

SWATCH PAGE

GUATEMALAN TWILL SKIPS



Twill skip blocks. From a Guatemalan backstrap loom.

An interesting weave that produces elaborate brocaded designs composed of miniature building blocks has been named twill skip by Mary Atwater. The supplementary weft "skips" over on the surface across several warps and under a single tiedown thread. It never enters a plain weave shed. Skips are often used to provide lavish decoration on the huipiles of Guatemalan Indian women. The distinctive feature of this weave is the presence of supplementary weft turns on the top side of the fabric, creating loops that enhance the woven surface. A regular pattern of tiedown threads holding the floats at either side of the block enables the shed to be loom controlled.

A variation of the Guatemalan skip weave is executed along diagonal lines. It is classified as a free weft float pattern, as it is not loom controlled.

Twill skip blocks for rigid heddle looms

To weave twill skip blocks on a rigid heddle loom regularly spaced tiedown threads are picked up behind the heddle. A separate butterfly is used for each separate block to be formed. Blocks progress diagonally to build a design.

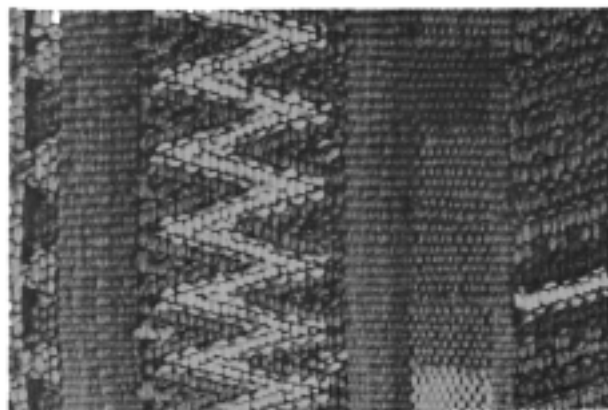
pickup 1 — push heddle down and pick up behind it:
1 up, 3 down across web

pickup 2 — open the next plain weave shed. Move in one warp in each direction from previously picked tiedown threads and pick up these new tiedowns.

weaving sequence:

- tabby a — ground weft
- pickup 1 — supplementary weft
- tabby b — ground weft
- pickup 2 — supplementary weft
- repeat until the block is the desired size.

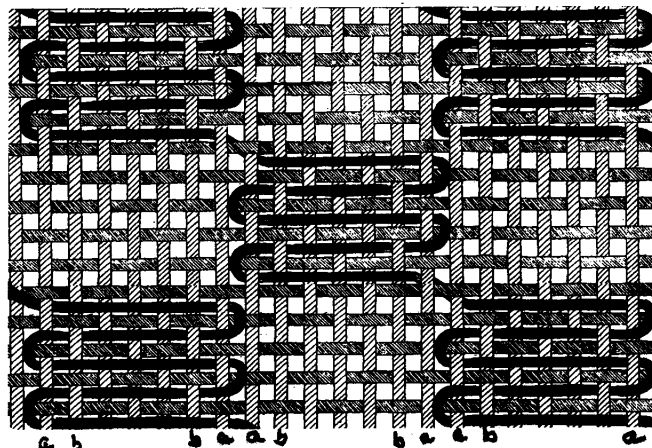
Note: in this method, the second row of blocks will share a tiedown thread in common with the first row of blocks



Diagonal twill skips from the angular designs on this Guatemalan fabric.

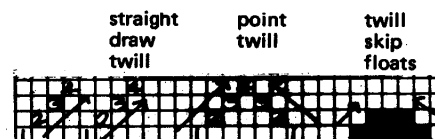
Twill skip blocks for four harness looms

To treadle twill skip blocks, the threading is arranged so that the tiedown threads can be raised when needed. The tiedown threads are indicated in the diagram above as "a" and "b". The tiedown threads securing the 5 thread floats are designated "a"; those securing the 3 thread floats, "b".

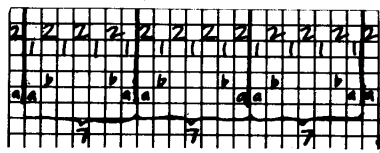


As you can see, even though the blocks are woven checkerboard fashion, the treadling raises tiedown threads for all blocks.

The threading for the twill blocks needs to be derived from a point twill rather than a straight draw twill.



There are seven threads in each twill skip block unit. Begin with dividing the 1–2 unit into seven thread units:



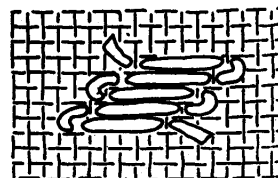
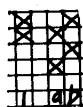
To control the two "a" tiedown threads that affix the longer, 5 thread float, place them on harness 3 and 4, replacing even numbers with even, odd with odd.

A treadle will control the "a" tiedown threads.

threading



tieup



Diagonal Skip Weave Motifs

For rigid heddle and four harness looms, pickups are made on a closed shed. Size of the skip depends on the scale of the design.

pickup — for each motif, pick under 1, over 6, under 1

Each successive pickup is shifted one warp end to the right or left of the previous tiedown threads.

weaving sequence:

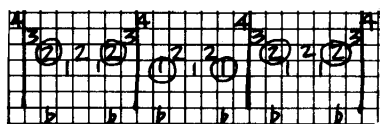
shed a — ground weft

supplementary weft — pickup as above

shed b — ground weft

supplementary weft — pickup (shifted by one warp end)

To control the "b" tiedown threads, string heddles are needed, attached to the circled threads.



weaving sequence:

tabby a — ground weft

1 — supplementary weft

tabby b — ground weft

S.H. — supplementary weft

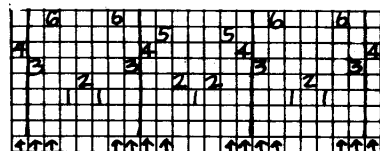
repeat ending 1 — supplementary weft

You may be wondering if there is indeed anything gained by using this setup on a four harness loom, as opposed to following the two harness instructions. We wondered about it too, but decided to include it because it was such fun to derive! You can decide for yourself.

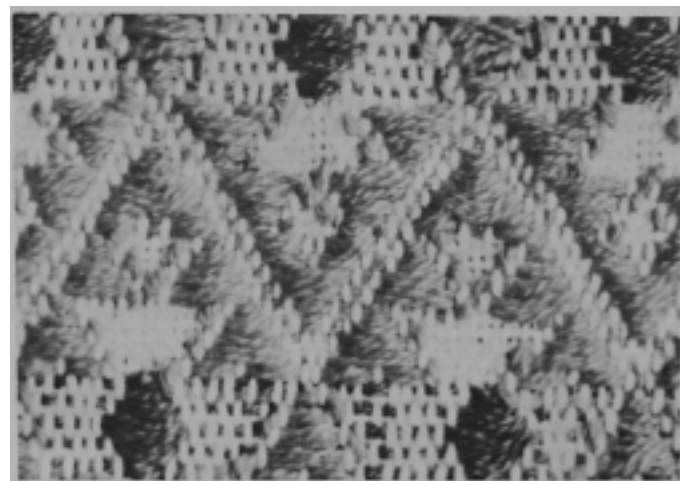
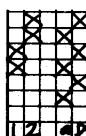
Twill skip blocks on six harness looms

For a six harness threading the circled threads would be placed on extra harnesses, one for the threads circled "1" and one for those circled "2" substituting an even number for an even number, an odd for an odd:

threading



tieup



Happy Weaving and Experimenting,
Suzanne Baizerman and Karen Searle