

Dear Weaver,

Thank you for signing up to be part of our collaborative weaving project, *Open Weave*. I hope you have as much fun participating as I have had in preparing for it! Let's go through some steps to help you on your way.

Step 1 Check the contents

- Modified (see note below) mini-loom
- weaving needle
- yarn
- Museum address label
- postage stamp (if requested)

Check the contents of your *Open Weave* pack, and let us know if anything is missing by an email to: events@gairlochmuseum.org. Please keep the envelope to return your finished tapestry to us.

Your pack should contain a **warped up mini-loom and a weaving needle** (see image below). On the back of the mini-loom is your number, which we're using for tracking the looms. There are two holes at the top, which are for hanging up the finished **tapestry**.



Some woollen weft yarn. There are four different colours in your pack (all are the same length) and enough to weave your tapestry. Note that we have different colour themes so the four colours in your pack may be different from the next person's. Try to work with your colour pack, please.

INSTRUCTIONS – MODIFIED BEGINNER

If you are going to be mailing your finished tapestry back to us (as opposed to dropping it off at Gairloch Museum), there will be a return address label, which you can stick on top of the current address label. If you have opted for prepaid postage (as opposed to paying the return postage yourself), there will also be a postage stamp.

TOP TIPS

- Keep needles and small objects away from young children.
- Keep the envelope and use it to return the woven tapestry to us.
- Do not cut any of the warp ends – we will tidy that up for you afterwards.

MODIFIED BEGINNER'S WEAVING PACK.

The requests for BEGINNER weaving packs has been much greater than that for NON-BEGINNER packs, and we are using up the excess NON-BEGINNER packs. They have been modified to keep a wide space between the warps by using the alternate “teeth” on the mini-looms, as shown in the image above.

Most of the images in these instructions will depict the original Beginner mini-loom and wooden needle. I hope that won't be too confusing – the principles will be the same.

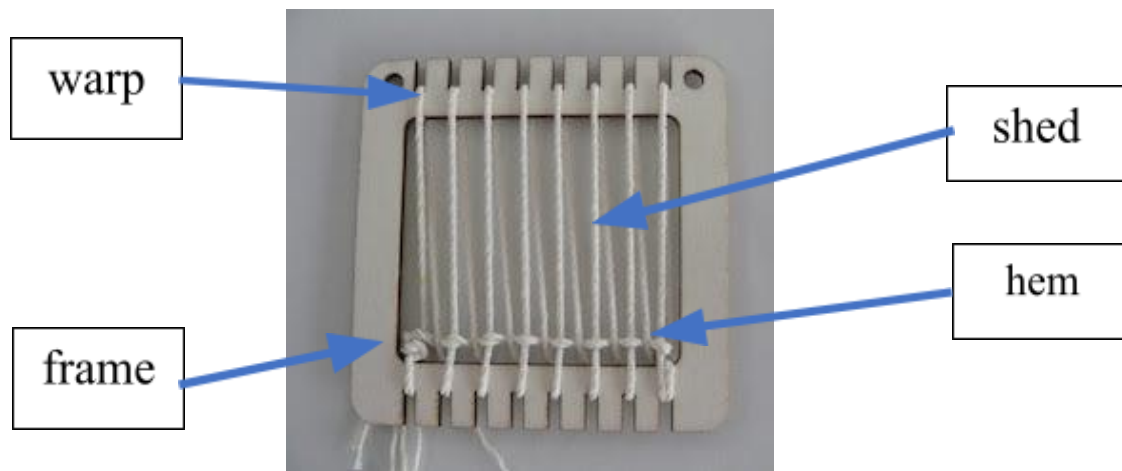
INSTRUCTIONS – MODIFIED BEGINNER

Step 2 Learn the basics

If you've never woven before, I have created some instructions for you below, but you may also want to have a look at some YouTube videos, or on-line written instructions. See TOP TIPS below for the websites. Note that the loom that you'll see in the on-line information may be different to your mini-loom, but the weaving principles will be the same.

The string that's running up and down the mini-loom is called a **warp** and during the process of weaving this will get covered with the **weft** yarn. (The definition of Tapestry is a weft-faced woven item.) You use the beater or a fork to push the weft downwards to cover the warp.

Take a minute to look at what's called the **shed**. This is the gap between the front and back warps, and is widest at the top of the mini-loom. When you are weaving you will be bringing the front and back warps together so that they become a flat surface.



