

## FIBERS FOR THE FRAMELOOM

Frameloom weavers have found few limits to the rigid heddle loom. Tell a zealous frameloom weaver that double weave or waffle weave are floorloom weaves, and you'll soon see a twenty inch wide, two-layered, waffle-textured solution to the challenge. Solving technical problems of weave structures is part of the fun. But capturing the beauty of any fiber you want to use is another joy—one which requires "contrivance, ingenuity, and perfect knowledge."\*

It isn't long before the frameloom weaver is tempted to leave off the trusty cotton carpet warp and try the array of available yarns. A good way to start designing with a variety of threads is to use several sizes of the same fiber. Or combine various twists of the same fiber. Then, try combining various fibers. Whatever the yarn choice, study it, for the threads will keep their character; will have their way. After recognizing the nature and structure of the yarns, you can add a little contrivance and ingenuity to solve the weaving problems the yarns create.

The suggestions below are arranged by characteristics. For example, hints for weaving with wool may be found under "hairy," "stretchy," and "fragile," depending on its spin.

### stretchy: wool, some synthetics, knitting yarns

Wind warp snugly, but not stretched.  
 Use a cotton thread at the edge to keep the selvage neat.  
 Wind onto the warp beam with firm, but not tight tension.  
 Weave with a slightly loose warp tension.  
 Bubble the weft to ensure comfortable weft tension.  
 Be careful that a stretched weft is not trapped in the warp before it is beaten down or narrowing will result.  
 Take care in passing the shuttle to avoid snagging the warp.  
 Release tension at the end of each weaving session.  
 Weave off as soon as possible to keep the elasticity.  
 When combining yarns of differing stretch, wind onto the warp beam carefully, not allowing the stretchier one too much tension or seersucker will result in the web.

### stubborn: linen, cords, jute

Wind the warp tightly on the warping board and shuttle.  
 Be especially careful to roll onto the warp beam with even tension.  
 Wet linen before tying onto the cloth beam for even tension.  
 Retie any loose warp ends to get a snug tension across the loom.  
 Be careful not to snag warps during the weaving.  
 Leave less of a weft angle as there is less give in the weft.  
 Never rest the shuttle on top of the warp.  
 Release the tension at the end of a weaving session.

### nubby, loopy: some wools, linens, cottons, novelties

Whatever will fit through the holes and slots comfortably is suitable.

If nubs are too large for the holes, try threading the yarn only in the slots alternating with a smoother yarn in the holes.

If the beater can't be pulled down, use a shed stick to beat each pick. Especially watch the weft tension and spacing of the warp as threads tend to get out of line. Try to use beater occasionally if possible.

If the nubs are too large for both holes and slots, some strands may be carried up during the weaving to add interest to the warp. Leave a space for the large yarns in the heddle; tie them to the cloth beam in place, and weave them vertically by hand every pick or two.

### hairy: wool, linen, mohair, some synthetics

Design a warp with smooth threads to alternate with the hairy threads to prevent locked sheds.

To help open the shed, tap the warp from the top on the up shed and from the bottom on the down shed. Threads will pop into position.

For the down shed, insert a shed stick behind the heddle and stand it on edge to help open the warp.

Wet roughspun linen warps to keep the fibers smooth.

A light coating of hairspray, fixative, or spray starch help to control stray fibers.

Watch for the accumulation of loose fibers near the heddle. Some of these may be carefully lifted off the warp.



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\* Three attributes of the skilled weaver in Joseph France's *Weaver's Complete Guide*, 1814.

**fragile: homespun, single ply, roughspun**

Single ply yarns break easily and tangle.

Make the warp carefully. Handle the warp as little as possible.

Add a commercial twisted, plied thread or two at the selvage for strength.

Weave with a snug but not tight warp tension.

Leave the weft comfortably relaxed.

Beat carefully; press rather than beat the yarn into place.

Release the tension at the end of the weaving session to prevent wear.

Wind the web onto the cloth beam with paper to keep pegs from damaging the piece.

**thin yarns: cottolin, any thin strand**

Sley double in holes and slots.

Crowd several warps in areas of the heddle and skip dent others for a textural effect.

Weave with a double strand.

**heavy, lumpy: any thick yarns**

If heavy weft (or rya areas) create thick areas in the cloth which in turn cause uneven tension on the warp, pad the low areas of the web on the cloth beam to equalize the tension.

If heavy weft causes the cloth beam to become too bulky to roll, unhook the cloth from the cloth beam, lay the project in teh lap, and hook back onto the pegs along the fell. Pack in extra weft at this point that can be adjusted when the piece is off the loom.

**wiry: metal, nylon, plastic**

Wind the warp as tightly as possible on the warping board, the warp beam, and the shuttle.

Tape across the warp beam loops to prevent slipping.

Tie or twist the ends onto the cloth beam and tape down.

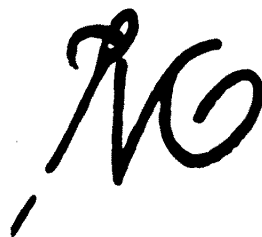
Weave with a small angle. Keep the selvage comfortable without loops or pulled in edges.

Wind onto the cloth beam with paper to prevent the pegs from poking through the web.

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