

Part 9 What to do if a warp thread breaks - Video 31

Avoiding broken warps

Broken warps can normally be avoided with a few simple tricks. You can use virtually anything as a warp if you know how to treat it. This is important because if you are weaving a delicate scarf, you want the warp to be the same, delicate yarn.

If using something that is a bit fluffy or vulnerable, cise the warp before use. To do this, wind the yarn into hanks then soak it in a strong solution of soluble laundry starch, which should be easy to find online. Dry it without rinsing. It will make the warp a lot more durable.

Use the correct heddle. If weaving with something fluffy, use a heddle with wider spacing, such as a 5 dent or even a 2.5 dent heddle. This will ensure there is room for all the fluff, which will otherwise get rubbed off on the heddle, causing the yarn to break. Ashford Handicrafts make their heddles with especially large eyes in them for this reason. Their heddles will also fit some other makes of loom for example the Kromski with a little sanding.

Clear the shed when you bring the heddle forward. To do this, take the heddle from its stand and push it down or up firmly as you bring it forward, before using it to beat the weaving. This means that when you then change shed, the threads are less likely to stick together. If some threads still stick, clear them by hand. Check regularly that there are no fibres caught around the heddle at the back or front.

Beat by hand. With a very fluffy warp, use the heddle to change shed, but do not use it to beat down the weaving. Instead, do this with an afro comb. Do not use a tapestry beater for this, as it will be too heavy and could damage delicate or fluffy warps.

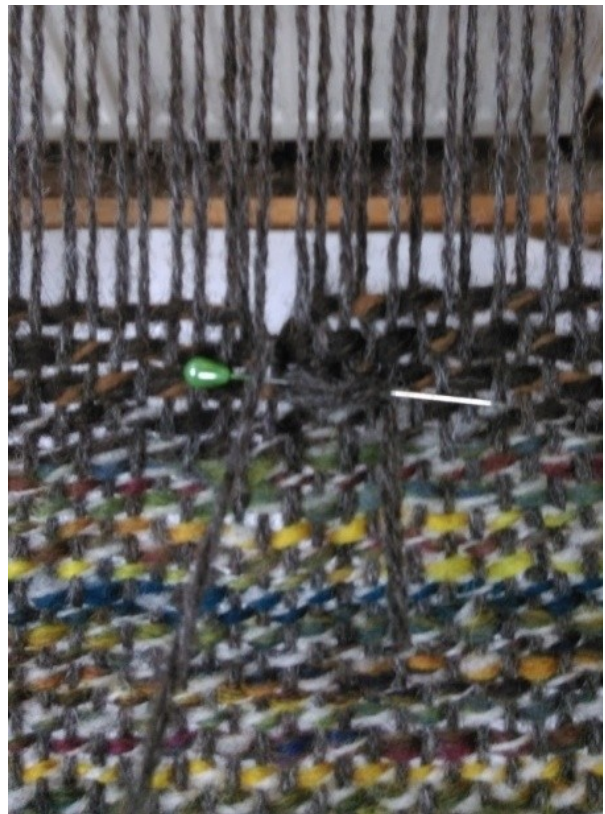
Mending a broken warp thread

This is actually quite easy to do and a great thing to practise, because then you will not worry about it so much!

- Cut a new length of warp, long enough to finish the weaving, although you may not need it all.
- Tie this to the rear part of the broken thread if possible. If not, proceed as below and we will deal with the broken thread later.
- Get a pin and pin it into position in the weaving you have already done, where the broken thread was.
- Wrap the new warp around the pin in figure of eight fashion.

How to deal with a missed warp in the weaving

- If you were unable to tie the new thread to the old, throw the new thread over the back of the loom and tie a weight to it so that it is under the same tension as the other threads. Various household objects such as a fork, rolled up paper etc. can be used.
- Throw the old thread out of the way to the back or front of the loom.
- As you weave and the warp is wound forward, it may become possible to tie the old and new warp threads together later but it does not matter if you just leave it as it is.
- If the old and new threads are tied together, they will need to be adjusted and re-tied as the weaving progresses. At some point, this second end may need pinning into the weaving as well - it will be obvious if this needs to happen.



Tying the new thread in (left) and using a pin as part of the mending process (right).



This is very similar to repairing a broken warp except there is not an old thread to remove.

- Take a length of yarn long enough for the entire warp. You can wind it into a ball if necessary.
- Thread it through the heddle from back to front.
- Tie it to the front stick.
- Allow the remaining yarn to hang down at the back of the loom and weight it as necessary.
- You may need to move the weight or unwind more yarn as you weave and the weaving is wound onto the front stick.