

HAND-PAINTED RAYON RIGID HEDDLE WARP

Instructions / Suggestions

**You will need a Rigid Heddle loom
that weaves at least 9" wide
and a 12 dent rigid heddle bar**



This hand-painted rayon warp has 108 threads, is $2\frac{1}{3}$ yards long, and should be set at 12 ends per inch. We suggest doubling the outside two threads on either side for selvedge. If you choose to double those threads your warp will be $8\frac{3}{4}$ inches wide. If you don't double those threads the warp will be 9" wide. If you are working on an Ashford Loom, you will be using a 12.5 dent heddle, and your scarf will be slightly narrower. The warp is made with Dragon Tale Rayon Slub and is hand-dyed with fiber-reactive dyes.

It is long enough to weave one 5 foot long scarf (measured on-loom, before shrinkage) using the loom waste for fringe. The two warp chains are identical and mirror so it doesn't matter which is on the right or left. The weft yarn is Dragon Tale 8/2 rayon and should be used doubled.

Twenty weavers asked to explain their warping techniques would respond with twenty different methods. Each of us likes her own way best, and we have our particular rituals to get the warp tensioned, threaded, and tied on. Feel free to proceed in any way that's comfortable for you; but we can't help sharing some suggestions.

If you have never warped your loom using a pre-wound warp chain here are a few helpful hints. A cross, or figure eight, has been wound at one end of each chain. That cross has been carefully tied off to maintain the exact order of the threads. As the threads are wound on the warping board a loop is formed at the cross end. To put this warp on your Rigid Heddle loom you will pass each loop, in cross order, through the slots and attach them to the back beam or apron rod. Exactly how the warp loops are attached to the apron rod will depend on the loom you have. All the brands of rigid heddle looms are configured slightly differently.

Many brands attach the apron rods to the beam with cords. Some do it in a way that makes it easy to slide the rods in and out of the ties. The Kromski Harp even gives you a "Warp Helper" to hold the apron rod in position while you slip the loops on. Some brands have holes in the rods with cords attaching them in such a way that it's impossible to slip the loops on to the rod without untying them from the beam. In that case we suggest untying all but one tie slipping the loops on and reattaching the apron rod. The Beka loom has plastic pegs imbedded into to the back beam. Instead of slipping the loops on to a rod you simply hook them onto the pegs. If you are unclear on how your loom works we suggest you check your owner's manual.

Most of the rigid heddle books suggest holding the cross in your hand as you choose the correct loop to thread dictated by the cross. This works great unless the door bell rings or the baby knocks over a glass of juice. If you use your stick shuttles as lease (cross) sticks to hold the cross it leaves both of your hands free to manipulate threads. We tie the shuttles on to the front of the loom letting them secure the cross.

Start by attaching two loops of sturdy cord to each side of the loom. Make sure that they are not tied to the back beam or you won't be able to wind on the warp. A knot about 4 inches from the heddle bar will keep the shuttles from slipping too far back as you wind. The strings need to be close enough together to lock into the ends of the shuttles so you might have to pass them through the heddle. Tie the holding cords to the front beam.

(picture 1)

Open up the cross on one chain with your hand and pass one shuttle into each opening. Repeat with the second chain

(pictures 2 & 3)

Let the cords weave over and under the notched ends of the shuttles holding them in place.

(picture 4)





After the shuttles are secured remove the 5 cross ties from one of the warp chains. Do not untie the two remaining ties on the length of the warp yet.

Locate the first pair of threads and pass it through the slot that is 4 1/2" from center. Remember you want your warp to be centered on the loom. It doesn't matter if you work right to left, left to right, or center out.

(pictures 5 & 6)



Pay special attention to how you loop the threads on to the back apron rod, and try to keep the threads properly aligned so that the color areas stay where they were when dyed. Continue threading. Don't forget to reattach the apron rod cords in their proper place as you work across.

(picture 7)



Thread the second warp chain as you did the first.

(picture 8)



After you have all the threads through the heddle slots, make sure that the apron rod and warp beam are secured. Tug gently on the warp, holding the whole warp chain, to realign the threads before you start winding on.

(picture 9)



Don't comb through the warp with your fingers as you wind on; combing moves the threads away from their dyed position. One snagged out-of-alignment thread can change the whole look of the piece. Grab each warp chain in turn, and pull it tight all together. A good shake and pull will straighten everything out. Remove the security ties on the warp as you come to them.

After the warp is wound onto the back beam thread one thread of each pair into the adjacent hole. We suggest double-threading the selvages. Place two warp ends in the outside hole and slot on each side of the warp. Once the holes have been threaded the shuttles may be removed.

(picture 10)



Tie the warp onto the front apron rod making sure the tension is even.

(picture 11)



Because the length of warp used to tie on with will become fringe, we suggest that you use bows instead of tight knots. That way they will be easier to untie.

(picture 12)



Start weaving with some scrap yarn, anything that's about the same weight will do. This yarn will be unraveled and discarded when you tie off the fringe so there is no need for it to match. Four to five passes of yarn should spread the warp threads and let you know if there is a mistake that needs correcting.

(picture 13)



Wind your weft yarn on to your shuttle doubled being careful to maintain an even tension between the two threads. Go slowly and make sure that the threads don't catch on the shuttle in a way that allows one to become longer than the other.

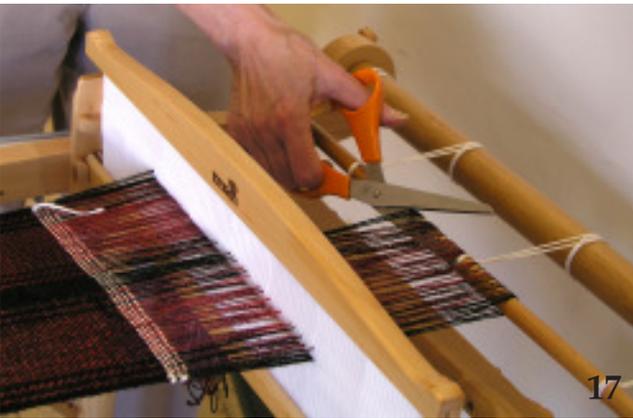
(picture 14)



There's always a chance you'll find a knot or break a thread, so we have included threads that have been dyed at the same time so that you can find a matching repair length. One thread has been taken from each half of the warp, and each is marked so you know which warp chain they came from. There is also some extra black slub, just in case. You probably won't need any of these.



Weave the entire length of the warp with the doubled 8/2 rayon yarn. When you get to the end of the warp again secure the weft in place with 4 or 5 passes of scrap yarn.
(*picture 16*)



When you remove the warp from the loom **don't** cut the warp at the fabric. But **do** cut the warp threads as close to the apron rod as you can. Remember you need the loom waste for fringe. Unwind the scarf from the cloth beam and untie the warp from the front apron rod so that extra length can also be used for fringe.
(*picture 17*)



To finish remove the waste yarn from one end of the warp. Tie 18 over-hand knots of 6 threads each snug against the fabric. Repeat this finishing on the opposite end of the scarf.
(*picture 18*)



Trim the fringe threads evenly after tying the knots.
(*picture 19*)

Hand wash your scarf being careful not to tangle the fringe. Then lay it out flat to dry. After the scarf is dry a gentle shake will soften the fabric.