Front view

Thread the needle with three or four strands of your weft yarn (this is your **weft bundle**). Note that the first row has been woven for you using the warp yarn, this is called the **hem** as seen in the image above. At this stage you're going to be weaving from one side of the tapestry to the other (this is called a **pass**) and then back again (in the reverse direction). Doing the pass involves going over and under the warp to weave the wool. When going back you go behind a warp that you previously went in front of.

You should weave from the front of the mini-loom and leave any tails of weft yarn at the back. The tail may be long (where you have decided to stop using a colour) or short (where you have run out of the weft yarn). If it's long and you want to pick it up again later, then let it dangle at the back until you want to use it again. This will create a "float" of weft across the back, which is absolutely ok because the back will not be on show.

Do not weave around the frame when you reverse direction, keep your weaving within the frame. See pictures below.

You can start from either the left side or right side, and you may find it easier to tie a quick knot around the warp to stop your weft from pulling through.

INSTRUCTIONS – MODIFIED BEGINNER



In addition to getting the hang of tapestry weaving, the most important thing to practice is getting the tension right. A common mistake made by beginners is to pull the weft through too tightly with the result that the sides pull in and you don't get a nice even-sided square.



Weft is being pulled too tight.



Tension is correct.

So, to get the tension right there are two things to focus on:

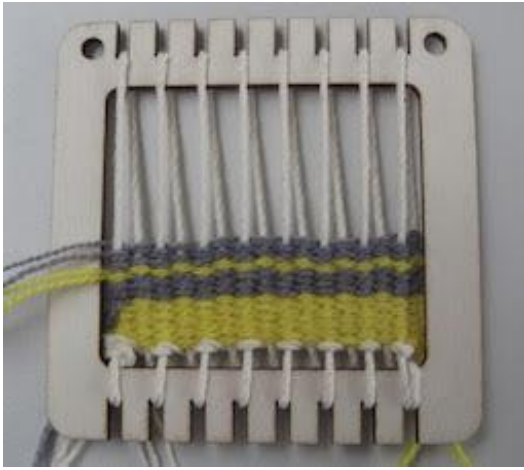
1. Allow for some extra yarn on each pass to create a little "hill", and use a fork (or your fingers) to push it down into place;
2. Do not pull your weft bundle too tightly when you turn to weave in the opposite direction.

You may notice that weaving is easier in one direction (when your needle is going behind the front warp yarn) than the other. This is because you are going through the open shed, and you can make it even easier by passing the needle through the bigger space at the top.

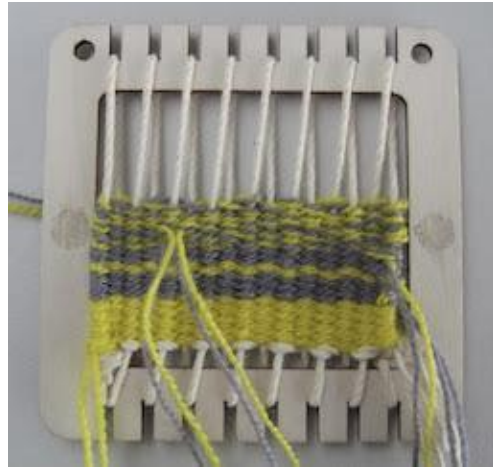
Remember to beat down the weft, at least every few rows, to make sure it covers the warp.

Now that you've got a nice bit of tapestry, it's time to try some different colours. Remember to leave a tail of weft yarn at the back as you drop one colour and pick up a new colour. You can vary the width of your stripes, and you can mix the colours on your weft bundle.

INSTRUCTIONS – MODIFIED BEGINNER

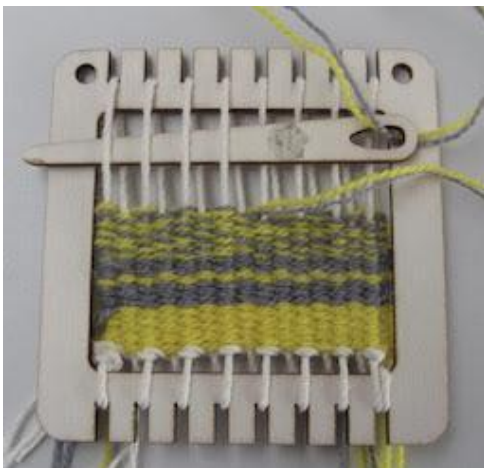


Front: stripes



Back: mixed colours in weft bundle

If you've mastered weaving stripes and ready for a new challenge, let's try some basic shapes. It doesn't matter which side you start from but just weave part way across. In my example below, I started from the left-hand side and have woven across eight warps, and then I'm going back on myself. Remember to keep the right amount of tension as you turn back.



