

Braid with Wire











Braiding with wire enables you to give sculptural effects to your braids. The wire can stiffen a handle, support a round wreath, or make Sandy Kub's sculptural pumpkins.

Supplies

- 16 gauge wire (depending on the wire's metal, you may need a different gauge. Steel, for example, is very stiff, but brass and aluminum are more bendable).
- Wire cutters
- Electrical Tape (optional for butted braids)
- Other usual braid supplies



Wreath braided with wire to keep the round shape. The wire also forms a hanging loop.

| Size Chart for Round Wire Gauges in American Wire Gauge (AWG) | | | | | |
|--|---|---|----|---|---|
| 10 |  | • | 20 |  | • |
| 12 |  | • | 22 |  | • |
| 14 |  | • | 24 |  | • |
| 16 |  | • | 26 |  | • |
| 18 |  | • | 28 |  | • |

softness

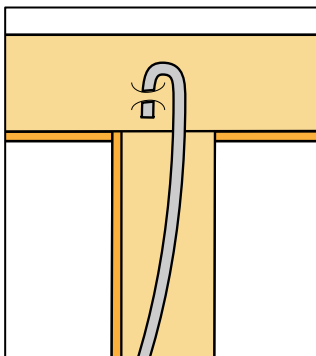


hardness

Aluminum
Copper
Brass
Bronze
Steel

Instructions

NOTE: When braiding with wire, the wire is carried within the center of the braid and is not visible on the outside of the braid.

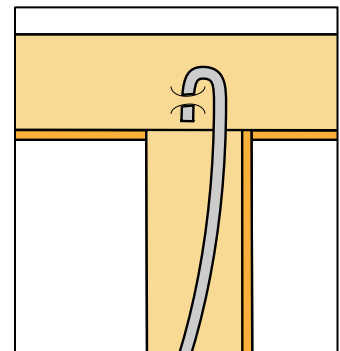


1. Adding Wire from the Start of a Continuous Braid

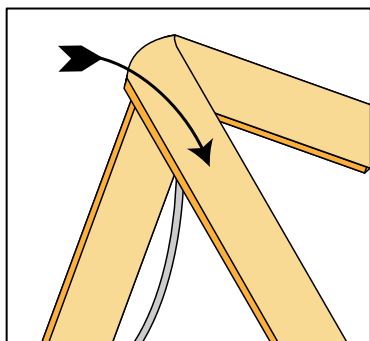
- Make a T-start.
- Bend the end of one wire to create a small hook. Stab the hook into the fabric just above the spoke of the T.

****Left opening braiders (LO)**
see diagram left.

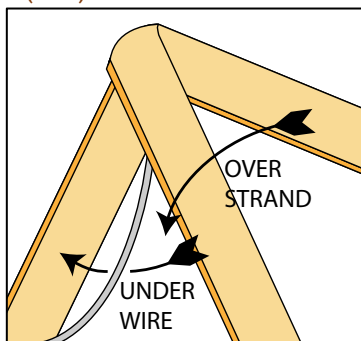
****Right opening braiders (RO)**
see diagram right.



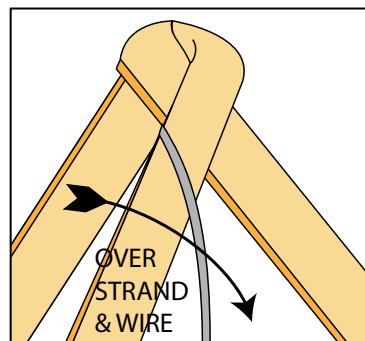
LEFT OPENING BRAIDERS (LO):



e. LO: Fold the upper left strand over to cover the wire.



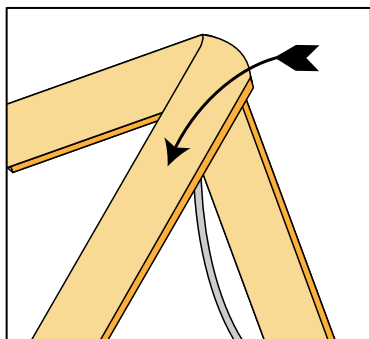
f. LO: Braid the right strand **OVER** the middle strand and **UNDER** the wire.



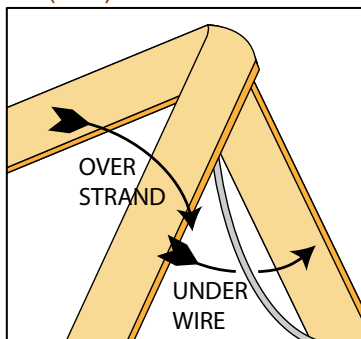
g. LO: Braid the left strand **OVER** the middle strand **plus** the wire.

h. LO: Repeat steps f & g until you reach the bend in the loop.

