

## Part 2 Weaving on a simple frame loom - Videos 3-10

### A bit about frame looms

Weaving on a frame loom is simple and fun to do. Because it is such an accessible form of weaving, people from three to ninety three can enjoy it. Many accomplished weavers also own a small frame loom for its flexibility and use it when travelling. Even our 4 inch/10cm Dinky Loom is popular with 'fancy' weavers, who love it for its diminutive size and portability. Don't be fooled by the simplicity of a frame loom, however. They can be used for all sorts of things and pieces of weaving can be sewn together to make larger items. Complex woven tapestries are often made on a simple frame loom, although they can also be done on a rigid heddle loom.



*Examples of Create With Fibre Midi Frame Looms.*

NB: There is another kind of small loom called a 'pin loom'. Although they have their own following, personally I find them annoying and fiddly. The end result tends to leave gaps between the threads which are impossible to rectify due to the pins being on all four sides. You use thick yarns, which does help but makes the weaving even more difficult. And the nearer you get to finishing the weaving the more you have to fiddle. It is also not really possible to create tapestry-style patterns on a pin loom. So for these reasons we are not covering pin looms on this course.

So I am assuming that by now you have bought, made or borrowed a frame loom. For simple weaving, this should be one with pins at the top and bottom of the loom but not at the sides.

You can also get looms that have grooves top and bottom to hold the warps. However, the warp has a habit of jumping out of the grooves as you weave. The warp threads end up further apart, as it is hard to make a loom with grooves that are close together and even harder to warp it up. You also cannot weave right to the top and bottom edges, so are left with unsightly loops - unlike the Dinky and other looms with pins at the top and bottom which can give a neater finish. So, at least for starters, I would still recommend one with pins rather than grooves, such as the Create With Fibre Dinky, Midi and Scarf looms.

### **Tapestry weaving - just for information - ignore this part if it confuses you!**

Tapestry weavers often use looms without pins or grooves and this is fine for woven tapestries. It is however more complex to set the loom up and is really a skill specific to tapestry weaving. And you can do tapestry weaving on a frame loom with pins or on a rigid heddle loom anyway, unless you are an expert and want to weave fine tapestries with lots of detail. Who knew there were so many different types of weaving, huh?

### **Warping a frame loom that has pins at the top and bottom**

A frame loom is the simplest kind of loom to warp and it has the advantage of helping you understand how warping works. So here are step by step instructions on how to do it.



1. Take a length of Aran weight/ worsted/ Australian 10ply yarn long enough to go around all the pins on the loom. You can simply use a ball of yarn, then you know it will be long enough.
2. Tie the end to one of the corner pins with a single knot, then a half bow or another knot. The bow has the advantage of being easy to undo afterwards.
3. Take the end attached to the ball of yarn and zig zag up and down each pin in turn, leaving the yarn slightly loose, but not loose enough that it wants to come off the pins. The reason for this is that the warp gets tighter as you weave, because it has to then go under and over all the weft threads.

*Beginning the warping process on a frame loom.*

4. Tie off the other end to the final pin with another single knot and another half bow.
5. Once you have had a bit of practise, you will find you can get away with just the half bow and it is easier to get this out when you have finished weaving.

Voilà, you have warped the loom. This is essentially what you are doing when warping any loom, stringing the threads (or warps) from one end to the other. Fancy techniques can be used to make a long warp, thread it through heddles (holes) and so on, but it is essentially a way of stringing threads from one end of the thing to the other.

## Weaving with a weaving needle

For much larger looms, shuttles are often used when weaving. For a frame up to about 20 inches/50cm wide a cranked weaving needle works well though. Although stick shuttles can be used for weaving on small frames, they are actually not necessary and tend to cause problems, as the warp threads want to pop off every time you use the shuttle.



*A cranked weaving needle in use with a Create With Fibre Dinky Loom.*

On larger frames when doing tapestry, simply use a small ball (butterfly) of yarn and use your fingers to do the weaving. So on a smaller frame, if ever you don't have a weaving needle, just do that! The great thing about weaving is that it is a simple concept and can be done with the simplest of equipment.

