

Welcome
to the
Ruth Dabritz
Legacy Weaving Project
Introduction to
Weaving on a
Floor Loom

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Introduction

Let's start by getting to know each other. We'll all share our names and a little bit about our past experience with fiber, including weaving, knitting, spinning, crocheting, etc.

As you start becoming a weaver you may want to refer to an introductory weaving book. There are 2 books that we will reference in case you want to read more about a particular step or topic:

- Deborah Chandler, *Learning to Weave*
- Peggy Osterkamp, *Weaving for Beginners*

A note about the weaving process: If you ask 10 different weavers how to do something you'll probably get 15 different answers. Like a lot of things, there are few rights and wrongs in weaving, and there are often several ways to do something. What will be right for you is what works best for you and what is most comfortable. As you weave more and repeat tasks over and over you'll likely find your own ways to do things that work for you. This aspect of weaving is reflected in the books provided to help you learn how to weave, including the ones that we have available for your use. The lesson materials reference two of the more popular general books. There are several books for beginning weavers, and many, many more books dedicated to weaving specific styles or types of weaving. They don't always agree on exactly how to do things, but they all provide methods that work for lots of weavers, and may work well for you, too.

One of the big differences you'll run into as you talk with other weavers is the method or direction of warping the loom. There are 2 basic methods for warping a loom - back-to-front and front-to-back. Both methods have their own fans, and both will result in a loom that's ready to weave. We are teaching you front-to-back. The suggested reference books describe both methods. If you're curious about the other method you can read more about both methods in either of the books.

And speaking of repeating tasks over and over, weaving is full of repetitive motions, so ergonomics is something you'll want to think about. On the Portland Handweavers Guild website we have a handout with specific exercises that will help you address the stresses and strains of repetitive motions. This QR code will take you right to that page: <https://portlandhandweaversguild.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Ergo-Exercises.pdf>



You'll also want to take regular breaks. Sore backs do not make for fun weaving, so stop, get up and move around often to avoid aches and cramps.

A note about the class: The class is designed to be very hands-on, and since we all have different strengths and weaknesses and different levels of experience the class is expected to be very self paced. We'll all start out together, but will quickly reach a point where some will be ready to move on before others. When you're ready to move on to the next step just go through the checklist to make sure you've completed all the steps, then let an instructor know and we'll make sure you know what needs to happen next and will help you get started.

Don't be concerned if others seem to be moving faster than you. This is not a race, and weaving is not a competitive sport. The goal is for you to be comfortable and enjoy yourself as you learn the basics of weaving!

Lastly, as you work through the class you may spot a mistake here or there, or you may find a spot that you find confusing or where a photo might help clarify what to do. If you run into any of these things you can leave comments for us on a copy of this workbook and the handouts, and we'll do our best to fix mistakes and incorporate your suggestions.



Student Workbook



Handouts

Overview of The Weaving Process

Weaving, like most crafts, involves its own unique set of tools and terminology. We'll get started by learning some of the basic terms and getting a quick overview of the weaving process.

Step	Description	Page	Details
1	Planning your project	13	Start your project by planning it. The planning worksheets document the project, and collect information about the warp and weft yarns being used.
2	Wind the warp and secure the cross	21	Measure out the yarn to create the warp chains that you'll use to warp the loom .
3	Sley the reed and install the reed in the beater	35	After measuring the warp you'll sley the reed which begins the process of loading the warp onto the loom.
4	Thread the heddles	40	Pull the individual threads from the reed straight back through the heddles , following the draft for your project.
5	Wind on to the warp beam	45	Secure the warp to the warp beam and wind the warp onto the loom.
6	Tie on to the cloth beam	49	Tie the warp onto the cloth beam in ½ - 1 inch increments, keeping even tension across the warp.
7	Tie-up, check for threading errors, and insert the header	52	Tie up the shafts to the treadles according to the draft and test the tie up . Insert header, and check for errors again.
8	Weave	55	Once all is correct, prepare your shuttle and weave using the weft and treadling described in your draft.
9	Finish your work	63	Cut off the completed weaving. Remove any pins, make any corrections. Wet finish.

Step 1 - Planning Your Project

Most projects will start with some planning, including a little bit of math. You don't want to start working on something and run out of yarn before you're done, so proper planning of your project helps you make sure you have enough fiber to finish your project, and lets you calculate how long your warp needs to be, how many warp ends you need, and how much total yarn you'll need for your project.

For this class, the Legacy Project is providing all the yarns you'll need, so we're not worried about running out of material. Therefore we're going to do some simple math to calculate the length of our warps, which you'll need before you can move on to the next step. For a real project there are complete planning forms available on the Portland Handweavers Guild website that will help you estimate how much fiber you'll need for a project.

References:

- Chandler, *Learning to Weave*
 - Planning a Project, pg. 103 - 110
- Osterkamp, *Weaving for Beginners*
 - Planning a Project, pg. 285 - 298

Our Project - Small Table Mats

For this class we will be weaving small table mats. The mats will measure approximately 9 inches by 9 inches. We'll wind enough warp to complete 4 mats. The first will be **plain weave**, the second will be **twill**. The third and fourth mats will be up to you. We'll also try out different ways to finish the edges of your mats.

As we go through the project worksheet be sure to fill in your worksheet to document your project! During the planning step we'll consider the impact of **shrinkage**, **take-up**, and the need for sampling.

The project worksheet is part of the handouts in the pocket of your workbook.

You'll need to refer to your worksheet throughout the class, so keep it handy.

Step 2 - Winding the Warp and Securing the Cross

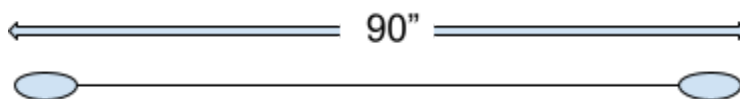
After you've calculated the length and number of ends in your warp, you're ready to start working with your yarn. We'll start by using a warping board to wind our warp - the long threads that go onto the loom. During that process we create and maintain a cross - a spot in the warp where alternating threads take different paths on the board. This cross will give us an orderly set of threads to work with for the next step.

References:

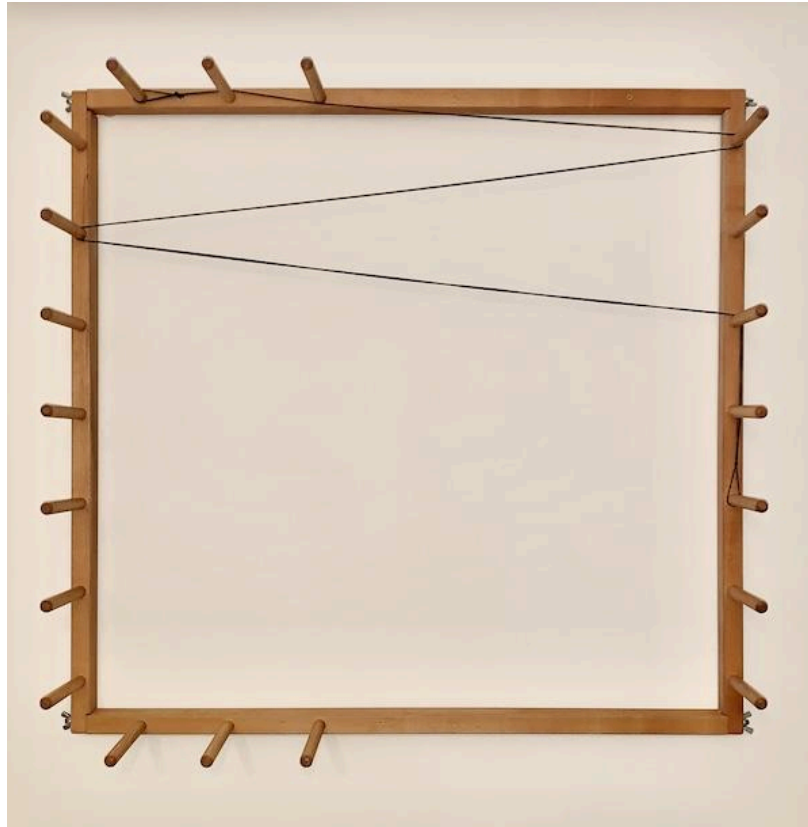
- Chandler, Learning to Weave
 - Warping Front to Back, pg. 26 - 34
- Osterkamp, Weaving for Beginners
 - Front-to-Back Warping, pg. 155 - 162

Measure and Wind the Warp

Using a yardstick to measure, make a guide string the length of the warp that you need. Refer to your worksheet for this measurement. For the class project, the warp is 90 inches long, or 2.5 yards. It's a good idea to make a loop at one end and hold that against the end of the yardstick as you measure. When you have the desired length make another loop so that the total length of your guide thread is 90 inches.



