

# Hand Woven Materials for Clothing

BY RUTH BOLINGER

**I**N MAKING MATERIALS for clothing, there are certain points necessary to keep in mind. In the first place, it is essential to know the number of yards of finished material required before the amount of yarn needed for weaving can be determined. It is often best to get the pattern by which the garment is to be made first, as nothing is more disastrous than not having enough material.

*Second:* Allow for waste in warp. From previous weaving you will know how much waste there is in your weaving and on your loom. Depending on the weaver the waste is from one half to one yard.

*Third:* Allow for the shrinkage of material after it is taken from the loom. Different yarns act so differently in this respect that no definite rules of amount of shrinkage can be given. But soft, loosely twisted yarns shrink more than tightly twisted yarns. Loosely woven materials shrink more than tightly woven materials. Lustre yarns, because they are combined with silk, shrink very little. It is best to allow plenty for shrinkage, as a little too much material is much better than not enough.

*Fourth:* Test the yarn for strength before warping. If it is a very fine yarn, as Afghan or fabri, or a loosely twisted yarn, as Shetland Floss, or a yarn that fuzzes, as camel's hair, always put a heavy dressing on it. Even such yarn as homespun and Laurel make a better warp if a thin dressing is used. This is really very easy to do, and should either be done while the yarn is still in skeins or, if warped on a warping reel, it can be done after the yarn has been measured. A very satisfactory and cheap dressing is made with flaxseed. Boil the flaxseed in water until you have a thick gelatinous liquid, which should be strained off. The flaxseed can be boiled in fresh water as many as four times, so that a small quantity of flaxseed makes a large amount of dressing. This will keep in a sealed jar so that it is ready for use. Use almost full strength for fine yarns. Dilute with water to consistency of thin starch for stronger yarns.

*Fifth:* One reason hand-woven fabrics are so much more desirable and lovely than machine-woven fabrics is that they are handled less after coming from the loom. The intense process of washing to cleanse the fabrics woven in grease on a power loom, and the ironing and fulling processes take away from the alive quality that hand-woven materials have. Besides making the materials less lovely than hand-woven ones, it reduces the wearing quality of the materials. As you know, hand-woven materials wear and last for years and years. Fifteen years ago material was woven for a suit that has been made over and remodelled a number of times, and today the material is just as good as new and the suit extremely smart.

There is a certain amount of finishing necessary for hand-

woven materials, but the less they are handled, within reason, the softer, more alive the materials feel. Washing is an essential finish for any woolen material.

Washing does three things to materials: (1) It removes the dressing that has been used on the yarn, and cleans the material. (2) It brings out the loveliest color and all the beauty of the yarn. (3) It shrinks the material all that it ever will shrink, which means that a garment can be washed any number of times afterwards and it will always hold its shape.

Certain points to remember in washing all woollens are: (1) Use lukewarm water—never hot water. (2) Keep water the same temperature throughout. (3) Use a good, mild soap. (4) Make a suds of the soap in the water before putting in the material. (5) Rinse water should be the same temperature and just slightly soapy. (6) Wash the goods gently. (7) Use a tub big enough to easily cover all the material with the soapy water.

The type of material and the amount of dressing used determine the amount of washing necessary. That is, a fine piece of cloth will be washed enough if it is put into one very sudsy water and one rinse water. As in washing of any kind, these materials should be washed until clean, and sometimes they take several sudsy waters and the rinse water. A yarn that has been spun and woven in the grease, as the Scotch hand-spun yarns, makes a very greasy material. This must be very thoroughly washed and can often best be done in a washing machine of the kind that is easy on clothes. After the material has been rinsed in slightly soapy water, wring as dry as possible. If it is a sheer material, wrap in a towel to partially dry. If it is a firmly woven or a heavy material, it can be hung on the line to partially dry. Be sure to hang it straight and do not let it dry completely on the line.

