity's sake, treat each doubled loop as a single (but fatter) loop. |
| ● | ● |  |
| ● | ● |  |
| ○ | ○ |  |

#### 3.2 The braid

This braid will use 5 fingers: the middle and ring finger on the left hand, and the index, middle, and ring finger on the right hand.

The braid again has a 4 move repeat.

1. Using the right thumb to lift the top of the loops on the right hand, move the right index finger through both loops and underneath the loop on the left ring finger, picking up that loop reversed on the right index finger.
2. "Walk" the loop on the left middle finger down to the left ring finger.
3. Using the left middle finger, go through the loop on the left ring finger and pick up the loop on the right ring finger reversed.
4. "Walk" the loops on the right hand down one finger: middle to ring, index to middle.

### 4 Combining the Round and Square Braid into the Barleycorn on 6 loops



#### 4.1 Starting Position

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| ● | ○ | Stop the previous square braid when you have each hand holds one loop of each colour.<br>Move the left light double loop to the left index finger.<br>Move the right light double loop to the right ring finger.<br>Separate the dark loops on each hand onto the middle and ring finger. |
| ● | ● |   |
| ● | ● |   |
| ○ | ● |   |

## 4.2 The braid

The barleycorn braid combines moves from the round and square braid. In essence, you perform one exchange as per the round braid, and then one repeat of the square braid, resulting in a square braid with dark edges and light bobbles in the center.

1. Exchange the doubled loops on the right pinky and left index finger
2. Using the right thumb to lift the top of the loops on the right hand, move the right index finger through both loops and underneath the loop on the left ring finger, picking up that loop reversed on the right index finger.
3. “Walk” the loop on the left middle finger down to the left ring finger.
4. Using the left middle finger, go through the loop on the left ring finger and pick up the loop on the right ring finger reversed.
5. “Walk” the loops on the right hand down one finger: middle to ring, index to middle.

## 5 The Round Braid on 8 loops revisited



### 5.1 Starting position



Moving on from the barley corn, arrange the loops so that the left hand has light coloured loops on the index and middle finger, and dark coloured loops on the ring and pinky finger. The right hand, on the other hand, has dark coloured loops on the index and middle finger, and light coloured loops on the ring and pinky finger.

Basically, on the left walk the dark loops down one finger and separate the double loop into two single loops. On the right, walk the dark loops up, and separate the double loop on the pinky into two single loops.

### 5.2 The braid

The moves are identical to the moves for the round braid. However, in the original round braid, the move would always exchange colours. Here, because of the different starting position, you will always exchange loops of the same colour.