
Weaving TnT:

Dynamite Tips 'n Techniques
FOR EVERY Weaver

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Preparing to weave

1. Wear a well-equipped apron, preferably with pockets in the front
2. Keep your scissors on a zip cord to avoid setting them down and keep them within reach at all times (available at office supply stores)
 - Round nose scissors, like Gingher's "pocket" scissors will keep the point of the scissors from poking through fabric when you lean over while you're weaving
 - If you would like to use your favorite scissors and they are pointed, use a flower "tube" to cover the point (These are used by florists to keep single stem flowers fresh)
3. Use kitchen utensils with straining holes (e.g., spoon, tongs, spatula, etc.) as a warping paddle to wind multiple warp ends
4. Separate the sections of the warp chain with snap tape
5. Hold the warp chain cross
 - Pony tail elastic holders
 - Foam curling rods/flexible curlers
6. Chip clips
 - Spaced apart and clamp down on warp chain to keep it from getting tangled
 - Grip a warp section when pre-sleying a reed or threading the loom
7. Hair bands are easy to use to hold down a warp section on a sectional beam
8. Tie a contrasting thread on the last heddle of a threading repeat to help you identify the position of a threading error within the threading repeat. Don't forget to remove them before weaving to avoid tangling in the warp ends.
9. Using an old-fashioned metal music stand can be invaluable when set next to your loom and help avoid neck strain. Place a magnetic board on it with strip to hold your drawdown while you thread your loom and while treadling. You can usually hang items with a cord (e.g., scissors, sley hook, etc.) from it. Plus, the ledge on the bottom can hold shuttles. Many of these music stands fold down into a compact package to take to a workshop. If you have a table or surface next to your loom, a plate stand works well for supporting a board and clipping your drafts to it
10. A plate holder with a board on it will keep the draft at a better angle.
11. To keep wound bobbins matched up with the appropriate cone of yarn, use a large hairband wrapped around the bobbin and the cone.
12. Tame finicky cones of yarn where the yarn wants to spin off in different directions.
 - Metallics
 - Monofilament
13. Secure warp sections on a sectional beam while winding new warp sections.

14. Tie a wrist cord (*mitten string*) on your threading/sleying hook. This will keep it from falling on to the floor if you lose your grip. It's also handy when you suddenly need both hands to complete a task (e.g., untangling ends, etc.). All you need to do is let it drop and hang from your wrist.
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16. Can't find the end of a fine thread on a cone? Use a soft bristle toothbrush to lightly brush upward and the end will pop out. Also, using a piece of tape on your hand will help lift it off the cone.
17. Mini-shuttles for small amounts of yarn may be readily made from
 - Bread bag closure with a notch cut out of it
 - Embroidery floss cards
 - Knitting bobbins (sometimes labels 'knit bobs')
18. Use bread bag closures to record information (e.g., fiber content, dye lot, yards per ounce, etc.) and secure with a slip knot to the end of a wound ball
19. Create a treadling "abacus" by stringing numbered beads on a cord and tying it to the top of the beater. While treadling, slide a bead over when you've completed a weft pick. Slide all the beads back when the sequence is done. You'll always know where you are in your treadling sequence. Create a threading "abacus" by stringing numbered beads on a stick shuttle and clamp the shuttle to the loom.

Websites for numbered beads:
<https://beadbee.com/collections/alphabet-number-beads>
<https://www.ponybeadstore.com/products.php?cat=46>
<https://www.artcove.com/>
<https://www.amazon.com/>
20. Use knitting stitch holders to organize and store heddles. To move them onto a heddle bar, unclip the knitting stitch holder and slide it along the heddle bar and slide the heddles onto the heddle bar.
21. Hold back unused heddles to avoid the heddles placing pressure on the warp.
 - Small binder clip
 - Plastic clips
 - Long hairband connected with two picture hangers
22. When fixing a mis-threaded warp end, hold the warp ends on either side of it apart with a hair comb. This will create a gap and make it easier to see what you are doing.
23. Make bobbins and quills for weaving and for storing "weftovers" from the following:
 - The heavy cardboard tube that some drycleaners use to hang slacks. Cut into three or four sections
 - Heavy drinking straws. Cut to the appropriate length with a pair of scissors
 - Use the cylinder from a pen (e.g., **BIC** style). Remove the pen and the end cap.