In pressing, the essential point to remember is to use as little heat as possible. We had some materials finished on a steam pressing table where the heat is intense, and they were not as lovely as the materials that were washed and then pressed with an iron or on a mangle. Use a dry cloth over the damp material and press.

*Sixth:* Care should be taken in making up woven materials. If at all loosely woven, they have a tendency to ravel. The piece should be stitched on both ends when taken from the loom and before it is washed. In cutting the material, each piece should be stitched before sewing together.

There are many lovely woven fabrics that can be made on hand looms; very sheer materials for light-weight dresses, slightly heavier, tighter woven materials for suits, and very heavy materials for warm winter coats.

A lovely woven fabric for a thin dress and jacket is made



ILLUSTRATION No. 1

by combining an all wool yarn, such as fabri with a silk and wool, such as Bernat's Lorneau. The combination gives a texture that is lovely to feel and has that loftiness of touch so desirable in materials. At the same time it is fine enough so that it makes up beautifully and has body enough to hang well.

Use the fabri for warp. In this loosely woven material, warp should be set up at least three inches wider than width of material desired. For instance, a warp 38 inches wide when through the reed will make a 35-inch material. Warp the fabri ten threads to the inch—making it 38 inches wide—means you will need 380 warp threads. The length you have determined, remembering to allow for shrinkage of material and waste on the warp. For this material allow at least four inches shrinkage per yard.

After threading the loom, using Draft No. 1, sley warp as follows: Use a fifteen-to-the-inch reed. Sley four threads, one through each dent—leave two dents without any threads and again sley four threads, one through each dent and the next two dents leave empty. Repeat this for the whole set-up. This makes the threads come in groups of four, with the space between equal to two dents on the reed.

Weave four threads of Lorneau, using the treadles in order, that is, 1, 2, 3, 4, then leave a space equal to spaces left in warp threads, and weave four more weft threads and again a space. This makes a material that has four threads

woven together with a small square hole at each corner.

Fabri warp will require 380 yards of yarn to a yard, or a little over one and one-half ounces. Lorneau weft will require two and a quarter balls to the yard.

This same idea of an open fabric can be varied in many ways. Using Lorneau, according to Draft No. 1 and the instructions given above, a slightly heavier and more bumpy material is the result. In Draft No. 1 the threads in the little squares are woven together, so that in spite of the open material it is a comparatively tightly woven material. If Draft No. 2 is used, the center threads of the square are longer, and the result is a thicker fabric. This is a good weight material for a street dress or a light suit.

This material requires four and one-half balls of Lorneau to the yard. Allow for six inches shrinkage per yard. Warp ten threads to the inch, and after threading according to Draft No. 2, sley through a fifteen-to-the-inch reed. Two dents on the reed should be left empty between the threads on heddle sticks two and three each time, making the threads come in groups of four with a space equal to two dents between each group. Use the tie-up given with Draft No. 2 and treadle as given. The first and fourth treadles are used twice, or the thread doubled and a space equal to two dents of the reed is left between the second and third treadles.

A very sheer and open material can be woven by using



ILLUSTRATION No. 3

a fine wool, as fabri or Afghan, for both warp and weft, and either of the above patterns may be used.

A striking corded or monotone striped material can be woven of either fabri or Afghan, by using Draft No. 3, warped twenty threads to the inch. This makes a firm fabric with two stripes running vertically through it at half-inch intervals. This fabric is made on a 1, 2, 3, 4, set-up and the stripes are made by running three threads through three heddles on the same stick, and three more threads through three heddles on the next heddle stick. It is woven with a plain weave. Trimming for the dress or material for a cape or jacket to go with the dress can be made by checked pattern by weaving three threads together, the same as the three threads come together in the warp to make the stripe. Illustration No. 1 is a dress and cape made of black fabri in this weave. The dress is striped and the jacket checked.