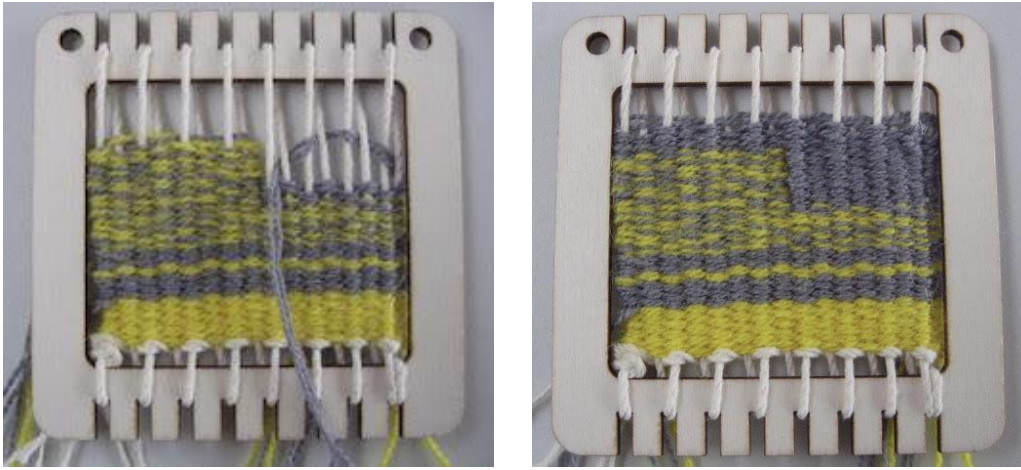
Don't forget to keep pushing the weft down, especially now that you're creating a shape. As you get closer to the top of the warp, you'll find it's more difficult to weave...there's less room for the needle and it's getting tighter. That's normal, and (you may have been doing this already) now you may want to weave each warp one by one... as if you were stitching through a piece of fabric.

I've just made a mistake with mine. I didn't notice until I started weaving back the way, but I went under two warps and will just go and correct it.



I'm coming to the end of my grey/yellow weft bundle, so I'm taking it back to the left-hand side and will now weave in a block of grey on the other side and then I'll continue it above my blended weft. It's important to start from the right hand side, so that when I weave across the top of the speckled shape, I'm in the right shed.

INSTRUCTIONS – MODIFIED BEGINNER



Carry on weaving and get as close to the top of the warp as the needle will allow. If you are able to weave your last row in the closed shed (i.e. your weft yarn is going behind the back warp), then the top row will be nice and taut. Leave a tail of yarn at the back of the tapestry and you've finished...well done!

TOP TIPS:

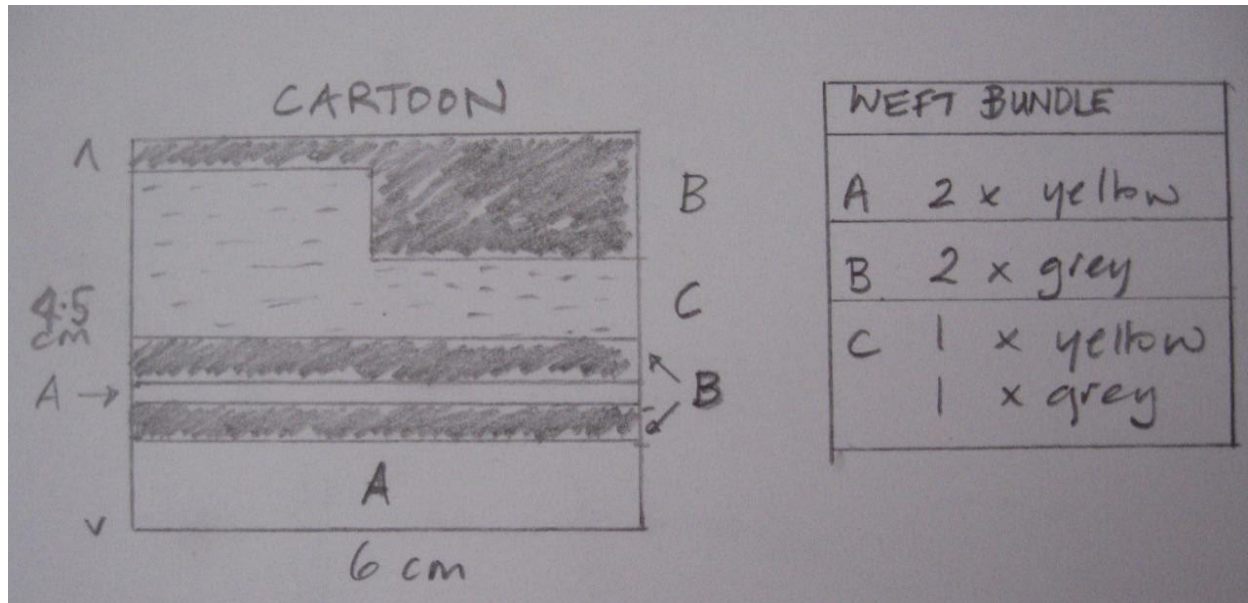
- Links to on-line instruction
 - [weaversbazaar Knowledge Zone](#)
 - [Weaving for Beginners on Youtube by Creativebug Studios \(YouTube\)](#)
 - [Four Things to Remember for New Tapestry Weavers by R Mezoff \(YouTube\)](#)
 - [Why Tapestry? by Mirrix Looms \(YouTube\)](#)
 - [Questions from the Art of Tapestry Weaving by R Mezoff \(blog\)](#)
- Do some practice weaving and unpick before you start thinking about your design.
- Take your time and unpick if you go wrong, don't try and cut out your mistakes... it will end in tears.
- You can decide how many strands of yarn to include in the weft bundle. The more strands you have, the faster the progress you'll make. You'll find it difficult to thread more than 4 strands on the needle provided. I suggest using the same number of strands throughout; you can however, vary the colours.
- The length of weft yarn should be about out-stretched arm-width. If it's too long it will keep catching on things and if it's too short, you'll end up with a shaggy carpet of weft tails on the back.
- Attention to tension.
- Start from the bottom and weave to the top... it's a good idea to have a plan (see below).
- Please be careful not to puncture yourself with the needles

INSTRUCTIONS – MODIFIED BEGINNER

Step 3 Design Guidelines

Open Weave is about understanding the woven structure and how patterns can be created, so while we don't want to be too prescriptive about what you weave, we do have some guidelines. There are some interesting woven blankets and coverlets in the Museum's collection that can be a source of inspiration, as can any woven items around the house that you may have, or you may have developed your own ideas as you were learning to weave.

You can make a drawing of what you would like to weave (this is called a cartoon) and do some colour-coding so that you have a plan of what you hope to weave. This will help you to "budget" your yarn.



Now, this may not be the way that you like to work... and that's okay. In fact, once you've got the hang of weaving, you may just want to let inspiration come to you as you weave and not bother with a cartoon.

TOP TIPS

- This is a very small tapestry and you don't need to make your design overly complicated.
- You can get some ideas from Pinterest, where you can check out a folder called [Open Weave 2021](#).
- Make notes or take photos if you are trying out some ideas before finalising your design.
- The design stage is a challenge for many tapestry weavers, but if you have questions contact us at events@gairlochmuseum.org and we'll arrange for a short phone or video call.

INSTRUCTIONS – MODIFIED BEGINNER

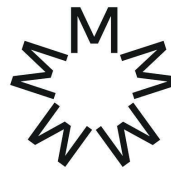
Step 4 Send us your work.

Return your completed mini-loom, needle and beater to:

- Gairloch Museum's post box at the entrance to the Museum OR
- Post it to Gairloch Museum re-using the envelope.
(Gairloch Museum, Gairloch, Ross-shire, IV21 2BH). If you are paying for the 96p postage yourself, thank you

If you would like your tapestry returned to you, please enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope, we will return it later in 2021 after any public exhibitions held.

The project is made possible thanks to our project supporters:



Art Fund_
Museum of
the Year 2020
Winner

Supported by funding from



**Museums
Galleries
Scotland**

Supporting Scotland's Museums