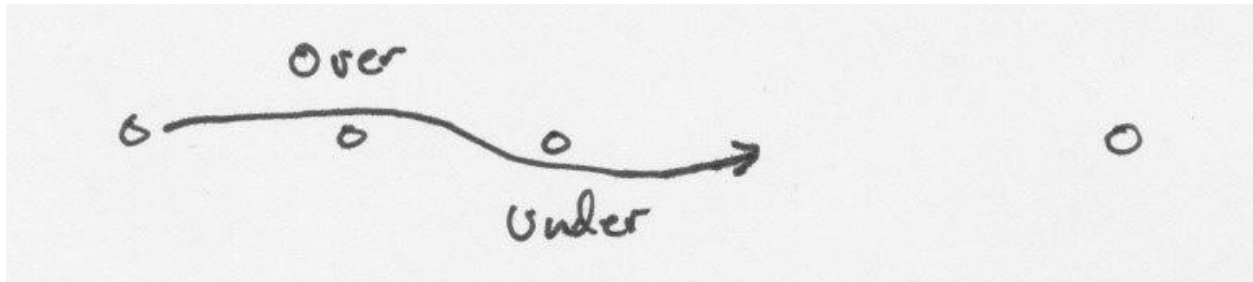
Take a loop from one end of the guide string and slip it over the peg at the upper left corner of the **warping board**; if you're left-handed, start at the upper right peg. Follow across the top of the board with the guide string, going over the second peg and under the third peg and around the peg in the other upper corner. Continue down and across the board, fitting the guide string over the pegs so that the string is all used up. Slip the second loop over a peg so that the string is taut. This establishes the path you'll use to wind your warp and create a warp chain of the desired length for your project.



Running the thread from one end of the guide string to the other will give us one warp thread, and then running the thread back up to the beginning will give us another. So, one complete run with the warp thread down and back gives us 2 threads, or 2 ends for our warp chain.

As we follow this path with the thread we need to create what is called the cross. The cross is a place in the warp chain where individual warp threads pass over each other in an X, usually between the second and third pegs. Creating and maintaining the cross keeps each warp thread in order so that the warp can be put on the loom with greater ease and less risk of tangling.

Begin creating your warp by tying a slip knot to create a loop at the end of your warp thread and placing that loop over the first peg at the top left corner of the warping board where your guide string begins. Then begin to follow the guide string across the top of the board. To create the cross take the thread **OVER** the second peg and **UNDER** the third peg before continuing to the upper right corner of the board.



Now, take your warp thread and continue along the path of your guide string down to the peg at the other end of the guide. Loop around the peg at the end of the guide string and follow that path back up to the top. As you come around the peg at the top right corner you'll repeat the process from the start, going **OVER** the next peg and **UNDER** the peg after that before returning to the starting peg.



By always going **OVER** the first peg you encounter and **UNDER** the second you'll create that cross that we need to keep things in order. This may be confusing at first, but if you remember that the pattern is **OVER - UNDER** as you go past those pegs you'll be fine. If you find that you have 2 threads next to each other that take the same path stop and ask for help. Your cross should look like this:



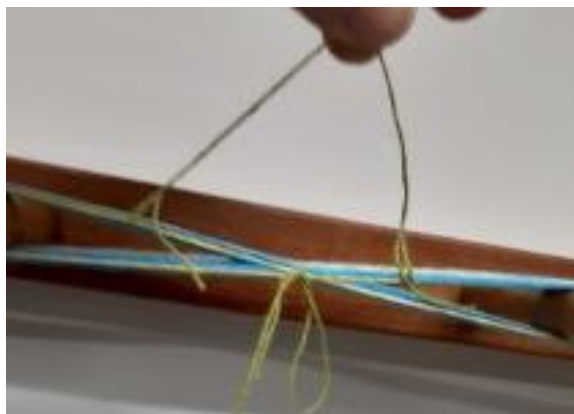
Continue to measure the warp down and back the full length of the guide string, remembering to keep the warp cross. **Remember that the measurement of the warp down and back counts as two (2) ends.**

For our project we need 120 ends for our warp. Rather than wind all 120 ends together on the warping board we'll wind 2 groups of 60 threads each. This will give you 2 chances to practice this part of the process.

After winding 12 ends, use a pair of **thrums** as a counting string to mark a section of the warp. Simply tie the thrums together with a slip knot at one end, then wrap the 2 thrums around the 12 ends in the bundle at the cross with a simple overhand or half knot. The knot doesn't need to be tight, and in fact should be a little loose so you can untie it easily later. We simply want to group the threads into bundles to aid in slaying the reed in the next step. Our project calls for 12 ends per inch, so each 12 threads will be one inch of the total width of the project. Use the same counting string for each new bundle of 12 ends until you have a warp chain of 60 ends which will give us 5 inches of warp on the loom. If you miss the cross, stop and ask for help. Don't unwind the warp. Also, be careful where you count threads. Count your threads at the cross to make sure you are getting threads from both passes with the warp. After completing the last bundle tie a half bow in the counting string.



When you have wound your warp with 60 ends as needed you'll secure the cross by tying a "suitcase handle" with a thrum on the top of the warp on either side of the cross. The suitcase handle is a string with one end tied around the threads going over the first peg creating the cross and the other end tied around the threads going over the second peg in the cross. With the threads on either side of the cross bundled like this you can use the handle to move the chain to the table where you'll slay the reed.



Next, secure each end of the warp by tying a thrum tightly around the beginning and ending loops.



Tie a **choke tie** securely around the threads about a foot beyond the cross with a half bow. Note that with longer warps or with warps that are slippery or otherwise prone to tangle you may want to add more choke ties to keep things neat. We now have a bundled warp with a secured cross that we can work with.



To make the warp shorter and easier to handle you can chain the warp as you take it off the warping board. To chain the warp, create a loop at the end of the warp, then reach through the loop and pull the thread bundle further up the warp through the loop and create a new loop. Repeat the process of pulling the warp threads further up the warp bundle through each successive loop until you reach the choke tie near the cross.



Secure the warp chain to the choke by untying the bow and then tying it around the last loop of the chain, again with a half bow. You can now remove the chain from the warping board.

When done with **both** warp bundles lay the chains out on a table. Lift the suitcase handles to show the cross. Slip the **lease sticks** into the chain, one on either side of the cross, and tie the ends of the lease sticks together. This secures and preserves the cross for the next step in the process.

Step 3 - Sleying the Reed and Installing the Reed in the Beater

The first step in moving the warp to the loom is sleying the reed. (See a diagram of the loom and its parts on page 42.) This is where you find out why we created the cross on the warping board.

References:

- Chandler, *Learning to Weave*
 - Warping Front to Back, pg. 34 - 38
- Osterkamp, *Weaving for Beginners*
 - Front to Back Warping, pg. 160 - 166

Sley the Reed

In a fully dressed loom, each warp end is tied to the warp beam, runs up and over the back beam, through the heddles, through the reed, over the front beam and is tied to the cloth beam. There are many ways to get the loom to this state. The method taught in this class is one variation of dressing the loom referred to as front to back warping.

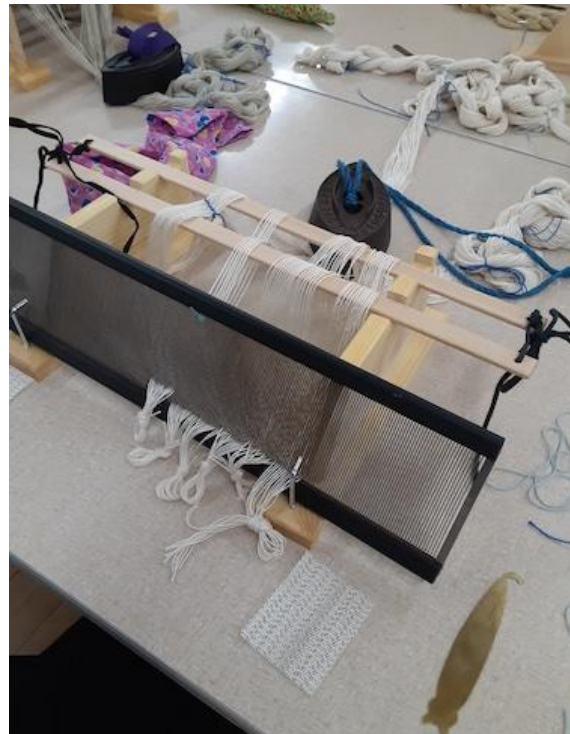
In this next step we prepare the warp to be placed on the loom by running each warp end through the dents in the reed. This process of pulling the warp threads through the reed is referred to as **sleying the reed**. To make this easier, we'll remove the reed from the beater and move it to a **reed stand** that we can place on a table. (See a diagram of the loom and its parts on page 42.)

Start by removing the reed from the beater and placing it in the reed stand. Place the warp behind the reed with the end loop closest to the reed, the lease sticks resting in the notches in the reed stand blocks, and the chain curled up towards the back of the table. Make sure you have at least a foot or so of warp at the looped end before the lease sticks that you can work with as you pull the ends through the reed. Weigh down the chains with some weights - heavy books work well for this - to keep them secure. Starting with one of the warp chains you can cut the loop end where the knot was tied. This will create the individual ends to be pulled through the reed. You can also remove the suitcase handle so that the warp threads can be carefully spread out over the lease sticks. **Exercise caution with the warp until the warp ends have been pulled through the reed and tied in bundles in front of the reed. If the warp ends are pulled backwards and beyond the lease sticks you will lose the cross.**

It's best to center the warp in the reed. To facilitate centering the warp there's a thread tied to the center **dent** in the reed. Untie the bundling string on the first warp chain and starting from the center of the reed use a **sley hook** to reach through the empty dent in the reed, hook the first warp end from the cross behind the reed, then pull the warp thread through the reed, leaving a few inches of warp thread in front of the reed. Then pull the next thread in the cross through the next empty dent in the reed. Continue through the bundle, taking each thread **in order** from the cross and pulling it through the next empty dent in the reed. As you work across the reed, be sure to tie groups of warp ends in a slip knot, 12 in a bundle, to prevent the warp from being accidentally pulled back out of the reed. It's also a good idea to check the dents in the reed and each of the threads in the warp as you tie the knots to ensure that you haven't skipped a dent, or accidentally placed 2 warps ends in a single dent.

