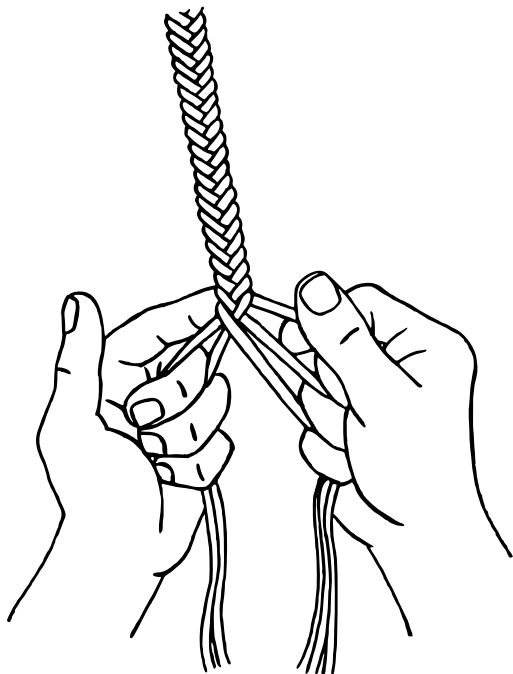


KHERMADION

Issue 5



Braiding patterns

KHERMADION Issue 5

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Issue 5 of KHERMADION presents various braiding patterns with up to eight strands.

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1 Introduction

Braided cords are made of an even or odd number of interlaced strands. When braiding by hand, these strands are split into two bundles, each held in one hand. In every braiding step, one strand — the leading strand — is led over and under the other strands, following a particular pattern. It usually ends up either on the inside of the opposing side, or on the inside of the side it came from. The former method produces flat or rectangular braids, whereas the latter method yields round braids of various shapes. Every braiding step rearranges the strands to advance the braid. After a certain number of braiding steps, which together make up the braiding pattern, the strands are again in their original position.

When braiding, tension has to be applied to all strands, and the leading strand should be pulled reasonably tight before leading it to its new place. This usually requires the other end of the braid to be fixed to an object, or to one's own body (to a foot, for example).

For most braiding patterns, the leading strand is alternately the rightmost or the leftmost one. Whenever possible, the illustrations in the following in-

structions show the braids in a configuration where the rightmost cord is the leading one, and explain the steps which have to be repeated to advance the braid.

Finally, most of the braids presented here are listed in the Ashley Book of Knots (ABoK) as well.^[1] Whenever this is the case, the corresponding number is given, for reference.

2 Multi-string strands

Each strand of a braid can consist of a single string, of multiple strings or of a bundle of loose fibers. Braiding with multiple strings or with raw fibers allows to gradually increase and decrease the thickness of the braid by adding or removing individual strings or fiber bundles over the course of multiple braiding steps. When using fibers, the leading strand should be twisted in each braiding step, and the direction of twisting should be the same across all braiding steps. When using multiple strings per strand, the strings can either be twisted collectively as with fibers or they can be folded over with the strings running in parallel.

3 Rectangular braids

The following braids have a rectangular cross-section. They are usually made with an odd number of strands, as using an even number results in an asymmetrical cross-section. A higher number of strands produces a stiffer braid, but also makes it more difficult to keep the tension of the strands consistent. The three-strand rectangular braid (section 3.1) is the simplest and probably most well-known braid, whereas the five-strand rectangular braid (section 3.2) is traditionally used for Balearic slings.

Albeit uncommon, it is possible to work rectangular braids around two parallel running cores.

3.1 Three-strand rectangular braid

The most basic braid consists of three strands.

Hold two strands in the right, one strand in the left. Lead the first strand from the right over one to the left. Lead the first strand from the left over one to the right.

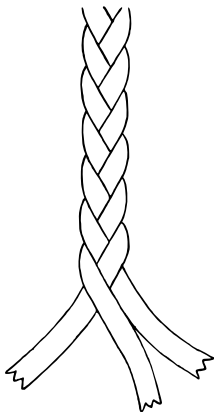


Figure 1: Three-strand rectangular braid (ABoK #2965).

