

SIMPLE WEAVE

Weave without a large loom

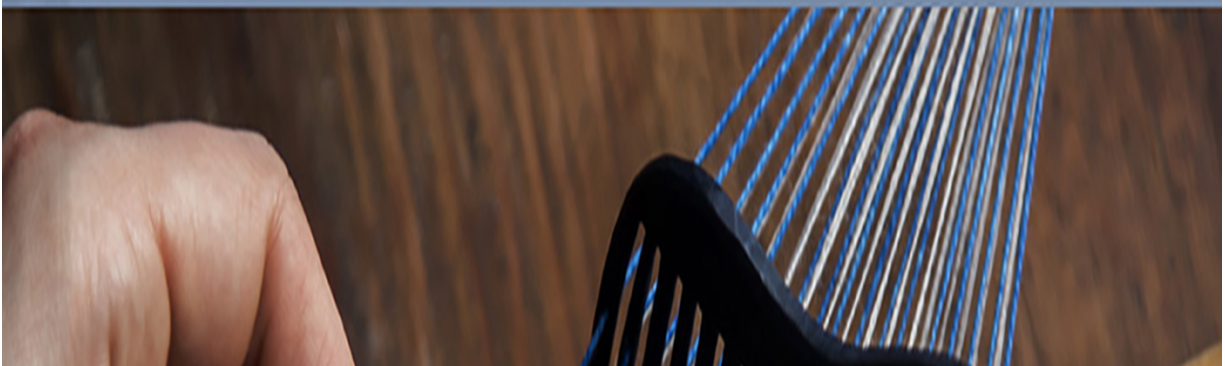
— KERSTIN NEUMÜLLER —



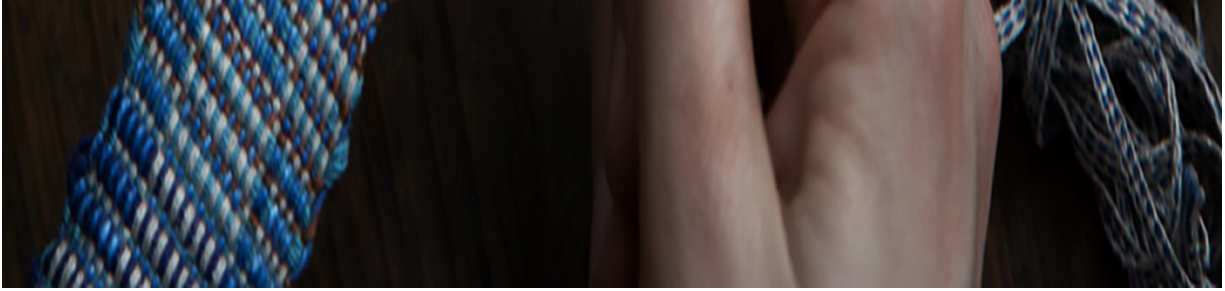
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BATSFORD

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Foreword

A few years ago I got struck by a sudden urge to weave. A loom was ordered, but what should have been five weeks waiting time turned into 6 months and there I was, pacing around with an unmet weaving urge that grew bigger and bigger. Eventually I got out an old rigid heddle that my grandfather had made 40 years ago and warped a band, so that I at least could weave something. When the loom finally arrived, I was too busy with the bands to unpack it! Weaving without a loom can sound limiting, but you actually avoid a lot of the preparation work that is otherwise associated with weaving, and I don't like the idea of having to be tied to one particular place to be able to weave.

Time passed and one day a juniper bush came down during a spring storm on my family farm. I needed a few sticks to wrap yarn around, so I took a piece of the trunk and started carving. One of my yarn sticks ended up quite flat and wide, and my grandfather's heddle came to mind. What if I too could...? And before long, I had carved my first heddle.

Carving your own weaving tools doesn't have to take up more space than it takes to weave with them, and it's also a lot of fun. For me, a textile craftsperson through and through, the step into the world of woodcraft felt enormous, but making my own tools, adapted for my own needs and preferences, opened a wealth of new possibilities. I have found that I no longer need to form my weaving

process around which tools I have to hand; now I form the tools to fit the process instead!