Note that sleying from the center won't work if you have an uneven number of warp chains or if they have different numbers of ends.

Proceed through the remaining bundles in that chain, tying a slip knot in each bundle as it is sleied. Sley one of the warps chains from the center to the edge, then do the other chain, again from the center out to the edge.



After sleying the reed it's a good idea to do a visual inspection and make sure that the threads all run parallel to each other from the front of the reed, through the reed and out beyond the lease sticks. If there are crossed threads it means you didn't take those threads in the correct order through the reed, and you'll want to correct that before proceeding.

When the reed is completely sleyed, use thrums to attach the lease sticks to the ends of the reed. There's a hole in the end of each stick that you can use to tie the sticks to the reed. Then you'll take the sleyed reed to the loom and place it in the beater. Install the reed into the beater frame with the slip knots facing the heddles and the warp chains on the front beam. Center the reed in the beater bar so that your warp (which is centered in the reed) is centered in the loom. Once the reed is in the beater bar and properly centered, secure the top of the beater bar and tighten the wing nuts.

A note about reeds

Reeds come in various lengths and sizes. Reeds are measured in terms of the number of slots/dents per inch or centimeter (cm) depending on whether the reed uses a metric or imperial system. Most reeds available for looms in the US use the imperial system (dents per inch), as we do in this class. So, a 10 dent reed has 10 dents per inch, a 12 dent reed has 12 dents per inch, etc. Our project has 12 ends per inch, so a 12 dent reed makes sleying the reed easy and straightforward. At times you may need to accommodate something other than 1 to 1 sleying. There are books and websites that can provide guidance on how to accommodate these situations, for example 12 ends per inch in an 8 dent reed.

Step 4 - Thread the Heddles

After slewing the reed we moved the warp to the loom. Here you'll put the reed back into the beater and thread the warp ends through the heddles.

References:

- Chandler, *Learning to Weave*
 - Warping Front to Back, pg. 38 - 44
- Osterkamp, *Weaving for Beginners*
 - Front to Back Warping, pg. 166 - 168

Threading the Heddles

When the reed is sleyed you're ready to start threading the heddles. Before threading you would normally count the number of heddles needed for each shaft and then count the heddles on the loom to ensure that you have the heddles you'll need installed on each of the shafts. (See a diagram of the loom and its parts on page 42.) The classroom looms are set up with enough heddles on each shaft for the draft we're using, but if this were a different draft we might need to move heddles from one shaft to another.

Threading the heddles can be done with a threading hook, or just by using your fingers to pull the warp end through the eye of the heddle.

Though you don't have to move heddles, you will find that each shaft has more heddles than you need. Some weavers prefer to count out the heddles so that there are an even number of unused heddles on each side of the loom, while some simply push all the heddles to one side and pull one at a time as they thread. Having extra heddles on both sides may help facilitate fixing threading errors if you misthread the heddles. Another reason for balancing the unused heddles is that a shaft with too many unused heddles on one side will be unbalanced, especially if the heddles are heavy. On some looms and in some situations the unbalanced shaft might tilt slightly to one side making the shed uneven. The empty heddles may rattle a bit as you weave, so clips are available to help hold them to the side to reduce the noise and keep them out of the way.

To make threading the heddles easier the back beam of the Wolf Pup loom is removable.

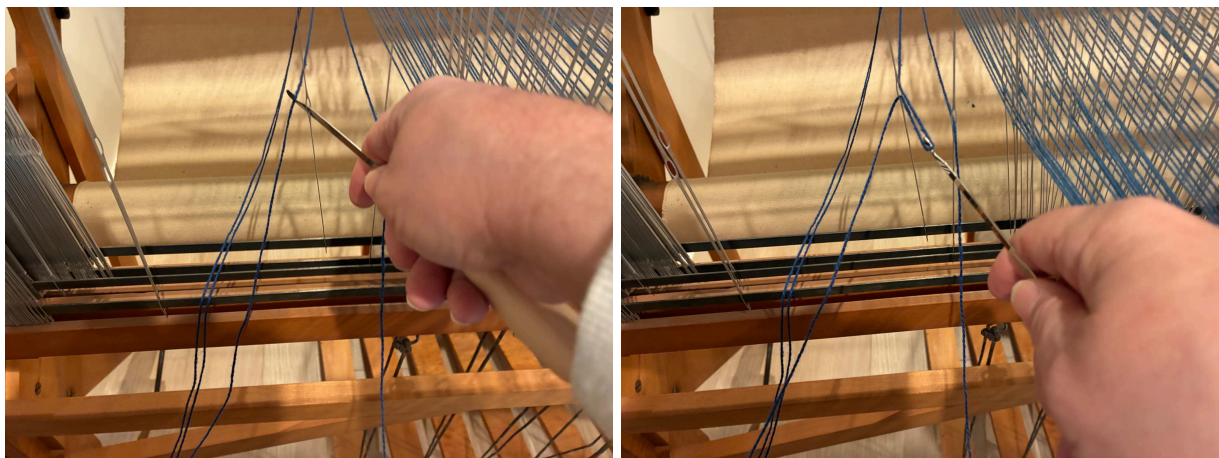
For this project we recommend pulling all the heddles to the center, then split somewhere close to the middle and push each half to the sides. Pull 15 heddles from each side, and they will be the 30 heddles you need on each shaft. Install the clips on the shafts to keep the extra heddles off to each side.

Heddles come in a variety of materials and styles including metal, thread, or Texsolv. The Wolf Pup looms come with metal inserted eye heddles. Inserted eye heddles have an oval metal eye that is angled slightly. The direction of the angle is significant and the desired angle depends on whether you are right- or left-handed and whether you use a hook or thread by hand.

As you thread the the heddles be careful to insert the hook at the same angle as the eye to avoid twisting the eye. You'll also want to ensure that the warp threads come straight through the loom and don't wrap around another heddle, and of course that they are threaded in the correct order. Warp ends should be parallel to each other and not cross at any point between the reed and the back beam.

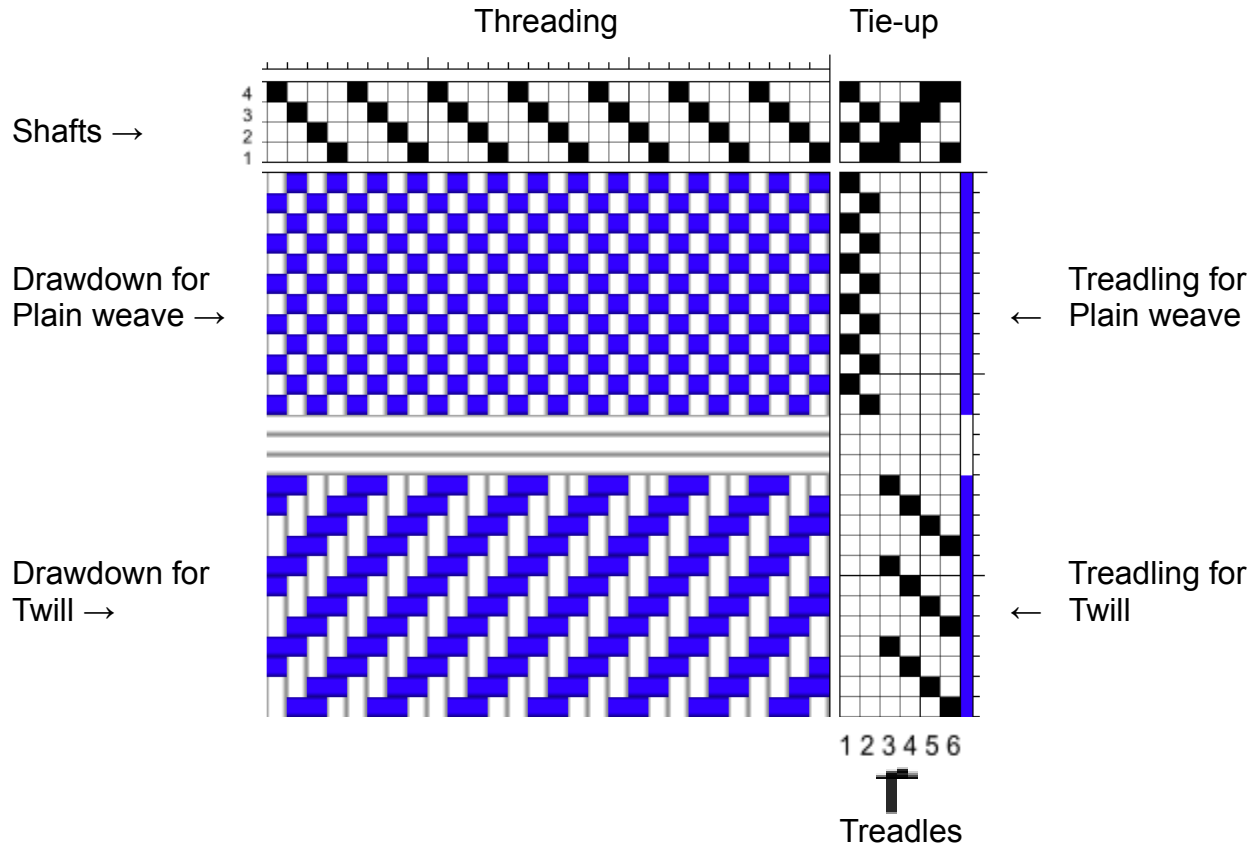
One by one, undo the knot from the bundle of threads you are working on and thread the heddles, one end per heddle, using a **heddle hook** or by simply feeding the end through the eye with your fingers. Pull the heddles needed for each bundle into the center of the shaft as you work across the warp. This allows for an easy check to help ensure that you've threaded the correct number of heddles for each bundle before moving to the next bundle. For this project, the heddles are threaded in shaft order - 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4, with shaft 1 being the shaft **closest to the reed** and the weaver during weaving. This is referred to as a straight draw. This will allow us to weave both plain weave and a twill pattern with the same threading.