24. If you want to keep filled bobbins organized and easy to see, use sewing spool organizers. Place the bobbins where the sewing spools are supposed to go. These organizers are easy to find and not very expensive . . . and a great way to tidy up a studio!
25. Adding a bit a weight to the selvedge warp end can help you avoid a fell line that smiles or a selvedge that draws in. There are a number of different ways to add weight to the selvedge warp end.
 - Fishing line weights with a snap fitting (available at fishing supply stores)
 - Bulb clips can be used to attached weights without a clip
 - Table cloth weights. Change the clamp to a ring or use a bulb clip. This will allow the weight to be quickly added and removed. It will also help the table cloth weight slide along the warp end.
26. Make your own repair heddles
 - Take a small piece of wood slightly longer than your loom's heddle
 - Lay a heddle from your loom on the wood and mark the top of the upper heddle bar, the bottom of the lower heddle bar, and the inside of the heddle's eye.
 - Hammer headless nails into the marks you just made
 - Slide safety pins onto the headless nails at the top and bottom. The openings of the safety pins should be where they will come in contact with the heddle bars.
 - Take a smooth yarn (e.g. 5/2 cotton) and thread it through the loop at the bottom of the upper safety pin
 - Tie square knots at the nails in the center to create a heddle eye
 - Tie the yarn to the loop of the lower safety pin and trim the end

Weaving

27. To cover the knots at the cloth beam to avoid distorting the woven cloth, cut down the length of a cardboard tube (e.g., paper towel tube, gift wrap tube, foil tube, etc.) and wrap it around the cloth beam and cover the knots.
28. Manage and weight floating selvedges using two cones by wrapping the floating selvedge around one cone, take the end up through the center of the other cone, and cap the first cone with the second. The weight of the two cones creates a tension that works well for many projects. As weaving progresses, lift the top cone, drop the lower cone, and recap the lower cone with the upper cone.
29. Headers don't have to take a lot of time to weave. It's possible to weave a header with only a couple of picks of plain weave
 - Weave a pick of plain weave near the beater – Don't beat
 - Weave another pick of plain weave near the beater – Don't beat
 - Close the shed
 - Beat the two picks on a closed shed.

Note – Some weavers prefer the results from using three plain weave picks, instead of two.

30. Concealing the weft end of plied yarns when starting and ending a new weft
 - Lightly beat in the new weft leaving a tail about 2"-3" long. Leave the shed open
 - Carefully un-ply the tail of the weft.
 - "Unweave" one of the plies back through the open shed and pull the end back through the warp ends
 - Take the other tail of the weft end, wrap it around the outer most warp end, weave the end back onto itself, and pull the end back through the warp ends near the place where the other ply comes through the warp.
 - Lightly beat the weft in place and continue weaving
 - Trim the ends later

31. Get a crisp edge on a hem of a towel by interweaving a heavy yarn where the hem will be turned. Keep this end in place until you're ready to hem the towel. Pull it out. The space left will not only make for a sharper edge, it will provide a visual reference for getting straight hems.

32. Repair broken warp ends with a "Russian join" (you will need a sharp pointed needle with an eye large enough for the warp end to go through). If done correctly, the repair will be undetectable in the woven fabric. This technique works well for joining two ends of yarn together for novelty yarns used as a weft, knitting, crochet, etc. A video of this technique is available at www.knittinghelp.com
 - Take the broken end and the end you will add to it and wrap the ends around each other
 - Thread one end through your needle and sew it back on to itself for approximately ½" and pull the yarn snugly
 - Repeat for the other warp end
 - Trim the tails off

33. If you need to cut off a partially woven warp and would like to minimize waste and maintain even tension, try the following:
 - Weave an inch or so of plain weave
 - Weave in a rod or lease stick
 - Weave another inch or so of plain weave
 - Bring the beater all the way forward to place pressure along the fell line
 - Tie the beater to the front stanchions of the loom to maintain pressure on the fell line
 - Cut off the warp leaving the plain weave areas and rod on the loom. With the beater tied to place pressure on the fell line, the warp will remain tensioned
 - With a smooth cord, lash the rod/lease stick that was woven in to the apron rod.
 - Release the ties holding the beater. Weaving may recommence

34. Office supplies - Tag the tail before winding a ball on a ball winder
 - Small binder clips for clipping to the heddle bar to hold unused heddles in place so they don't move inward and crowd the warp.

