

# Kongo Gumi: Which Way to Turn the Disk for the Pattern

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There are two ways to make a kongo gumi (sometimes called round braid or spiral braid).

The most common and popular method is **Z Twist**, where the bottom left and top right elements are moved and the disk is rotated counterclockwise or a marudai user works clockwise to the next set of elements. In Jacqui Carey's books, this is the only version of kongo gumi included and Z Twist is the primary or only version of kongo gumi shown in most other instructions or books. Z Twist is the version of the braid used by the pattern generators [www.craftdesignonline.com](http://www.craftdesignonline.com), [www.friendship-bracelets.net](http://www.friendship-bracelets.net), and Janet Nijman's Kumihimo Bead Designer app, among others. Below is a 20 element Z Twist braid.



The other method is called **S Twist**. The bottom right and top left elements are moved, the disk is rotated clockwise or a marudai user works counterclockwise to the next set of elements. This method is far less common than Z Twist and is commonly used to reverse the direction of a braid, creating chevrons. I know of no pattern generators currently using S Twist. Below is an example of S and Z Twist alternating in a 16 element braid.



There are two other ways kongo gumi is made by doing the cord movements of one type and the rotation of the other. I call them Broken Z and Broken S twist. There is at least one popular instructor who teaches broken Z twist braiding online, although she does not describe it using that term.

All of this matters because if the moves of a pattern are not made correctly, the pattern will not turn out. This is less obvious in 8 element braids and patterns that are symmetrical. Recently, the pattern shown below was posted to the Kumihimo facebook group with the user asking how the braid should be created.



It was correctly identified as Z Twist kongo gumi. Other members of the group asked about what would happen if different moves were made, so I decided to make a sampler showing all 4 moves (Z Twist, Broken Z Twist, S Twist, and Broken S Twist) to create a reference as to why Z Twist is the only set of moves that will create this pattern.

Z Twist

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You can see that this braid perfectly matches the pattern. All the diamonds are nice and sharp, and the stitch length is even and straight throughout.

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Broken Z Twist

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This version has the center row of the diamond offset from the other parts and the stitches are uneven as the elements were moved against the grain of the structure.

S Twist

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The stitches are nice and even as the element movement and the structure movement are in harmony, but the pattern is even more broken as the braid is being made in the opposite direction.

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## Broken S Twist Kongo Gumi Rotated Counterclockwise

This variation comes closest to the pattern after the Z Twist, but the edges of the diamonds are not smooth, and the stitches are against the grain of the braid again.

### Conclusion:

If you are using one of the major pattern generators or images made from them that you found online to create a braid, you will not have a successful braid unless you use Z Twist kongo gumi to construct it.

Below are comparison photos of each variation next to Z Twist.