When all the threads of the bundle are threaded through the heddles, line up the ends evenly and tie a small overhand knot close to the end. Go to the next bundle, repeating until all 10 of the 1 inch bundles are threaded. Again, as with sleying the reed, it's good to check the threading before you tie each bundle.



Reading a Draft

The instructions for weaving a pattern are typically provided in a draft. For our project we're using the following draft.



The draft has 4 parts:

- A visual depiction of the pattern being woven called the drawdown.
- Threading instructions to show how to thread the warp in the heddles.
- Tie-up instructions for connecting the shafts to the treadles.
- Treading instructions for how to weave the pattern.

Sadly, drafts are not all done the same way. Drafts might be written assuming a rising shed loom, like the Wolf Pup you will use in class. Other times the draft might be written assuming a sinking shed. In addition, many Scandinavian drafts number the shafts and treadles differently, a sinking shed loom is assumed, and treadling starts at the bottom, rather than the top. It's always best to read the text accompanying any draft to determine the assumptions made about the loom and adjust accordingly.

For a good overview of reading a draft, see this video by Jane Stafford:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qD6bKAhIDuI>.



Step 5 - Wind on to the Warp Beam

You have your warp threads going through the reed and the heddles. Now it's time to start securing it to the loom. First, you'll attach it to the warp beam, then wind on to the beam, inserting paper along the way to keep the layers of warp threads separated. This helps ensure even tension across the warp.

References:

- Chandler, *Learning to Weave*
 - Warping Front to Back, pg. 44 - 51
- Osterkamp, *Weaving for Beginners*
 - Front to Back Warping, pg. 169 - 175

Connecting and Winding Onto the Warp Beam

After threading the heddles you're ready to connect to and wind onto the warp beam. Do this by **snitching** each 12-thread bundle onto a stick using a larks head knot, spacing the bundles across the stick so that the width of space occupied on the stick matches the space used in the reed.



Then tie the stick to the back apron stick with strong ties evenly spaced across the sticks. There should be at least three (3) ties. Then reinstall the back beam that we removed before threading the heddles and carefully wind the warp beam until the stick is touching the warp beam, making sure that the stick is centered on the beam. You'll need to step lightly on the brake release as you crank the beam to allow the beam to

move smoothly and freely. Note that the crank must be engaged in order to roll the warp beam forward.

Now, pull the warp back to the front of the loom until you have consistent tension across the warp. It's a good idea to strum the warp, pulling each section firmly to tension the warp bundles, then pull the beater bar forward to the breast beam.

Slowly start winding the warp onto the warp beam with heavy paper or some other medium between each warp layer to keep the layers separate, one rotation at a time. Keeping the layers separate is important to ensure that the tension remains consistent across the warp. Strum and tension each bundle in the warp with every rotation of the warp beam crank handle. As needed, return to the front of the loom, strumming and tugging each bundle to retain consistent tension across the warp, and pull the beater bar forward to the breast beam. You may need to strum or comb the warp a few inches as you pull the beater forward. Continue to wind on, carefully removing the choke tie when it approaches the reed, until you have about 12 inches in front of the reed and the loops in the warp reach the front beam.

Be very careful to stop winding and return to the front of the loom if the beater bar is pulled to castle while winding on to the warp beam. Winding further when the beater is against the castle may result in broken warp threads or a damaged reed.

Step 6 - Tie on to the Cloth Beam

You have one end of the warp secured to the warp stick which is then tied to the warp beam, and you've wound most of it onto the warp beam. Now it's time to secure the other end to the cloth beam. You'll need to not only tie the ends of the warp to the beam, but you'll also need to check and adjust the tension on the warp. Even tension across the whole width of the warp is the goal.

References:

- Chandler, *Learning to Weave*
 - Warping Front to Back, pg. 51 - 54
- Osterkamp, *Weaving for Beginners*
 - Front to Back Warping, pg. 175 - 176

When the warp is wound onto the warp beam with about 12 inches of thread left in front of the reed it's time to tie on to the cloth beam. Push the beater back away from the front beam then carefully cut the end loops in front of the reed and remove the lease sticks.

Bring the rod from the cloth beam up and over the front beam towards the beater. Tie the warp onto the cloth beam rod in 1/2 - 1 inch increments using a larks head with the first half of a surgeon's knot. (**See Appendix B to see how to tie a larks head knot.**) Some find it easier to start in the middle and work out, while others work from the edges, alternating left and right until they reach the center and all warp threads are tied. Both approaches work well to keep the rod from flopping around. Try to keep even tension across the warp. After all warp threads are tied to the rod check and readjust tension on the bundles as needed. The goal is to have nice, even tension across the entire warp. Be particularly mindful of the tension on the edges.

Now is a good time to review how the ratchet dog, ratchet gear, and ratchet advance lever work. The ratchet dog can be lifted to allow the cloth beam to spin freely when pulling the cloth beam apron over the front beam. Note also that the ratchet advance lever simply hangs from the gear until lifted to engage the gear.

Note that the shorter your ends when tying on to the cloth beam the less waste you will have. But you also have to be careful to leave enough warp to tie the knots and bows. Lastly, don't tie your knots too tight. If you find threading errors now you'll need to untie the affected bundles to rethread as needed. **Hint:** releasing the tension on the warp can help make untying bundles a little easier.

Tying on to the Cloth Beam



Split the group of threads and carry over and around the front stick



Make a surgeon's knot



Cinch down the knot by pulling the ends towards the heddles then out to the sides



Tie a half bow (easy to undo later if needed)

Step 7 - Tie Up, Check for Threading Errors, and Insert the Header

Your warp is on the loom now, and you're almost ready to start weaving. But first you need to check the draft and tie up the shafts to the treadles, then check for any threading errors. (See a diagram of the loom and its parts on page 42.) If there are any problems you'll need to fix those before you can actually start weaving. The last thing you need is a header - some scrap yarns inserted in the warp to spread the warp threads out evenly and remove any gaps from the bundles tied to the cloth beam.

References:

- Chandler, *Learning to Weave*
 - Warping Front to Back, pg. 55, 92 - 96
- Osterkamp, *Weaving for Beginners*
 - Front to Back Warping, pg. 176 - 179, 168

You're almost done dressing the loom, but before you can start to weave you have to attach the shafts to the treadles. The draft provides instructions for these connections, referred to as the tie up. You do this using cords to connect the treadles to the lamms controlling the shafts. (See the loom diagram on page 42.)

After connecting the treadles to the lamms you test the tie up by stepping on each treadle to make sure the correct shafts are going up and that you have an adequate shed. Make sure all the shafts are clear of threads, paper, scissors or any other weaving materials. Step on a treadle, check the shed, find and correct errors, and repeat as needed until all errors are corrected. Each shaft should lift smoothly and raise only the threads in the heddles on that shaft. In addition, they should run parallel to each other, not crossing each other within a shaft or with other shafts. Ask for help if your shed seems narrow or if the shafts appear to be stuck or difficult to raise.

After all errors have been corrected make one last check and adjust warp tension as needed. When the tension is even, tie the second half of the surgeon's knot or a half bow without adjusting the tension to secure the warp.

Weave in the header using scrap yarn, cloth strips, or bundles of thrums. The header spreads the warp and removes the gaps that appear in the warp from where we tied the bundles to the rod connected to the cloth beam. This is often done with a yarn that is thicker than the warp and a different color from the weft you'll be using. For this project we can simply double up the threads that we'll use for weaving. Start by positioning the rod from the cloth beam a couple inches from the front beam, between the front beam and the reed, and push the reed/beater bar back towards the heddles and away from the cloth beam rod. Step on the first treadle, which will raise shafts 1 and 3, and insert

the header into the shed, positioning it a couple inches away from the rod. Do not beat. Now step on the second treadle to raise shafts 2 and 4 and insert the next section of header into the shed a couple inches away from the first. Without beating, step on the first treadle again and place the next section of header into the shed a couple inches away from the second. Pull the beater forward and draw the three passes together. This will spread the warp threads out more evenly and remove the gaps. If needed you can repeat this process until the gaps have been removed and there is uniform spacing between the warp threads. (Note: in the example below a strip of cloth cut from an old sheet has been used for the header.)