Kerstin Neumüller
Vevelsta, 2021



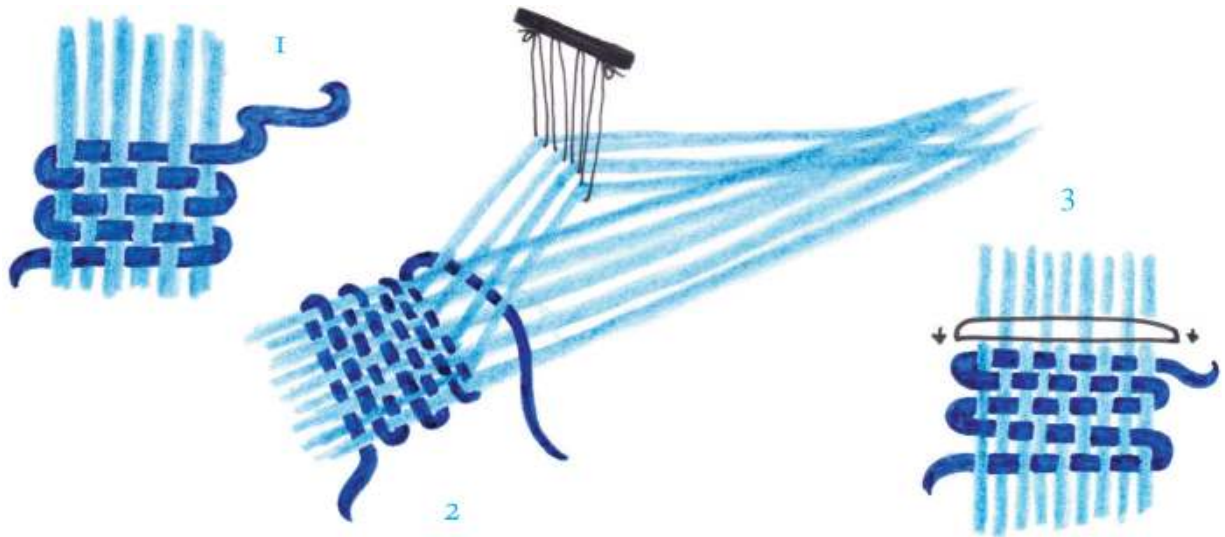
PART 1

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TECHNIQUES

What is weaving?

Weaving is made up of two basic components: one thread system called warp and one called weft. The warp is, in most cases, held taut with the threads arranged next to each other, and the weft is passed through the warp threads.¹ The most basic weaving technique is plain weave, where the weft runs over every other warp thread and, therefore, under alternating warp threads. You could sit yourself down and pick up every other thread each time you want to add weft, but this is very time-consuming so most weaving techniques involve some kind of heddle. Heddles are usually made up of tied thread loops that the warp threads run through, and by pulling the heddle, you can raise the required warp thread. When you gather many heddles together onto a bar to enable you to raise a particular group of warp threads, that bar is called a shaft.²



The space that is formed when you raise a shaft, separating the warp threads, is called the shed, and this is where the weft is passed through from one side of the weave to the other, which is called 'making a pick'. The actual weaving is done through a repetitive rhythm of opening a shed, passing through the weft (pick), changing the shed and finally, packing the weft by beating into the new shed with an implement. For small weaves I usually use a straight, flat, wooden stick that I call a pick-up stick.³



Glossary: Weaving lingo

BALANCED WEAVE – A weaving technique where weft and warp are equally visible.

BEATING – Packing the weft by beating with an implement in the shed.

CLEAN SHED – When the shed opens without any warp threads out of place or misaligned.

COTTOLINE – Yarn made from 40% linen and 60% cotton.

CUT OFF – When you have finished weaving and want to remove the weave from all the tools you cut the warp threads off the back edge of the weave.

HEADER – Weaving a few picks using a thick yarn or scraps to even out the spreading of the warp threads before the actual weave starts.

HEDDLE – A loop made of thread that runs around a warp thread.

HEDDLE BAR – A smooth, straight stick that you can attach heddles to.

LEASE STICKS – Two smooth sticks that sit in the warp and hold the warp threads in place. I drill holes in the ends of my lease sticks so that I can tie them together, which prevents them from sliding out of the warp.

PLAIN WEAVE – The simplest of all weave structures, almost exclusively used in this book.

RIGID HEDDLE – Tool for weaving with holes and slits that the warp runs through.

SET UP A WEAVE – A catch-all term for all preparations before you can start weaving, from warping to weaving a header.

SHAFT – Heddle bar + heddle = a shaft.

SHED – The gap that is formed in the weave when you raise a shaft or a rigid heddle, causing a group of threads to be lifted. Can also refer to the group of threads that is lifted when the heddles are raised, as in the expression ‘one of the sheds’.

SHED STICK – A stick that is inserted to the warp of a backstrap loom and forms a shed if it is tilted to one side.

THREAD THE HEDDLES – Arranging all the warp threads into place in the heddles.

WARPING – When you arrange all the threads to be included in the warp into place.