

# Band Weaving 101



## Universal Weaving Vocabulary

**warp** - The “vertical” threads which form the framework that the weaving takes place on.

**weft** - the “horizontal” threads that are woven over and under the warp threads.

**shuttle** - device usually a wooden stick used to hold the weft thread depending on the type of weaving and the loom, the shuttle may also be used to “beat” the weft into place. For weaving bands a belt shuttle usually works best. It has a blade or knife edge on at least 1 side for beating.

**shed** - the opening created by raising or lowering various warp threads through which the shuttle is passed.

**warp-faced weave** - the warp threads are the only visible threads in the finished fabric. The weft threads are beaten into the center of the fabric and are not visible except perhaps at the selvedge. The pattern design is made solely with the warp threads.

**Shed Stick:** a stick often with strings tied to specific warp threads and used to raise warp threads so that the shuttle can be passed beneath the warp threads in order to create a specific weave structure or a pattern.

**Heddle** - A wire, string or wood device in which the warp threads are threaded through so that they can be raised or lowered according to a pattern.

**Rigid Heddle:** A harness like device in which specific warp threads are threaded through the center and between sticks or threads so that only certain warp threads can be raised or lowered to create a shed for the shuttle to pass through.

**EPI** - “Ends per inch” - simply put, this is the number of warp threads per inch.

## Types of Weave Structures

**Tabby** - the weft goes over one warp thread and under the next, over and under

**2/2 Twill** - the weft goes over 2 warp threads and under the next 2 warp threads and so on. Each row of weft is moved over 1 thread position. Twill creates a diagonal pattern. Tartan is woven in twill.

## Backstrap Weaving

This is a method of weaving that dates back to the earliest weavers and continues today around the world. Backstrap weaving is adaptable for many different kinds of weaving including inkle, tablet and rigid heddle. Basically, one end of the warp threads are tied around a solid object (a chair, door knob, tree, etc), then, the other end of the warp is tied around the weaver’s waist or to a belt the weaver is wearing.

## Inkle Weaving

A warp-faced tabby weave. In the Middle Ages Inkle bands were woven using the backstrap method of weaving with either a shed stick or a rigid heddle and a loom was not used. Also during the Middle Ages the band itself was called an “inkle”. The word, Inkle, did not refer to the weaving method as it does today. In period, inkle bands were used for straps, bags, trim, handles, anything and everything that

required a strong, narrow band of fabric. The Inkle Loom was invented after the Middle Ages and is not strictly period for the SCA, however, because the inkle loom allows the weaver to put down their work and set it aside and because the bands created on it are indistinguishable from a backstrap inkle band, you will find many inkle looms in use in the SCA. While it is not strictly period, the loom makes weaving inkle bands much more practical and you will find lots of inkle looms in the SCA. A good, full-size inkle loom (producing a band about 3-4 yards in length) can be purchased for between \$40 and \$80. Inkle looms also come in floor models that make a longer band and “mini”-looms that make a slightly shorter band.

#### **Books to buy:**

**Inkle Weaving** by Helene Bress, Flower Valley Press, 1990 ISBN: 0-9620543-1-3  
**Inkle** by Evelyn Neher, 1974

#### **Websites to visit:**

<http://www.woolery.com/> (weaving supplies, looms, books on weaving)  
<http://inkleweaving.com/> (general instructions)  
<http://www.schachtspindle.com/help/inkle.htm> (instructions and looms for sale)  
<http://www.earthguild.com> (looms for sale)  
<http://members.shaw.ca/evethejust/pickuplearn.html> (instructions for pick up weaving)  
<http://www.geocities.com/scalaska1/inkle.html> (info on history)

#### **Tablet or Card Weaving**

Tablet weaving is a warp-faced weave. In the Middle Ages tablet weaving was done using the backstrap method as well as on a simple loom. The warp threads are threaded through cards with holes in them. Different colored threads go through different holes and the cards are rotated to allow specific threads to come to the top. The shed is changed as the cards are rotated forwards and backwards.

#### **Books to Buy:**

**Card Weaving** by Candace Crockett, Interweave Press, 1991

#### **Websites to visit:**

<http://www.earthguild.com> (supplies, cards and shuttles)  
<http://www.geocities.com/ceryndip/card.htm> (my page of basic instructions)  
<http://www3.sympatico.ca/kirkflowers/tablet.html> (instructions for beginners and more advanced)  
<http://www.stringpage.com/tw/tw.html> (instructions and other information)  
<http://www.weavershand.com/> (excellent resource for all sorts of weaving information)  
<http://www.ronane.com/cards/> (patterns, examples, loom designs, instructions)  
<http://www.cs.vassar.edu/~capriest/birkarcp.html> (information on how to read tablet weaving patterns)  
<http://housebarra.com/EP/ep04/22tablet.html> (basic instructions)  
<http://guntram.co.za/tabletweaving/> (Guntram’s Tablet Weaving Thingy - a program to design your own patterns, also the site contains a large library of advanced patterns.)

#### **Multiple Harness Weaving**

A loom is a device which holds the warp threads under tension and allows specific warp threads to be raised or lowered according to a pattern or weave structure. The warp threads are threaded through 2, 4, 8, 16 or more harnesses (or rigid heddles). What we call the modern loom was invented in the early middle ages and has remained basically unchanged since. The operating principles remain the same.

#### **Books to Buy:**

**Learning to Weave** by Deborah Chandler, Interweave Press Inc, 1995. ISBN: 1-883010-03-9

**Websites to visit:**

<http://www.weavingworld.ca/weave.htm> (weaving resources)

**\*\*\*Must see website of downloadable copyright free books on weaving, lacemaking, and other textile art subjects. <http://www.cs.arizona.edu/patterns/weaving/weavedocs.html>**

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**Instructions for weaving the band**

- 1. Cut a piece of cardboard or foam board or wood 3-4 inches wide and the length should be half the length of the finished band.**
- 2. Wrap yarn around the length of the board as many times as needed for the width desired.**
- 3. Tie the ends together at the top of the board. Cut from the skein. This is your warp.**
- 4. Thread the weft yarn on a yarn needle.**
- 5. Begin at the end with the knot and move down one side of the board leaving at least 6 inches for fringe. Begin weaving (over and under, back and forth) moving down the board. Leave a 6 inch tail on the first row, either weave this tail in over the next couple of rows and trim it off or tie it off to the nearest warp thread and add it to the fringe on that end.**
- 6. When you reach the bottom of the board, turn the board over and continue weaving around the bottom edge and up the back side. As you run out of weft thread, if you are using yarn, you can join the next length of thread with a Russian Join, see below.**
- 7. Stop when you reach 6 inches from the top of the back side.**
- 8. Cut the warp threads at the top of the board and trim off the knot.**
- 9. Tie a half square knot in each end at the point where the weaving ends and the fringe begins to keep the belt from unravelling.**

**\*\*Russian Join: using the needle turn the weft thread back on itself and pull the needle through the center of the thread 2-3 inches leaving a loop on the end the size of your finger. Pull off the needle and thread it on the new piece of yarn. Pull the new yarn through the loop left in the end of the previous length of yarn. Then, turn the new thread back on itself forming a loop which is already connected to the old thread. Trim the tails. Continue weaving with the now connected weft thread being careful not to pull out the embedded tails, continue being careful until the weaving has passed the connection.**

<http://www.knittinganyway.com/freethings/russianjoin.htm>  
[http://www.geocities.com/mama\\_bear\\_007/Russian\\_Join.html](http://www.geocities.com/mama_bear_007/Russian_Join.html)

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