You are now ready to weave.

Step 8 - Weaving

Finally, you're ready to weave! Time to wind a bobbin, insert it into a shuttle, and start weaving. The draft will tell you what treadles to use and in what order. Keep an eye on that beat. Remember, for this project you're placing the weft into the warp. Beating is for rugs and other projects that require a sturdier cloth.

References:

- Chandler, *Learning to Weave*
 - Warping Front to Back, pg. 55, 92 - 96
- Osterkamp, *Weaving for Beginners*
 - Front to Back Warping, pg. 176 - 179, 168

Weaving

Pick your weft yarn, select a shuttle and wind thread onto your bobbin as shown by your instructor, then begin weaving your first mat.

Mat 1

Weave the first mat using the weft thread and treadling described in your worksheet for a plain weave cloth. Remember from our project planning that weaving involves take-up. To minimize draw-in you will need to provide more weft than you might expect to accommodate the extra weft needed. Work with the instructor on an angle or bubble to minimize draw-in.

At some point you'll need to advance the warp, moving the woven cloth forward and onto the cloth beam and bringing more unwoven warp into position for weaving. You'll do this by loosening the tension on the warp using the ratchet handle on the cloth beam, then gently release the brake using the brake pedal. Crank the cloth beam to advance the warp, then re-engage the brake and use the ratchet handle on the cloth beam to reassert tension on the warp. Looms have an area that's the sweet spot for weaving. Your instructor can help you find that area on the classroom looms.

As you weave, notice how the cloth looks. From the planning worksheet we specified the expected number of picks per inch when beating in the weft threads. After weaving a couple inches count the number of picks in an inch of your cloth. It doesn't need to be exact, but the closer you get to the specified pick count the more the pattern in the cloth will be balanced. It may be helpful to think 'placing the weft' instead of 'beating the weft.'

Remember to get up, stretch, and move around once in a while!

After you have woven 10 inches, cut and tuck the tail then insert spacers to allow enough thread for you to tie knots for fringe for the first mat, some leeway for straightening the fringe, and an inch for the fringe at the start of the next piece before moving on to the second mat.

Mat 2

Weave the second mat using the weft thread and treadling described in your worksheet for a twill cloth. Because the weft will sometimes not catch the outside thread on the return into the cloth we add floating selvages to the warp. To do this measure 2 more warp threads. Run each thread through the reed and down along each side of the warp. Since these are **floating** warp threads they will not be threaded through heddles. Use a straight pin to secure one end to the cloth, then wind the remaining thread behind the back beam onto a weighted item and allow the weighted warp thread to hang over the back beam.

When weaving with floating selvages the warp threads on the sides are in a neutral position and do not move as the shafts are raised and lowered. For each pick you'll pass the shuttle **OVER** the floating selvedge warp thread as the shuttle enters the shed, and then go **UNDER** the floating selvedge warp thread as the shuttle exits the shed. This will ensure that the warp threads on the edge are always engaged and you won't have floats along the very edges of your cloth.

How firmly or loosely you beat the weft into the cloth becomes more important when weaving twills. If you desire a 45 degree angle to the twill pattern then you will need to strive for a balanced weave by having the same number of picks per inch as there are ends per inch in the reed. If you beat too firmly the weft threads will compact and cause the angle to be too shallow. If you beat too loosely the weft will have too much spacing and the pattern will be too steep. It is often helpful to have a folded piece of paper to compare with to see how steep and straight your pattern appears in the cloth.

For the second mat use a hemstitch to finish the edges. After hemstitching the entire edge of the piece you can needle weave the tail back into the cloth. After weaving and adding the hemstitch at the end, add spacers before moving on to the next piece.

Mats 3 and 4

For the third and fourth mats you can choose either plain weave or twill, or identify a pattern from one of the pattern books available. You may also want to introduce a second shuttle and weave stripes. If needed, adjust the tie ups to support a new pattern. Weave the mats using the weft thread and treadling as needed. For these mats use whatever method you desire for finishing the edges.

Hemstitching

Hemstitching is one way to finish the edge of a woven piece. There are several ways to hemstitch, and just as we said at the beginning, the correct way to hemstitch is the one that works best for you. We'll teach you one that many people use.

First, decide how many picks you want within the hemstitching and how many warp ends in a bundle. For this project we're using 4 warp ends per bundle and stitching 3 picks into the cloth.

Right to left is usually easier for people who hold the needle in the right hand, left to right is usually easier for people who hold the needle in the left hand, but use whichever one is more comfortable for you.

At the beginning of the piece, measure a tail of the weft yarn 4-5 times the width of the warp, coming out of the side where stitching will begin, and then weave the three picks that will lie within the hemstitching. Set the shuttle aside and proceed to hemstitch across the warp using a blunt tapestry needle and the long tail.

On your project sheet you might want to record the number of picks, number of ends in a bundle, and what style of hemstitching you're using for each item so you can use the same numbers at the end of the piece, which is significant if it's long and you might not remember.

At the end of the piece it helps to lay in a thread of a contrasting color before you weave the last three picks. Then measure out a tail of the weft yarn 4-5 times the width of the warp, coming out the side where stitching will begin. Cut the yarn from the shuttle then proceed to hemstitch across the warp using a blunt tapestry needle and the long tail using the contrasting thread as your marker for which picks to include in the stitch.

The details for hemstitching including photos of each step are in your handouts starting on page 11. To see a demonstration of hemstitching go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-7bS90Sgk2o>



Step 9 - Finishing Your Work

You're done weaving. Now what? Well, this is where you cut your work off the loom and finish your pieces. Finishing can mean different things depending on what you're making and who you ask. But remember - it's not finished until it's wet-finished.

References:

- Chandler, *Learning to Weave*
 - 'Getting Familiar', pg. 15 - 21
- Osterkamp, *Weaving for Beginners*
 - 'The Basics', pg. 3 - 12

When you've finished weaving your pieces you'll release the brake and the ratchet dog to release tension on the warp and remove the weights from your floating selvages. Cut the warp at a spot in the warp that allows for sufficient warp to finish the last piece. If doing a knotted fringe you'll want to leave enough warp to tie the knots. If you've hemstitched the last piece then you can leave a shorter fringe with an inch or two extra to allow for trimming after wet finishing. After cutting the warp from the warp beam in front of the heddles you can grasp both sides of the piece and pull to unspool the cloth from the cloth beam.

After taking the project off the loom the last step is wet finishing, sometimes referred to as just finishing. Wet finishing allows the fibers to full and relax into their final position. Finishing will vary depending on the fibers used in your project, but will usually include soaking in water with a small amount of detergent, agitating the fibers, and drying. Some fibers including natural wools and alpaca may also include a step called fulling.

Resources for Further Learning

Books and Magazines

- Deborah Chandler, *Learning to Weave*
- Peggy Osterkamp, *Weaving for Beginners*
- Anne Dixon, *The Handweaver's Pattern Directory*
- Marguerite Davison, *A Handweaver's Pattern Book*
- Handwoven Magazine
- Little Looms Magazine
- Weft Magazine
- Heddlecraft

Local

- Portland Handweavers Guild (portlandhandweaversguild.org)
- Multnomah Arts Center
- Ruthie's Weaving Studio
- Fiber Rhythm Craft & Design
- Eugene Textile Center
- Individual instructors listed on PHG website

Online

- Jane Stafford Textiles School of Weaving
- Kelly Casanova Weaving Lessons
- The Handweaving Academy
- Handweavers Guild of America
- ANWG - Association of Northwest Weaver' Guilds
- WeGO - Weaving Guilds of Oregon
- Schacht Spindle Company's School of Textile Arts
- Handweaving.net

Conferences

- Black Sheep Gathering
- Oregon Flock and Fiber Festival
- Convergence (Handweavers Guild of America)
- ANWG (Association of Northwest Weavers' Guilds)
- CNCH (Conference of Northern California Handweavers)

Glossary

Apron

A heavy cloth or set of cords attached to the warp and cloth beams to which the warp (at the back of the loom) and woven cloth (at the front of the loom) are attached and provides an extension to help reduce loom waste.

Beam

A beam runs from side to side on the loom. Typically there are 2 in the front and 2 in the back. In the front there is a rotating beam called the cloth beam which is where the woven cloth collects, and a stationary beam, sometimes called the front or breast beam, which holds the warp threads up in a parallel plane when the shafts are idle. In the back there is a rotating beam called the warp beam which is where the warp threads are wound and held, and a stationary beam called the back beam which holds the warp threads up in a parallel plane when the shafts are idle. On some looms the front or back beams may be removable to aid in warping the loom.

Beaming or Rolling On

Beaming (or “to beam the loom” or “rolling on”) is the act of connecting the warp to the warp beam and then rolling the warp onto the warp beam, using individual sticks or paper between layers of warp to ensure even tension.

Beat, Beating

Beat refers to the evenness (even vs. uneven) and force (heavy vs. light) by which the weft is pushed into the warp. Beating is the action of pushing the weft into the warp to get the desired design in the textile.