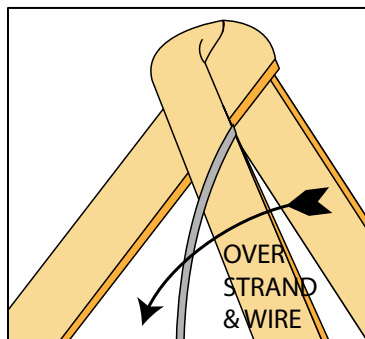
RIGHT OPENING BRAIDERS (RO):



e. RO: Fold the upper right strand over to cover the wire.

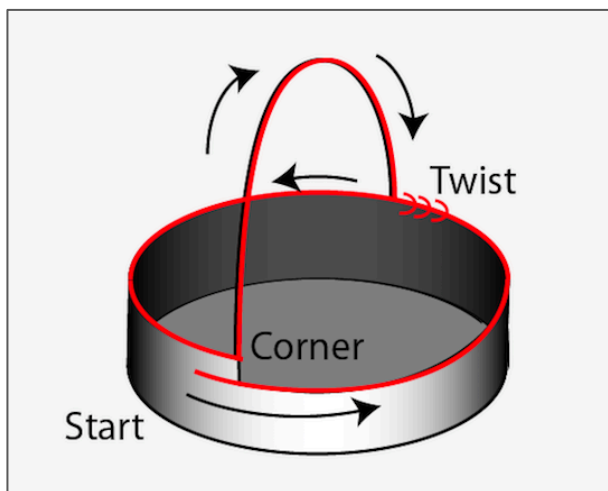


f. RO: Braid the left strand **OVER** the middle strand and **UNDER** the wire.



g. RO: Braid the right strand **OVER** the middle strand **plus** the wire.

h. RO: Repeat steps f & g until you reach the bend in the wire.



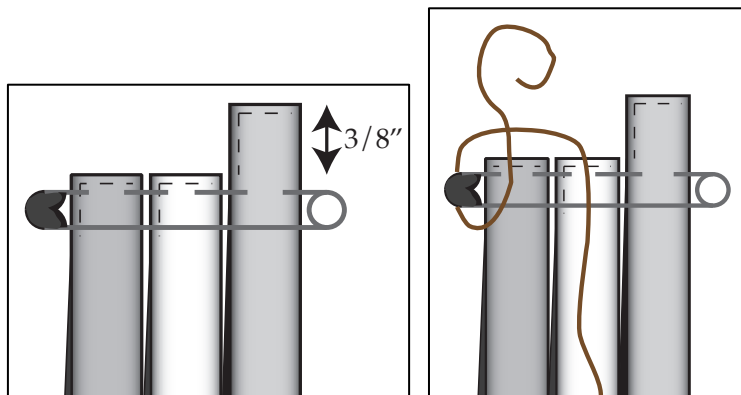
When placing a wire inside the handle of a continuously braided basket, it is **ALSO** necessary to wire the top row of the basket. If you don't, the perfectly shaped and wired handle will flop over on its side.

Anchor the wire with a little hook – just as on the T-Start, shown prior page – just before the top row of the basket (see “Start” in diagram left). Braid around the top row with wire, and then make a sharp corner with the braid and wire to begin the basket handle.

At the end of the handle, separate the braid loops to twist the handle's wire around the top row's wire.

2. Wiring a Butted Row

A. I recommend using the Enclosed End Butt for wired and butted rows... but you can also use the Triangle Butt, although I find it a bit harder to do. The problem is getting enough exposed wire from the Start of the braided row so that you can twist the Finish braid's wire around it. This is tricky... take a deep breath and try not to get frustrated. It is do-able, but fussy.



Far left: Shows L-shaped seams have been used to enclose the ends of each strand and, after trimming, turned right-side-out.

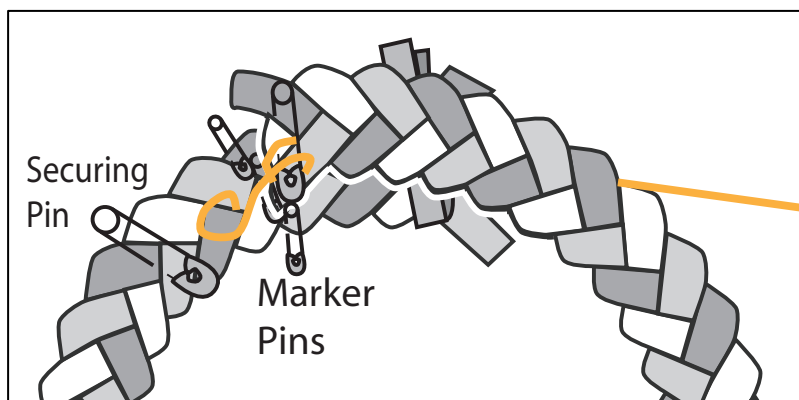
Near left: A piece of wire has been wrapped around the Start Pin to hold the wire in place.