3.2 Five-strand rectangular braid

For slings, the five-strand rectangular braid is a popular choice. It offers better lateral stiffness than the three-strand rectangular braid while still being relatively easy and fast to make.

Hold three strands in the right, two in the left. Lead the first strand from the right over two to the left. Lead the first strand from the left over two to the right.

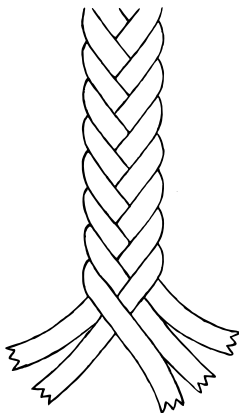


Figure 2: Five-strand rectangular braid (ABoK #2967).

3.3 Seven-strand rectangular braid

The seven-strand rectangular braid has a more pronounced lateral stiffness than the previous ones, but takes longer and is more difficult to make. Hold four strands in the right, three in the left. Lead the first strand from the right over three to the left. Lead the first strand from the left over three to the right.

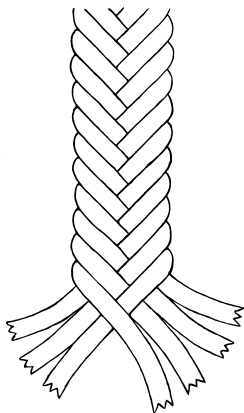


Figure 3: Seven-strand rectangular braid (ABoK #2968).

4 Flat braids

The following flat braids are made by alternately threading the leading strand over and under the other strands on its side, similar to weaving. They can be made both with an even or odd number of strands. Even-numbered flat braids look the same from both sides, whereas odd-numbered do not. Tension has to be applied carefully and evenly to the strands to not disturb the structure of the braid.

4.1 Five-strand flat braid

Hold three strands in the right, two in the left. Lead the first strand from the right over one, under one to the left. Lead the first strand from the left over one, under one to the right.

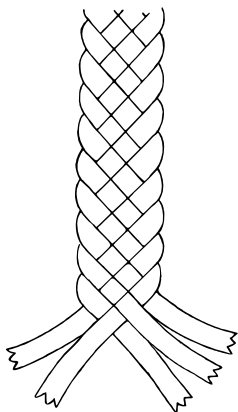


Figure 4: Five-strand flat braid.

4.2 Six-strand flat braid

Hold three strands in both hands. Lead the first strand from the right over one, under one to the left. Lead the first strand from the left under one, over one, under one to the right.

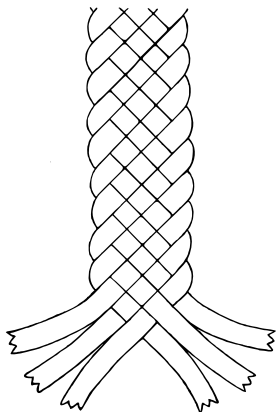


Figure 5: Six-strand flat braid (ABoK #2977).

4.3 Seven-strand flat braid

Hold four strands in the right, three in the left. Lead the first strand from the right over one, under one, over one to the left. Lead the first strand from the left over one, under one, over one to the right.

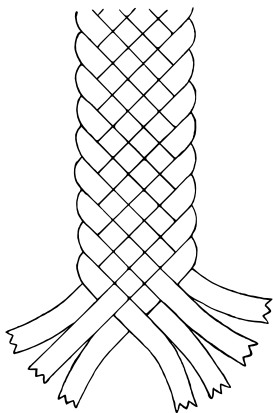


Figure 6: Seven-strand flat braid (ABoK #2976).

4.4 Eight-strand flat braid

Hold four strands in each hand. Lead the first strand from the right over one, under one, over one to the left. Lead the first strand from the left under one, over one, under one, over one to the right.

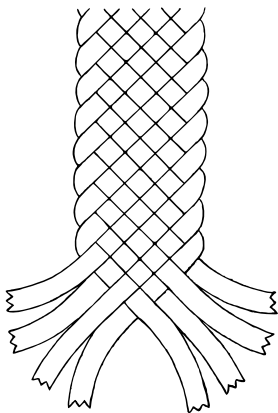


Figure 7: Eight-strand flat braid.