Beater

The beater is used to place the weft within the warp while weaving. In many looms the reed is mounted in a frame and can be used as a beater. In a rigid heddle loom the plastic heddles are used as the beater.

Bobbin

A bobbin is a spool that holds weft thread and fits inside a boat shuttle.

Brake

A device on a loom to hold the warp beam steady while the warp is under tension. The brake can be released as needed, allowing the weaver to advance the warp and wind the woven cloth onto the cloth beam.

Brake Release Pedal

The brake is released, allowing the warp beam to move freely, by pressing on the brake pedal. The brake pedal on the classroom looms is to the right of the treadles.

Castle

The castle is the section of the loom that encases and surrounds the shafts on the loom.

Chain, Warp Chain

The chain, also referred to as a bout, is a set of warp threads that have been measured and prepared for installation on a loom for weaving. The chain contains the cross and is often shortened in order to make the entire warp more manageable and easier to manipulate.

Chaining

Chaining is a method of shortening the warp chain to make it shorter and easier to manage.

Choke Tie

A tie placed securely, with a bow rather than a knot, around the warp threads to secure the chain bundle.

Cross

A place in the warp chain where individual warp threads pass each other in an “X” so that each thread is locked in order and the warp can be put onto the loom with less risk of tangling. The cross is held in place by ties and lease sticks until the warp has been beamed and the cross is no longer necessary.

Dent

The long slots in a reed that the warp threads pass through are referred to as dents. Reeds are sometimes referred to by the number of slots per inch in a reed, such as “a 15-dent reed” which refers to a reed with 15 slots per inch. European equipment uses the metric system, specifying the number of dents per 10 centimeters (approximately 4”).

Draft

The draft is the set of instructions that tells you how to prepare and weave a cloth to create a specific pattern.

Draw-in

Draw-in is a narrowing of the cloth from the width in the reed. Some amount of draw-in is natural, and the amount of draw-in will depend on weave structure, sett, and yarns being used as well as one’s weaving technique. Too much draw-in can lead to abrading warp threads on the edges, and potentially broken warp threads.

Dressing the Loom

The entire process of placing the warp onto the loom (to include a sleyed reed, threaded heddles, filled warp beam, and attachment to the cloth beam).

Ends per inch (epi) or Sett

The number of warp threads per inch as measured in the reed. Ends per inch is dependent on the type of thread being used, the type of weave structure being woven, and the desired qualities in the finished cloth.

Floating Selvedge

Floating selvedges (not to be confused with floats) are extra warp threads added to ensure that the weft will always have a warp thread on the very edges of the cloth to go around before returning back into the cloth. Since they are floating they will run through the reed but will not run through any heddles. Floating selvedges are weighted and hang off the back of the loom to ensure proper tension.

Floats

Floats are the lengths of thread that lie on the surface before being tied back into the cloth. Floats are common in twills and other patterns. Long floats are typically not desired as they can snag on things as cloth is being handled.

Guide String

A guide string is a piece of yarn the length of the warp, contrasting with the warp yarns, to show the path of the warp on a warping board.

Header

The header is yarn, thin sticks, paper strips, or other material that is initially woven into the warp to spread the warp threads evenly across the loom, and provides the weaver with a firm, even surface to work from. It can also provide an initial test of correct threading and tie-up before weaving with the desired weft.

Heddle

The heddle is a component that can be found in the heddle frame of floor and table looms to shed the warp threads more easily. Each warp thread will need to go through the eye of a single heddle before you start weaving. The heddle can be made of flat metal, wire, or plastic (Texsolv). A group of heddles in a frame is referred to as a shaft. A rigid heddle is typically made of plastic set in a wood frame.

Heddle (or Threading) Hook

A heddle hook is a thin metal or plastic hand-held device, usually longer and with a smaller hook than a sley hook, used to pull warp threads through the eye of a heddle. A sley hook may have one end smaller than the other so that it can also serve as a heddle hook.

Lamms

Bars between the treadles and the shafts. Cords from the lamms are connected to the treadles to allow the treadles to move the shafts as needed to create a pattern according to a draft.

Lease Sticks

Lease sticks are a pair of thin wooden sticks used to preserve the cross in the warp during the process of attaching the warp to the loom, which is referred to as dressing the loom.

Loom

A loom is a device used for weaving. There are many different types of looms used by handweavers; you'll be using a jack floor loom in this class. The three basic types of floor looms are jack, countermarche, and counterbalance. Other common types of handweaving looms include table, rigid heddle, inkle, backstrap, pin, frame, band, dobby, and tapestry looms. Looms are used to hold warp threads under tension and allow the weaver to manipulate the warp threads to allow a weft thread to be introduced, thereby creating cloth.

Loom Waste

Warp that could not be woven or used in the woven piece as fringe. For example, warp used to tie knots and that is behind the reed cannot be used for weaving and is wasted.

Pick

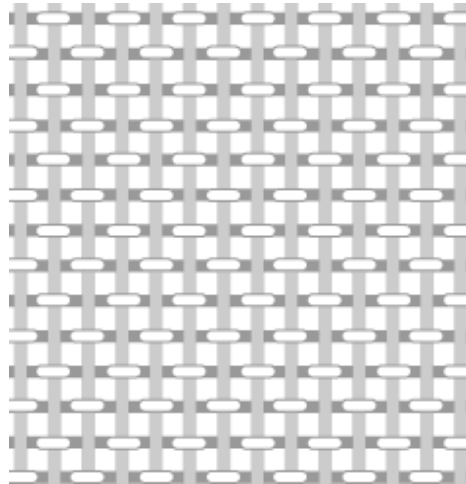
A single pass of a weft thread through the shed.

Picks per inch (ppi)

Picks per inch refers to the number of weft threads in an inch of cloth as measured in the woven cloth while it is still on the loom. Just as with ends per inch, picks per inch is dependent on the type of thread being used, the type of weave structure being woven, and the desired qualities in the finished cloth.

Plain Weave

This is the simplest weave structure/weaving technique and is generally the first learned. To create this pattern, the weft thread passes over and then under the warp thread without skipping any threads. Sometimes the plain weave is also referred to as tabby or linen weave. It creates a sturdy and long-lasting fabric.



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Ratchet Dog

The ratchet dog is a lever that catches the ratchet gear on the cloth beam to keep it from being pulled or moved while the warp is under tension.

Ratchet Gear

The ratchet gear is connected to the cloth beam and works with the ratchet dog to hold the cloth beam in place while the warp is under tension.

Ratchet Advance Lever

The ratchet advance lever is used to advance the warp onto the cloth beam. Be sure to step on the brake release pedal to loosen the brake when advancing the warp.

Reed

The reed is a piece of equipment that keeps a set width between the warp threads, and which is used for placing the weft.

Reed Stand

A reed stand holds the reed off the loom to facilitate slewing the reed.

Selvages

Selvages are the edges of the cloth where the wefts turn around the outside warp threads. Floating selvages are extra warp threads that are weighted and left hanging off the back of the loom; these are added to the edges of the warp to provide a consistent place for the weft to catch when it turns and goes back into the cloth.

Shaft

A shaft is a frame that holds the heddles and moves them up and down to create a shed. Floor looms usually have an even number of shafts and at least one treadle per shaft. [NOTE: Older books (and some older weavers) may refer to this as a “harness” and the terms were at one time used interchangeably, but the term “harness” increasingly is no longer used by the weaving community for this purpose.]

Shed

The shed is the space where weft threads are introduced to create cloth. Sheds can be closed or open. A closed shed exists when the warp threads lie flat across the loom and no shuttle can pass through. An open shed occurs when the weaver moves one or more shafts to split the shed into an upper and lower section, creating a gap through which the **shuttle** can pass and install the weft thread between the warp threads to create cloth.

Shrinkage

Many yarns will shrink during wet finishing. Therefore, the rate of shrinkage must be considered when planning a project. The best way to determine the amount of shrinkage to expect is to weave a sample and measure it before and after finishing.

Shuttle

The shuttle is a piece of equipment that is used to carry the weft thread through the shed while weaving. Some examples are boat shuttles, end-feed shuttles, stick shuttles, ski shuttles, inkle shuttles, netting shuttles, and band loom shuttles.

Sley; Sley the Reed

To sley the reed means to place warp threads through the slots in the reed in sequence from the order provided by the cross. The “sley” refers to the number of warp threads per dent. For example, to achieve 20 ends per inch, the sley would be 2 warp ends per dent using a 10 dent reed.

Sley Hook

A sley hook is a thin hand-held device used to pull warp threads through the slots of a reed. A sley hook may be made of metal, plastic, wood, resin, or other suitable material, and it may have one end smaller than the other so that it can also serve as a heddle hook.

Snitch, Snitching

Snitching refers to using a larks head knot to connect two strings or a string to a bar or rod.

Tabby

Often used interchangeably with Plain Weave, it more accurately describes the plain weave picks used in overshot and other structures to make the cloth more stable.

Take Up

Take-up refers to the curving of warp threads over and under weft threads, and the curving of weft threads over and under warp threads. The amount of take up you have will impact the consequent shortening or narrowing of a piece and potential thickening of the cloth, and will impact how you lay out the weft threads for beating into the cloth.

Thrum

A short length of string left over from a previous weaving project. Thrums are the left over warp threads that couldn't be woven when a project is complete. See Loom Waste.