B. Put your enclosed ends on a Start Safety Pin, with the strand on the right side 3/8" longer than the other two.

C. Place the wire on top of the middle strand, leaving a 5 inch tail. (The diagram's tail should be longer). Wrap the tail around the Start safety pin once to hold it in place.

D. Bring the strand from the right (the long strand) over the middle strand and the wire.

E. Bring the strand from the left OVER the strand and UNDER the wire. Repeat D & E to the length desired. See diagrams prior page for braiding with wire.

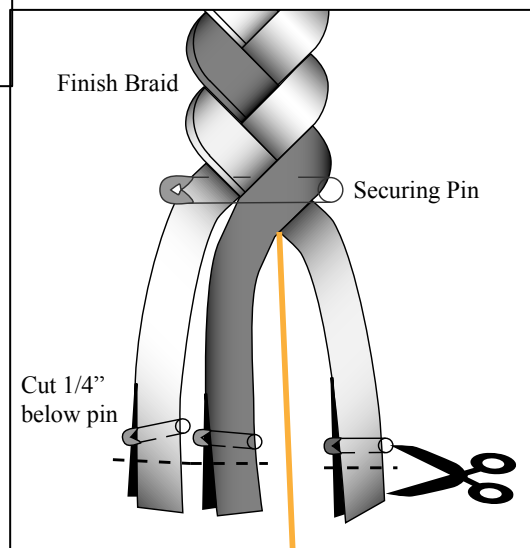


G. Open out the strands and cut them 1/4" longer than where the marker pins are. Enclose these ends. Rebraid, and place a pin across all three stands.

H. At this point your Finish Ends should be perfectly poised to meet up with your Start ends, but first you need to do something to overlap the wire.

There are a few **ways to overlap wire**. One is just to use tape: masking, electrical, floral, whatever. Overlap the ends and tape them together. While this is probably the least secure in the long run, it is the easiest on your fingers, and the ends will be well-kept inside the braid, so it doesn't really matter.

F. Butting: Lay the Start on top of the Finish of the braid, overlapping same-color loops. Pin the loops on the Finish where the top edges of the Start loops fall. Place a Securing Pin about 3" above the pinned Finish loops. Unbraid back to the Securing Pin.



Another is to twist both ends around the other wire. This method prevents separation completely: the two twists interlock and prevent movement.

Either method requires that you firmly shove the start-braid and the finish-braid back away from the overlap site to expose enough area to overlap. (Unwrap the Start wire from the Start Pin).

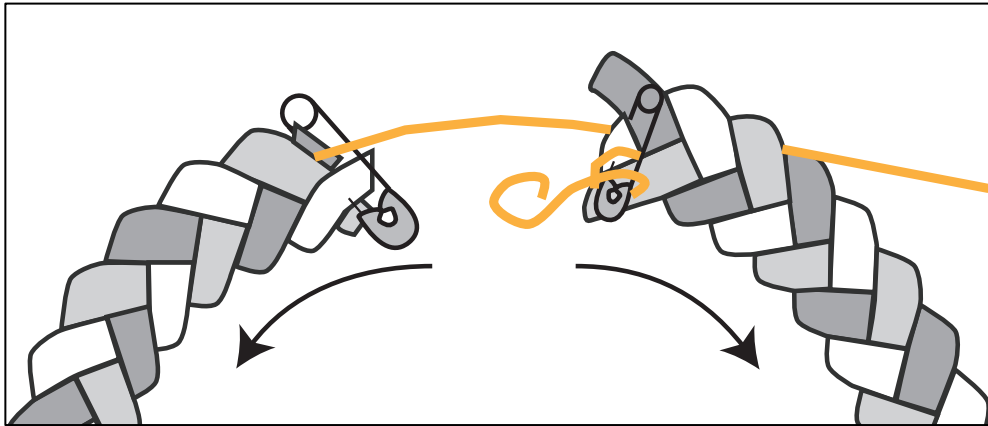


Diagram left shows a braid with enclosed ends that are rebraided... but have not yet been stitched back together.

To join the wires, you need to shove the braids back from the area where you're working. (See arrows).

Once the wire is wrapped, trim the wire ends with wire cutters. Pin the braid's ends on the Finish to the ends on the Start, and sew the ends together.

Alternatively, just overlap the wire ends by an inch, cut them with wire cutters, and wrap firmly with electrical tape. Finish butting the ends... making sure to keep the wire covered with braid loops at the butt site.