5 Mixed braids

The former two types of braids both followed a single concept, either folding the leading strand over all other strands on its side, or weaving it through them in an over-under fashion. Mixing these concepts results in a variety of ornamental braids, some of which are presented in the following. They have a flatter cross-section than rectangular braids, but are thicker than flat braids.

5.1 Six-strand mixed braid

Hold three strands in both hands. Lead the first strand from the right over one, under one to the left. Lead the first strand from the left under one, over two to the right.

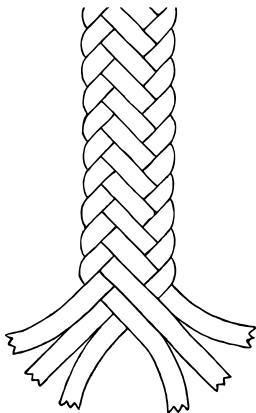


Figure 8: Six-strand mixed braid (ABoK #2981).

5.2 Seven-strand mixed braid

Hold five strands in the right, two in the left. Lead the first strand from the right under two, over two to the left. Lead the first strand from the left over two to the right.

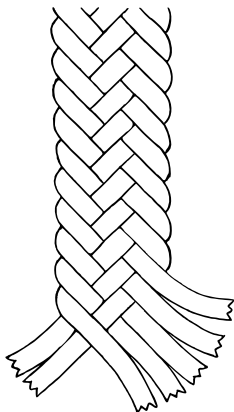


Figure 9: Seven-strand mixed braid (ABoK #2984).

6 Round braids

The following braiding patterns yield a more or less round cross-section. While for flat braids the leading strand is only interlaced with the other strands on its side and then put to the inside of the other side, for round braids it is led below the strands on its side, interlaced with the strands on the other side and finally returned to the inside of its original side. Correspondingly, all these patterns can be worked around a core, which is especially useful for stretchy material which cannot be waxed, such as wool.

6.1 Four-strand square braid

This pattern is often used for simple Paracord slings. Hold two strands in both hands. Lead the first strand from the right under the second and third, up between the third and fourth and back over the third to the right. Lead the first strand from the left under the second and third, up between the third and fourth and back over the third to the left.

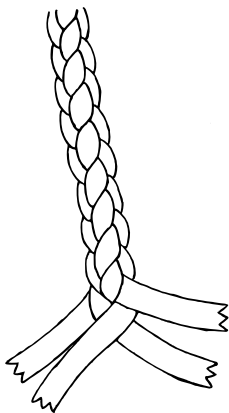


Figure 10: Four-strand square braid (ABoK #2999).

6.2 Six-strand half-round braid

From above, this braid is similar to the six-strand round braid (see section 6.3). However, the bottom side of this braid is slightly flattened, creating a half-round cross-section.

Hold three strands in both hands. Lead the first strand from the right under the second, third and fourth, up between the fourth and fifth and back over the fourth to the right. Lead the first strand from the left under the second, third and fourth, up between the fourth and fifth and back over the fourth to the left.

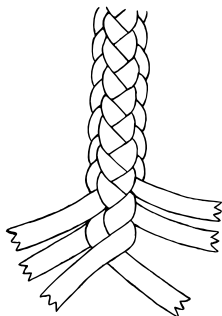


Figure 11: Six-strand half-round braid (ABoK #3003).

6.3 Six-strand round braid

Hold three strands in both hands. Lead the first strand from the right under the second to fifth, up between the fifth and sixth, back over the fifth and under the fourth to the right. Lead the first strand from the left under the second to fifth, up between the fifth and sixth back over the fifth and under the fourth to the left.

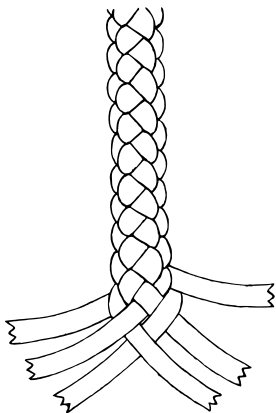


Figure 12: Six-strand round braid (ABoK #3011).