Tie-Up

The tie-up specifies which shafts are attached to which treadles to raise and/or lower them in groups to create the desired pattern.

Tie-up Cords

The tie-up cords are used to connect the treadles to the lamms under each of the shafts. The Wolf Pup loom has 6 tie-up cords on each lamm, one for each of the 6 treadles.

Treadle

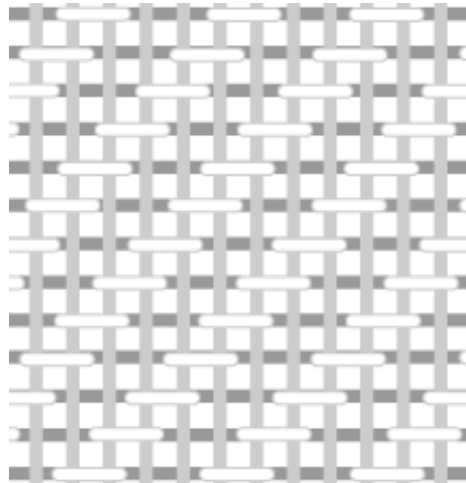
Treadles are pedals of a floor loom that are used to raise and/or lower the shafts in a way to create a shed. The act of stepping on the treadles is "treadling."

Treadling

The act of stepping on the treadles is "treadling." Treadling is done in a specific order according to a draft in order to create a desired pattern.

Twill

Twill creates distinct diagonal lines through the weave by passing over and then under a specific number of threads in one pick, and then shifting the pattern slightly in one direction on the next pick. Common types of twill are jeans twill, herringbone, birds-eye, and point twill. The twill pictured below is referred to as a 2/2 twill.



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via Wikimedia Commons

Warp

Threads attached to the loom and placed under tension while you are weaving. Individual threads of the warp are referred to as warp threads or warp ends.

Warp Beam Crank Handle

The warp beam crank handle is used to spin the warp beam when winding the warp onto the warp beam, or later when adjusting the tension on the warp. On the Wolf Pup the handle has two positions - engaged and disengaged. To engage the handle turn it until the portion surrounding the bolt slips out and around the bolt connected to the beam. To disengage push the handle in towards the warp beam until it is able to move freely without moving the beam. It's recommended to leave the handle disengaged when not being used.

Warp End

Individual threads of the warp are referred to as warp threads or warp ends.

Warping Board

A device used to create a warp chain. Pegs provide a pathway for the warp to be wound with a cross at one or both ends of the warp and for all warp ends to be the same length. Other devices are warping mills and warping pegs.

Weave Structure

Weave structure refers to the interlacement of warp and weft threads when weaving cloth. The structure you choose to weave will impact different aspects of the cloth, including how well it drapes, its strength, and the way it reflects light.

Weft

Yarn interlaced with warp to create a textile.

Yank and Crank

A term often used to describe the process of winding onto the warp beam where one 'yanks' the warp to tension the threads, then 'cranks' the warp beam handle one rotation to wind the warp onto the beam.

Appendix A: Parts of a Loom

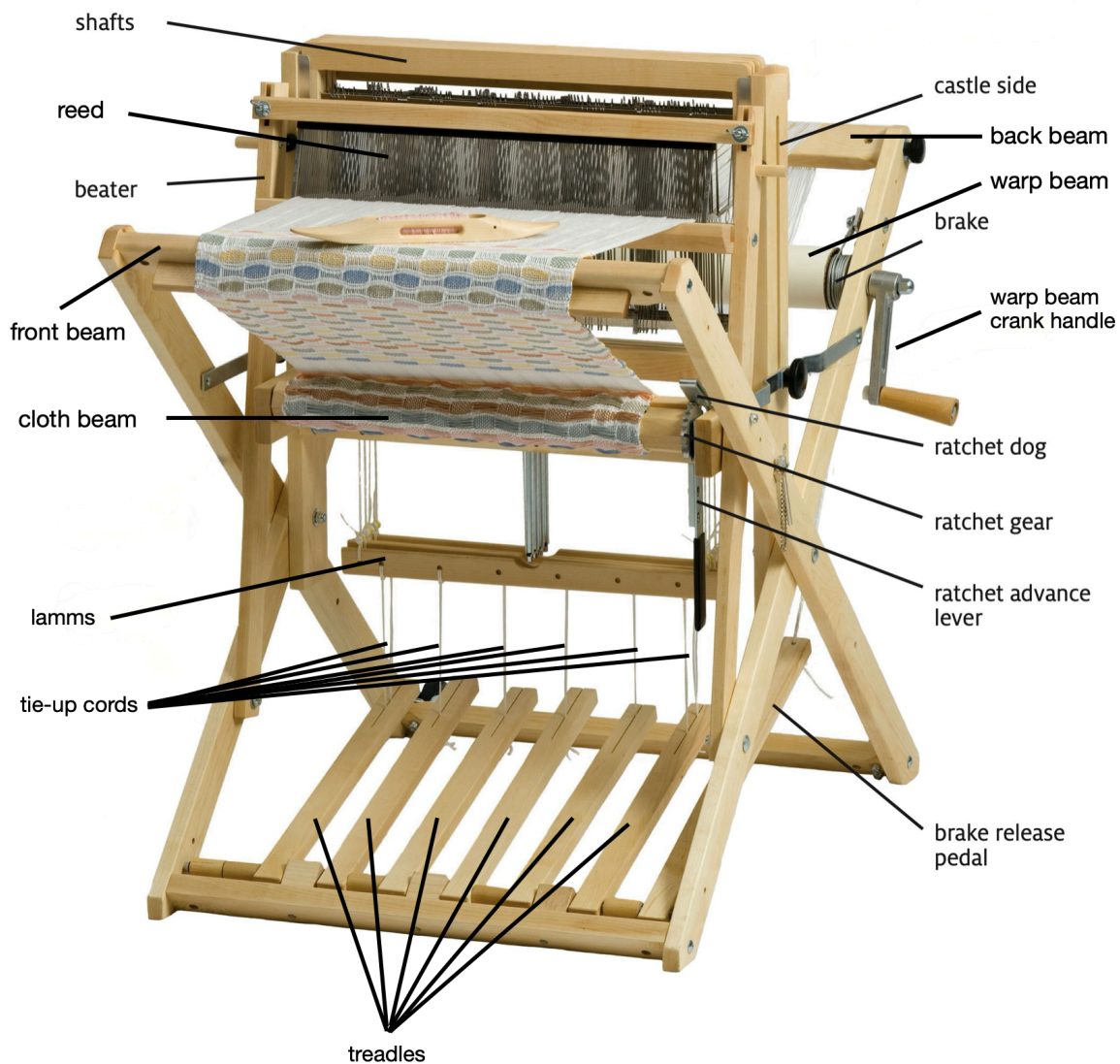
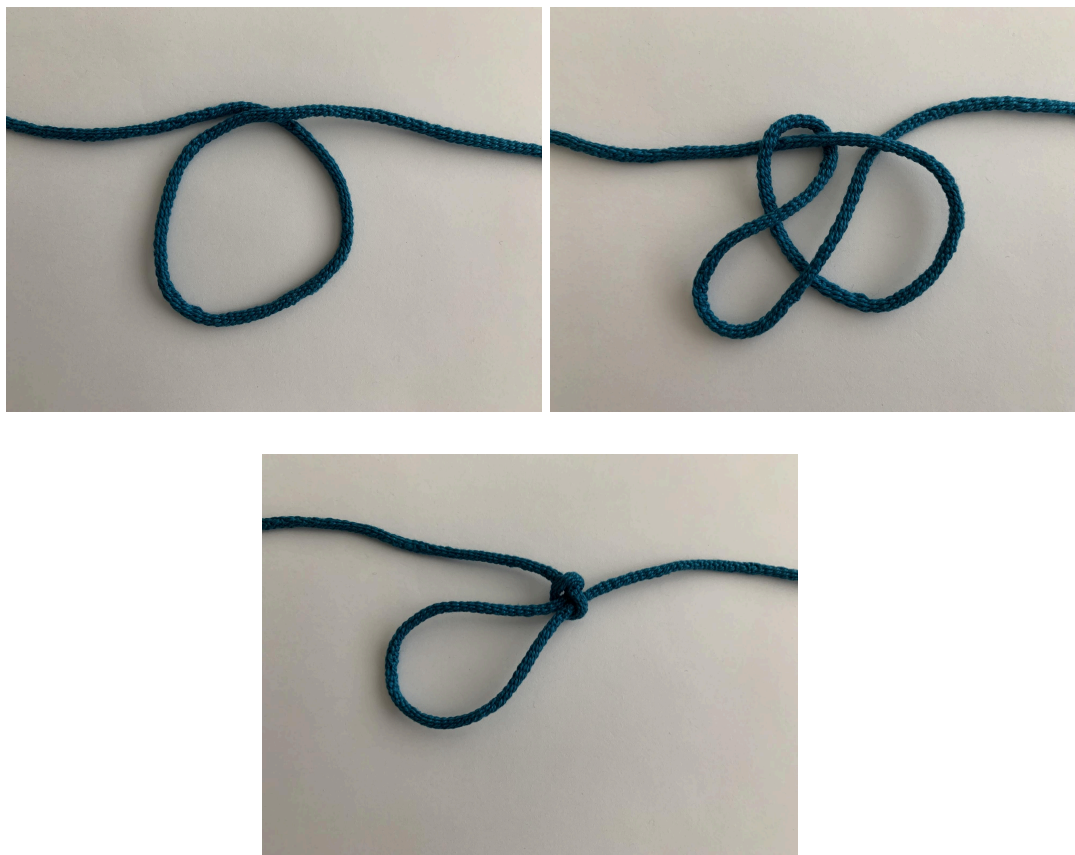


