



Viking Braids - Make a Trollen Wheel



by snowbiscuit

A Trollen Wheel is a tool for making patterned cords or ropes which dates back centuries. There is some debate about whether Vikings actually used these or not, but it is a popular craft for children at medieval fairs and Viking-age reenactments nonetheless.

Trollen wheels are simple to make, fun to use and produce beautiful braids in minutes.

Supplies:

Cardboard

Yarn

Scissors



Step 1: Making a Trollen Wheel

For this tutorial, I cut out the Trollen Wheel shape using a laser cutter on some 3mm plywood so I could reuse it lots of times. Cardboard wheels work just as well but wear out with use.

To make a Trollen wheel by hand, find some sturdy cardboard that won't bend easily and cut out a circle. It should be about 10cm wide or big enough to hold comfortably in one hand.

Cut out a smaller circle in the centre. This hole should be small enough that it doesn't make the cardboard

ring weak, but big enough for your yarn to fit through easily.

Mark on 8 points around the edge equally spaced out and make small cuts on these marks.

Cut 7 lengths of yarn to the same length, no longer than 30cm for a short braid. The yarn can be any combination of colours and changing this up will give very different effects.



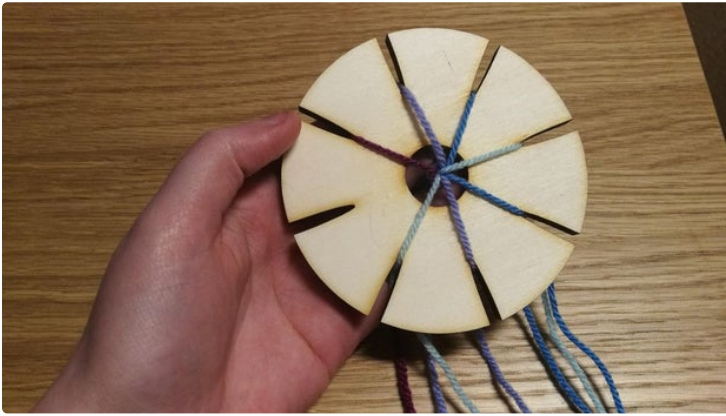
Step 2: Setting Up the Wheel

Gather up the ends of the yarn and tie together in one knot.

Post this end through the hole and hold it with your fingers behind the wheel.

Take your 7 strands of yarn and put each one into one of the small cuts around the outside, pulling them taut and wedging into the cardboard slot. You should have one slot left with no yarn in.



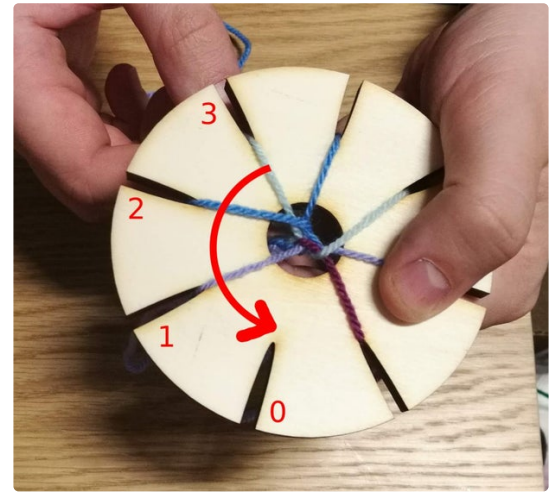
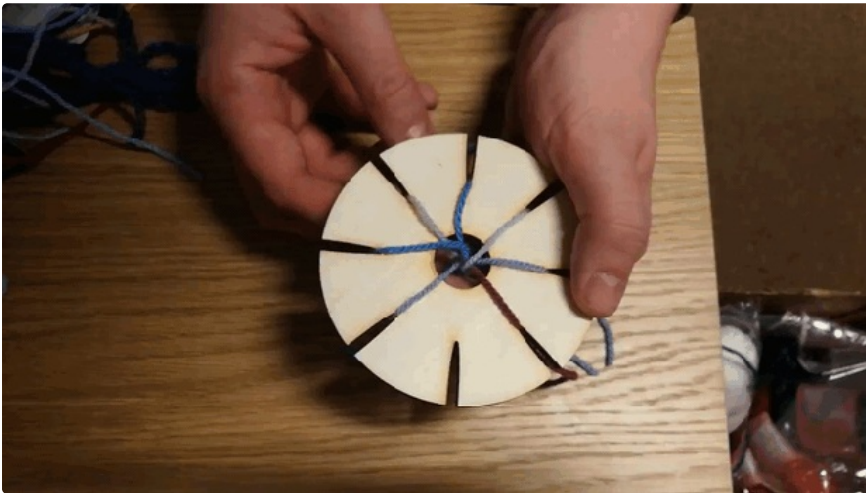


Step 3: Using the Trollden Wheel

Turn the wheel so that the empty slot is facing towards you.

Count clockwise from the empty slot to find the 3rd piece of yarn as shown in the picture. Using your other hand to keep the knotted end in place, move the 3rd piece of yarn into the empty slot.

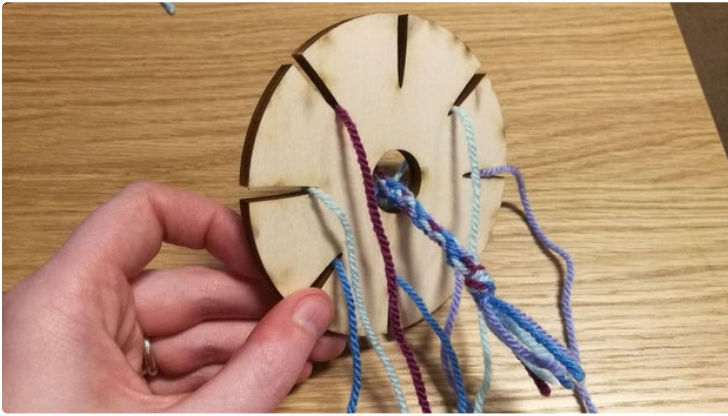
Rotate the wheel counterclockwise until the new empty slot is facing you and repeat.



Step 4: Making Progress

After repeating this method for a minute or two, you should start to see a braid appearing from the back of your wheel.

It might start a bit loose, but will firm up as you practice.



Step 5: Finishing

When you start to run out of yarn, remove the 7 strands from the cardboard and tie them together like we did at the start.

Ta da! Braid complete!



Step 6: Different Patterns

Using different sets of colours can produce some very nice patterns in your braid. Above are two of my favourites.

These make lovely key rings or friendship bracelets.

Happy crafting!