A weaving needle is a great tool however and can speed up the process. We use cranked, Perspex weaving needles and also smaller, flat 'tape bodkins'. Being flat, these bodkins are easy to bend in order to create a crank. but any longish needle with a large enough eye will do.

## To start weaving

1. Cut a length of yarn about 3 feet/1m long. It doesn't have to be precise, no need to measure it but don't make it too long or it will get tangled up.
2. Thread this through the eye of the weaving needle.
3. Start on one side and weave over and under the warp threads, putting the needle through the weaving first, not the tail.



*A threaded weaving needle on a Create With Fibre Midi Loom.*

4. Pull the yarn through until a 2 inch/5cm tail remains at the side.
5. Put the weaving needle down and weave this tail into the next shed (row) by hand, this time going under and over rather than over and under. The tail is tucked in like this because it is untidy if it is left at the start of the weaving.
6. Weaving builds up like bricks on a wall. You weave over and under on one row and under and over on the next.
7. Now pick up the needle again and do the next row. You will now be working from the other side, so that the yarn does not loop across the loom. This time you are going under and over. When you get to the woven in tail, you will be going the same way but don't worry about that.
8. It is never necessary (or a good idea) to tie knots when weaving. The ends of the yarn are simply locked in by the subsequent rows of weaving.

## How to deal with the end of the yarn

Now weave until you are almost out of yarn. To weave the last part of the yarn, weave the unthreaded needle through and then thread the yarn through the needle.

You are aiming to finish somewhere in the middle of the weaving not at the side. Weave until there is a short end left and poke this through to the underneath of the weaving. Do not cut it flush with the weaving but it can be cut a bit shorter if necessary, taking care not to cut the warp threads. Always leave at least half an inch/1cm of yarn as a tail. Ends are not a fault in weaving and should never be cut flush. In a lot of weaving, they can be left as short ends on the back. If you are making a scarf or other item where the back will show, leave a longer end and sew it in later.

## How to join in a new colour or new length of yarn

1. Now thread the needle with a new piece of yarn as before. You can change colour if you want to and frame looms are a great way to use up odds and ends of yarn in different colours.
2. Remember to put the needle through the weaving first, not the tail end of the yarn.
3. This time you are going to go through the weaving in the same shed as before and from the same side. That means that if you started from the right and went under and over when you wove that last half row with the old yarn, you start from the right and go under and over again.
4. Pull the needle and yarn through the weaving until it overlaps the old yarn by 1-2 inches/2.5-5cm. That will lock both yarns into place once you weave over the top and it is important not to tie knots. Don't worry if it looks a bit different due to going the same way twice, this will become less and less obvious as you continue to weave. It is important to overlap the yarns or there may be a small hole or gap where one yarn ends and the next one begins.
5. Start to weave again as before, now working from the new side. If you went under and over on the last row, you are now going over and under (or vice versa).
6. Continue to weave until you begin to run out of space.

## How to weave when you are getting near the end and running out of space

Eventually, there will not be enough room to get a Perspex weaving needle through the weaving. At this point, begin to pack the weaving down more firmly. This will allow you to weave more rows. Once the weaving is off the loom, you can spread the final rows out again so that they cover the spaces left by the pins at the top and bottom of the loom.

Then, when there is even less room, change to a smaller tape bodkin or other smaller bodkin/needle with a larger eye, such as the ones used to sew up knitwear. It is worth spending a bit of time on the last couple of rows to get a neater finish.

## Finishing the weaving

Now pop the weaving off the loom by putting your hand underneath it and pushing the weaving off the pins. Untie the two ends that were attached to the loom and sew them in. There is no need to sew in the ends on the back from when you changed yarn, simply snip them to 1cm in length and no shorter. If you make the ends shorter than that, you will end up with them poking through to the front or worse, make a hole in the weaving. If you wash the weaving in warm water with some washing up liquid, it will 'bed in' and look neater. It can be pulled into shape whilst damp if necessary. Dry flat.

## Joining pieces of weaving to make something larger

Weaving can be sewn together if you want a larger item. For instance, you make a scarf, cot blanket or even a jacket by joining woven squares together.



*A scarf made by joining Create With Fibre Dinky Loom squares together.*