

Make Your Own Cardboard Loom



Overview

Though hand weaving was not as prevalent in the 1830s as it had been in the late 18th century, there were still people in rural communities who practiced the art of weaving on a loom. Participants in this activity will make their own simple loom from cardboard and try out a weaving project!

Background

Wool comes from sheep. Sheep were sheared by hand with a pair of shears (they look like big scissors). Sturbridge farmers clipped between 7000 and 9000 pounds of wool in 1835! The wool was then picked and cleaned, carded, spun, and woven into cloth. OSV's sheep are bred to resemble the types of sheep you might have seen in New England during the time period. Before the Industrial Revolution, all cloth was woven on a loom, operated by a person. At OSV, you can see costumed historians making fabric on a loom at the Fenno House.

Supplies

- Piece of cardboard--it doesn't matter how big your cardboard is. It can be a square or a rectangle, long or wide.
- Scissors
- Ruler
- Pencil
- Yarn for weaving
- String for warping
- Fork (optional)
- Blunt sewing needle OR popsicle stick/small piece of cardboard to act as a shuttle

Directions

1. Lay your ruler along the top of the cardboard. Use your pencil to make marks every $\frac{1}{4}$ ". You will also want your notches to be about $\frac{1}{4}$ " deep, so you can draw a full line if it will help you make the cuts all the same length.
2. Repeat step 1 along the bottom of your cardboard.
3. Take your scissors and cut small slits into each mark on the top and bottom of your cardboard.

To warp the loom:

1. Tape your warping thread to the back of your loom in the bottom left corner.
2. Run your thread through the first notch on the bottom left of the loom. As you are warping your loom, make sure to not pull the thread too tightly. If you pull too tightly, it will bow the cardboard!
3. Bring the thread up through the notch in the top left of the loom.
4. Run the thread down the back of the loom and through the second notch at the bottom of the loom.
5. Bring the thread up through the second notch at the top of the loom.
6. Keep going until you have pulled the thread through each notch on the top and bottom of the loom.
7. Trim your thread and tape the end to the back of the loom. Now you are ready to weave!

Weaving:

1. Thread your needle with the yarn of your choice.
 - a. ALTERNATELY: Take a small piece of cardboard or a popsicle stick and wrap yarn around it. This will act as your shuttle.
2. Use your needle to bring the yarn under every other thread in your warp. (Example: Over thread 1, under thread 2, over thread 3, under thread 4, cont.) If you use the shuttle method instead, pass the shuttle under every other thread, just as you would the needle.
3. If you are using a fork, use the tines of your fork to press down the yarn row. Your fork is acting as the beater on a loom would. Otherwise, you can use your fingers.
4. When you get to the other side of you loom, weave your yarn through the warp in the other direction. If you went UNDER a thread in the previous row, go OVER it in this row.
5. Use the tines of your fork to press down the yarn row against the previous row of yarn.
6. Repeat steps 2-5 to weave the entire piece. Change out the yarn color whenever you like!
7. When you reach the end of your weaving space, remove your needle. Turn the loom over.
8. Carefully cut the threads on the back of the room in the middle. Tie the tails of the warp threads together. Trim off the excess threads, if you like!