Photo courtesy of Schacht Spindle Company, Boulder, CO

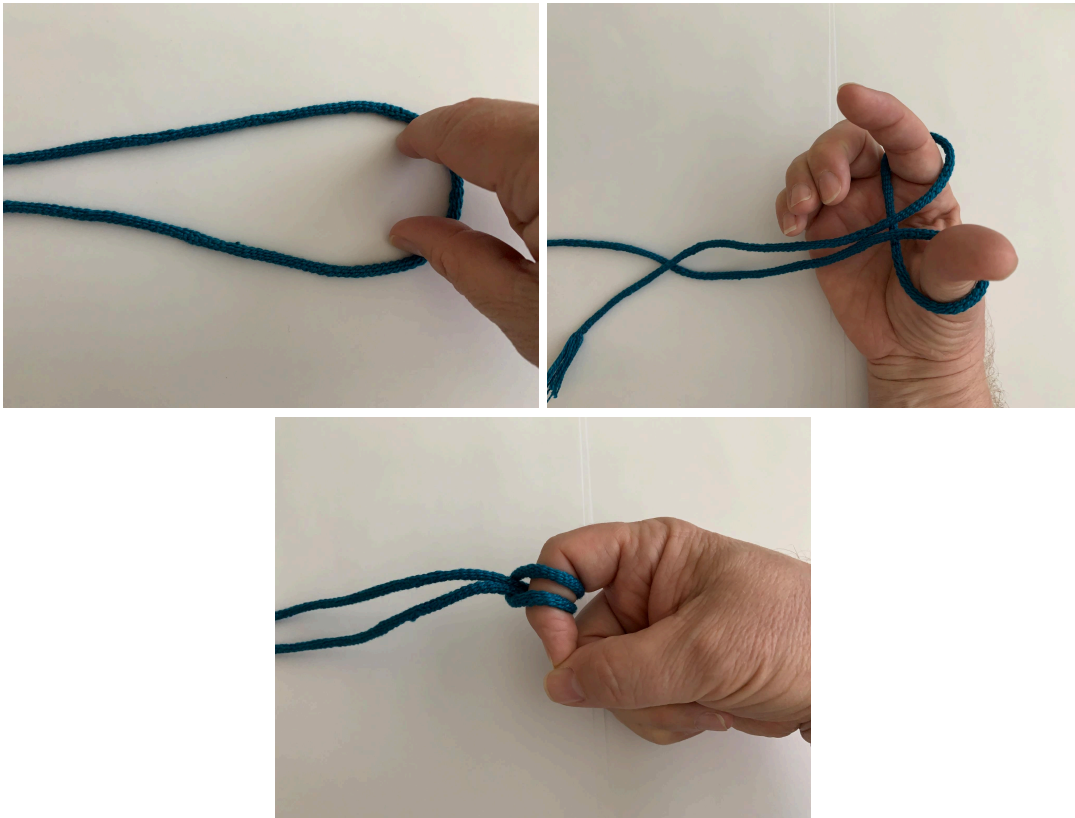
Appendix B: Knots

When winding the warp and preparing the loom there are a handful of knots that will help you keep things neat and easy to handle. Some knots are made to be easily untied, while others are intended to be more permanent and secure. Knowing where each knot falls on that scale will help you pick the right knot for the right task.

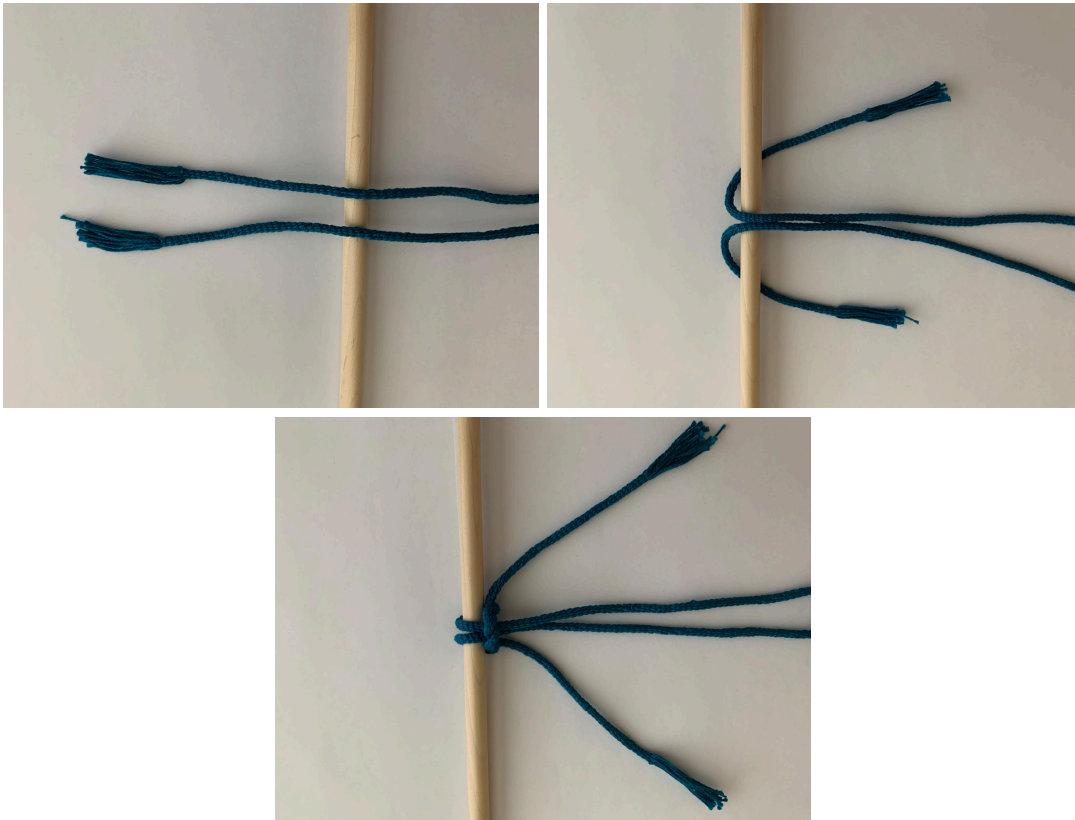
- **Bows and Half-bows** - bows and half-bows are temporary and easy to undo. If you can tie your shoes you can tie bows and half-bows. The only issue with bows and half bows is that you need extra yarn to tie them, and depending on when and where you use them the loops may end up contributing to your loom waste.
- **Slip Knot** - A slip knot is a temporary knot that can be easily untied with a simple tug of a string tail. Create a slip knot by starting with a loop in the yarn with the short tail behind the longer supply side of the yarn. Then reach through the loop and pull another loop from the supply side of the thread (not the short tail) through the first loop. Hold the loop with your left hand and pull the tail end with your right to tighten the knot. The resulting knot surrounds the supply side on the left and can slip back and forth, making the final loop larger and smaller. To untie the knot simply pull the yarn ends away from each other on both sides of the knot.



- **Larks Head or Snitch Knot** - the larks head knot is used primarily to snitch the warp onto a stick or tie onto the apron bar.
 - **Larks Head from a loop:** If the threads are looped or knotted at the end, split the threads with your thumb and index finger going down through the threads to separate the threads into two even groups. Twist your hand, keeping the threads apart, and rotate your hand and fingers so that your finger and thumb are encircled by the threads and your finger and thumb now point up. Bring the tips of your thumb and finger together, then move both bundles of thread to your finger. A stick can then be placed in the knot in place of your finger, and that stick can then be tied to the apron.



- **Larks Head from two loose ends:** If the threads are loose ends with no knot or loop then separate the threads into two even groups and pull them over the bar, then down and around the bar, bringing the two groups of ends up on either side of the full bundle. Bring the two groups together and tie a surgeon's knot to secure the bundle. While they will hold fairly well while you tie your warp onto the cloth beam they aren't so tight that you can't untie and adjust if you find the tension on your warp isn't even or consistent.



- **Overhand Knot or Half Knot** - Overhand or half knots are the simplest, and perhaps most used knots. For an overhand knot just loop the threads around each other just as you would at the beginning of making a bow or tying your shoes.



- **Square Knot, also known as a reef knot** - Square knots are essentially a bow with the tails passed in the opposite direction in the second pass and pulled through instead of leaving loops.
- **Surgeon's Knot** - Surgeon's knots are handy because they're easy to tie and will hold under moderate tension but are still able to be undone fairly easily. For a surgeon's knot start by looping the threads just as you would at the beginning of making a bow or tying your shoes, but pass the tail around **twice** instead of just once. The extra pass provides more surface tension that will prevent the knot from slipping easily. When securing the knot, pass the tails in the opposite direction to the first.