35. To quickly organize information sheets and samples, especially in workshops, use clear plastic sleeve protectors (available at office supply stores) and then keep them in a three-ring binder. This will keep the sample and the appropriate information together for future reference or until properly mounting the sample.

36. If you have return address labels that are mailed by various companies and organizations, consider using them to label items that you're taking to a workshop. They work especially well for bobbins.

37. Reeds should always be kept straight in order to avoid warping
 - Mount brackets above doors to make use of unused space and keep your reeds straight
 - Metal shelving units may be used for organizing and storing reeds on their end and keep them straight up-and-down
 - Ikea wine racks can be stacked and used to organize and store reeds

38. Organizing bobbins - If you want to keep filled bobbins organized, easy to see, and accessible, use sewing thread spool organizers. Place the bobbins where the sewing thread spools are supposed to go. These organizers are easy to find and not very expensive . . . and a great way to tidy up a studio!
 - Wooden sewing thread organizers
 - Silicon sewing thread organizer (NobelNotions.com)

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40. To organize small items, use plastic photographic slide organizers. The small pockets are perfect for organizing packages of sewing machine needles, placing small amounts of yarn, etc.

Thrums (odds and ends)

41. Hair "braiders", a type of beauty appliance designed for twisting hair can make short work of twisting fringe and making cords . . . They may also be used to wind some bobbins

42. When it's late at night and your tired:
 - a. Don't cut your fabric - There's too much opportunity to cut incorrectly
 - b. Hold off on repairing threading errors until the next day - Small errors in tie-up and/or treadling may create mistakes in the fabric that may be interpreted as a threading error

Resources for More Tips and Techniques

Books and Publications

- Erickson, Johanna. *Rag Weaving Gimmicks and Tricks*. Watertown, MA: (1999).
- Gilmurray, Susan. *Weaving Tricks*. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1981. (ISBN - 0-442-26132-2)
- Griswold, Alice. *Weaving Solutions: Shortcuts, Tips and Ideas for the Handweaver*. Milan, MI: A & G Publications, 2000. (ISBN—0-9700223-0-1)
- The Weavers Guild, Boston, MA. *Weavers' Wisdom: 250 Aids to Happier Weaving*. Monograph Two, 1980.

Past issues of:

- **Heddlecraft®**
- Handwoven
- Shuttle, Spindle & Dyepot
- Weaver's
- Handweaver & Craftsman
- Warp & Weft (Published by Robin and Russ Handweavers)
- Fiberarts

Videotapes

- Guy, Sallie. *Tips, Tricks & Problem Solvers for the Handweaver*. Victorian Video Productions. 1989. (ISBN - 0-9-36225-22-X) - very helpful for weavers that have looms with plain beams)
- Guy, Sallie. *Warping and Loom Preparation*. Victorian Video Productions. 1997. (ISBN - 0-936225-47-5)

Websites

1. Handwoven magazine's weaving resources, including the Master Yarn Chart <https://handwovenmagazine.com/master-yarn-chart/>
- **Handweaving.net** – Over 60,000 drafts available at www.handweaving.net
- **On-Line Digital Archive of Documents on Weaving and Related Topics** at <https://www2.cs.arizona.edu/patterns/weaving/weavedocs.html>
- **Peggy Osterkamp's Weaving Tips** - <https://peggyosterkamp.com/100-great-weaving-tips/>
- Patterns with more treadles than your loom has can often be treadled using a "skeleton" tie-up. This allows more treading combinations by treading more than one treadle at a time. Converting tie-ups and treading can be labor intensive; however, the following website provides an on-line tool to assist weavers faced with this challenge <https://www.cs.earlham.edu/~timm/treadle/>

For Robyn's *Favorite Things*, go to <https://spadystudios.wordpress.com>