One pound of fabri will make two and one-half yards, one yard wide, of material as described above. Afghan will make a finer material and one pound will make four and one-half yards. Allow at least four inches a yard for shrinkage, and remember to allow for the waste in warping.

Another beautiful fabric, this time coat material, is made from Bernat's Glorine yarn. There are some beautiful colors in this lustre yarn for coats, and Glorine yarn makes a good weight fabric.

A very soft material and still practical in its wearing

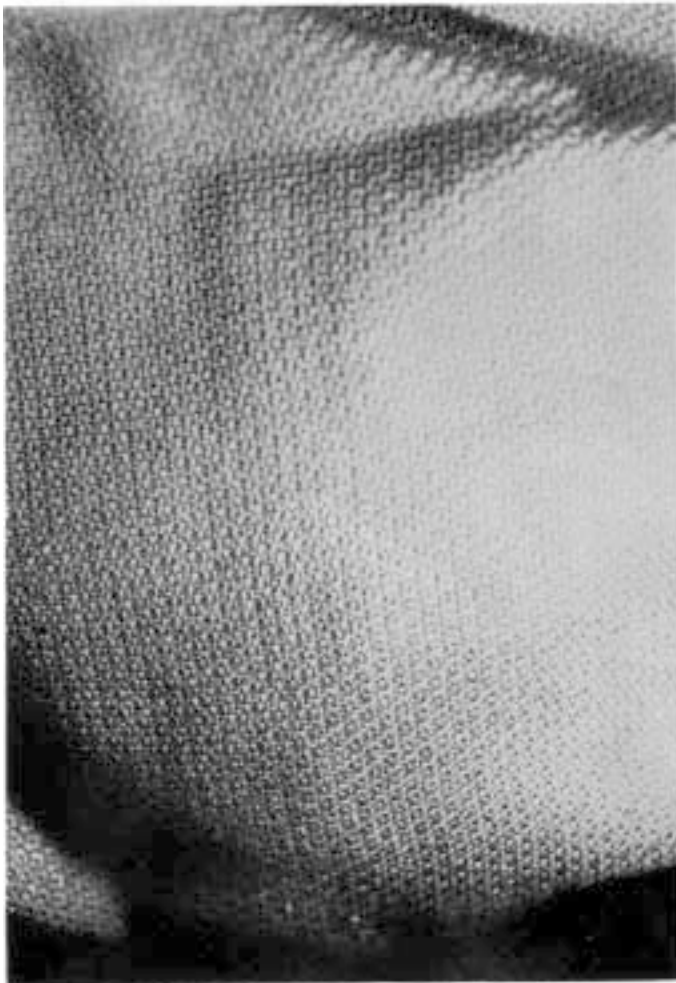


ILLUSTRATION No. 4



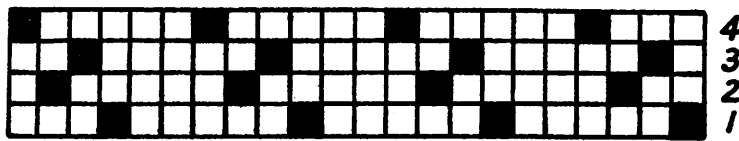
ILLUSTRATION No. 2

qualities is made by using ten threads to the inch for both warp and weft of the Glorine yarn. A 39-inch material finished means a 41-inch set-up. Allow for three inches shrinkage per yard in the material. Three quarters of a pound of Glorine yarn to the yard is required, using Draft No. 4, at ten threads to the inch. Use tie-up given with draft and treadle it 1, 2, 1, 3, and repeat.

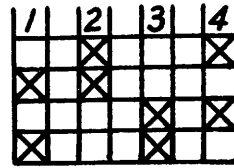
The outstanding characteristic of this material is the vertical lines made by two warp threads every half inch. These are the threads that stand out, the rest of the threads forming the background. This is what makes it such a practical coat material for those who like to look as slender as possible. Illustration No. 2 gives the back of a tailored coat made of a silver grey lustre yarn and woven in the pattern above described.