6.4 Six-strand elliptical braid

Hold three strands in both hands. Lead the first strand from the right under the second, third and fourth, up between the fourth and fifth and back over the fourth to the right. Lead the first strand from the left under the second to fifth, up between the fifth and sixth and back over the fifth and fourth to the left.

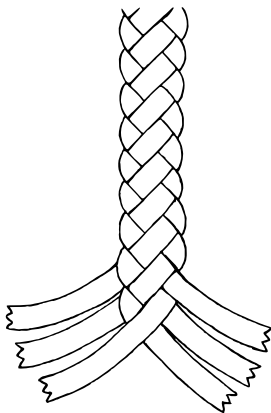


Figure 13: Six-strand elliptical braid (ABoK #3008).

6.5 Eight-strand square braid

Another popular sling braid, often used for more sophisticated designs than the four-strand square braid (see section 6.1).

Hold four strands in both hands. Lead the first strand from the right under the second to sixth up between the sixth and seventh and back over the fifth and sixth to the right. Lead the first strand from the left under the second to sixth up between the sixth and seventh and back over the fifth and sixth to the left.

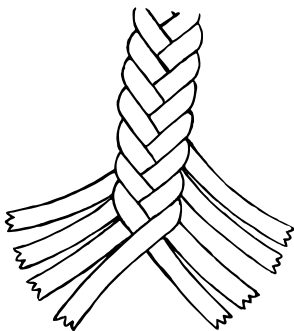


Figure 14: Eight-strand square braid (ABoK #3001).

6.6 Eight-strand half-round braid 1

This braid is similar to the six-strand half-round braid (see section 6.2) and has a half-round cross-section.

Hold four strands in both hands. Lead the first strand from the right under the second to fifth up between the fifth and sixth and back over the fifth to the right. Lead the first strand from the left under the second to fifth up between fifth and sixth and back over the fifth to the left.

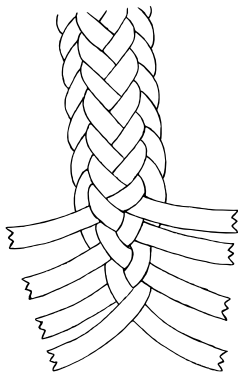


Figure 15: Eight-strand half-round braid 1 (ABoK #3004).

6.7 Eight-strand half-round braid 2

This braid has a half-round cross-section too, but less so than the other eight-strand half-round braid (see section 6.6).

Hold four strands in both hands. Lead the first strand from the right under the second to sixth up between the sixth and seventh back over the sixth and under the fifth to the right. Lead the first strand from the left under the second to sixth up between the sixth and seventh back over the sixth and under the fifth to the left.

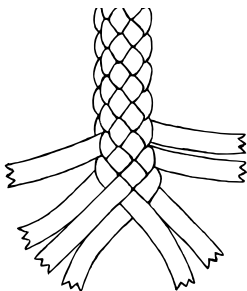


Figure 16: Eight-strand half-round braid 2 (ABoK #3006).

6.8 Eight-strand elliptical braid

This braid is similar to the six-strand elliptical braid (see section 6.4).

Hold four strands in both hands. Lead the first strand from the right under the second to fifth, up between the fifth and sixth and back over the fifth to the right. Lead the first strand from the left under the second to seventh, up between the seventh and eighth and back over the fifth to seventh to the left.

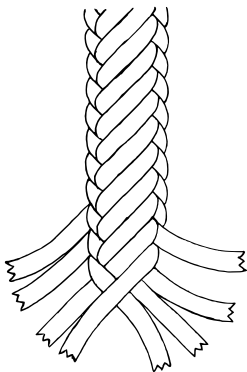


Figure 17: Eight-strand elliptical braid (ABoK #3009).

7 **References**

- [1] Clifford Warren Ashley. *The Ashley Book of Knots*. New York: Doubleday, 1944.