Draft No. 5, using Glorine, or a similar weight yarn, at twelve threads to the inch, makes a material of an outstanding weave. It has little squares with four threads coming out of the center of the square. In certain lights one sees a vertical line, in another light diagonal lines running both ways. Illustration No. 3 shows eleven yards of this material, woven of a wine-colored lustre yarn. Illustration No. 4 gives a close-up of the weave. A three-piece ensemble was made of this material. The skirt was straight line with a short split on either side. The jacket was quite plain and fitted and buttoned up the front. The coat was made on loose swagger

**DRAFT NO. 1**

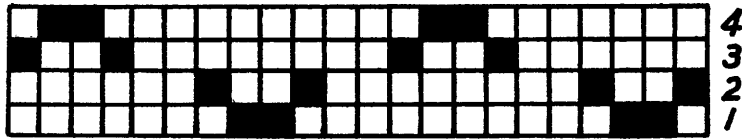


Thread 1, 3, 2, 4 ; 1, 3, 2, 4.  
Sley 4 threads - Skip 2 dents.

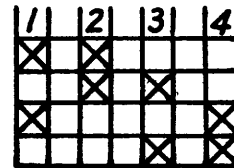


Treadle 1, 2, 3, 4.

**DRAFT NO. 2**



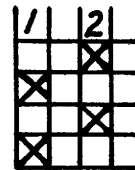
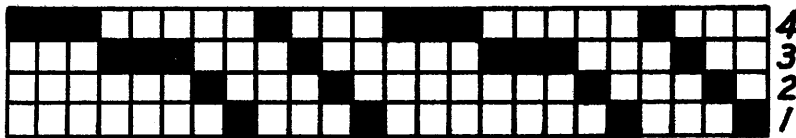
Draft showing two empty dents between threads on 2nd. & 3rd. heddle sticks.



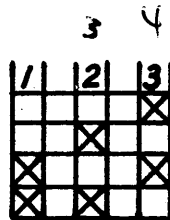
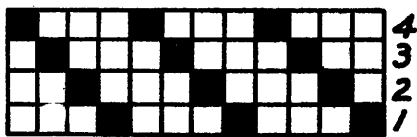
Treadle

1 - 1 time  
2 - 2 times  
1 - 1 time  
3 - 1 time  
4 - 2 times  
3 - 1 time

**DRAFT NO. 3**

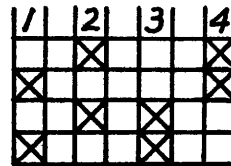
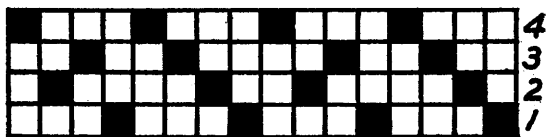


**DRAFT NO. 4**



Treadle  
1, 2, 1, 3.  
Repeat

**DRAFT NO. 5**



Treadle  
1, 2, 3, 4.

lines, with lovely full sleeves coming in tight at the wrist. The weight of this outfit, worn together, makes it warm enough for rather cold weather, while either the suit or coat worn separately makes it practical for warmer weather.

A lighter weight ensemble could be made of a lustrous yarn similar to Laurel, by using Draft No. 5, with fifteen threads to the inch. The weave is the same as described above but tighter and finer. This material would require a little over a half pound to the yard.

Only a few fabrics have been described. There is an

almost unlimited number of materials one might make, using different yarns and different combinations of yarn. And hand-woven materials do make such beautiful clothing.

But one of the essential points in hand-woven garments is that they must be well tailored. Your material may be ever so beautiful, well woven and of lovely yarn, but if the finished product is not well made, so that it hangs correctly, fits, is smart, has the right lines, it will not be as beautiful an article of clothing as every piece of hand-woven material deserves to be.