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4-H

Heritage Arts: Rug Making

MJ0705
Member's Manual



Colorado
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University
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Extension

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Introduction

Welcome to the 4-H Heritage Arts project. Without interested individuals, such as yourself, many historic arts and crafts would be lost with the passing of generations.

You will be given the opportunity, through the Heritage Arts project, to choose from a variety of fiber, fabric, yarn arts and crafts. The projects and activities you experience depend upon your enthusiasm and the availability of resources within your home and community.

Heritage Arts is defined as the practical skills passed down from preceding generations that were developed to provide basic family needs, such as apparel, home furnishings, or decorations. It also is defined as a traditional craft and the methods that have been maintained throughout history and passed on to others, often by observation and example.

Classes on traditional crafts are available in many communities, taught by skilled local artisans. The techniques taught often incorporate new techniques and materials with the old, traditional methods to enhance the craft.



P roject Objectives

The Heritage Arts project is designed to help you:

- Learn about a variety of historic arts and crafts.
- Create a craft that connects you to the past.
- Learn about historic influences on arts and crafts.
- Have fun learning.
- Gain skills that might lead to a home-based business.

P roject Expectations

Members are encouraged to learn about and try a variety of different historic crafts. Think of fun places in your community where you can learn more. Ask about interesting, creative artisans who are willing to share their skills with you. Take a field trip to local museums that feature historic fabric and yarn displays. Take a trip to the library and look up interesting facts about a craft that is of particular interest to you. Evaluate or judge fabric and yarn crafts and do a demonstration to share your skills with others. The more activities you do, the more you learn.

To complete your project, respond to all questions on the Heritage Arts Record. Check with your Cooperative Extension office for county fair requirements *if* you want to exhibit your project.

T

extile Crafts

What is a textile craft? It is defined as any method of creating a unique design with fiber, fabric or yarn. Patchwork and applique quilting are examples of textile crafts that use fabric as the main design ingredient. Needlepoint, embroidery, crochet and weaving are textile crafts that use yarns as the design tool. All textile crafts have one thing in common—they use fibers, fabric or yarn to create a design.

With some textile crafts, it means making the fabric, such as weaving, crochet or needlepoint. With other textile crafts, an already existing fabric is changed into something quite different. Quilting and embroidery can change the appearance of a fabric to create an exciting, imaginative design.

C

reating a Design

Once you decide on a heritage craft, it's time to think about the design. Many books show how to create a pleasing design. There also are many printed patterns that can be purchased. There's no better way to enjoy and understand design than to try it! Designing, like most activities, can come naturally once you understand what you are doing.

A design is really a plan—a plan for using all materials so that they look good together. To begin planning the design, examine your materials—whether they are yarns or fabrics or some other material—in a special way. For example, regardless of what materials are used, these basic ingredients are the design:

- line
- shape
- space
- texture
- color

These ingredients are called the *elements of design* and they are important to your plan because they are the visible details of a design. Without a design plan, these elements may seem haphazard or clash. Let's take a closer look at each of these elements of design.

- *Line*

Line is an element that's found everywhere around us. In a garment, lines are created by a seamline, a hem, a dart, a row of trim, a plaid or stripe. A row of embroidery stitches creates a line, as does a row of crochet stitches or the pattern in a quilt square. Some lines are straight and angular, others are curved. Some are thick and sturdy, others fine and delicate. The kind of lines used in a design will affect the character of that design.

- *Shape*

When lines are connected and overlapped, they create shapes: squares, circles, triangles, any shape imaginable. The outline of an applique is a shape, the pieces in a patchwork quilt are shapes, the outline of a garment is a shape, and so on. Just as lines create feelings, so can shapes.

- *Space*

When we talk of space, we mean the actual space an object or a design occupies. When we design, we work within a specific space; so not only must the design itself be well thought out but so must the space around it. That space might be an individual quilt square or entire quilt.

- *Texture*

Texture is the surface characteristic of an object; it may be smooth, fuzzy, soft, pebbly, scratchy, or one of many other textures. Sometimes we don't have to touch an object to know its texture—we can *see* the texture. In planning a design, texture is important to think about because each one we see has a character or feeling, just as lines and shapes do.

- *Color*

When we think of colors, we usually think of color names (or hues) like red, green, yellow or blue. We can create different feelings in a design on the colors we use together. For instance, a design in yellow and green will give you a different feeling from the same design in purple and blue. But, there are other ways we use colors to give a design the feeling we want. The way we use color *values* also can affect a design (value refers to the lightness or darkness of a hue). The same hue can have lots of different values.

Think about all the different kinds of blue (baby blue, light blue, sky blue, peacock blue, navy blue and royal blue). Value can affect the feeling of a design too. Try to visualize a design in all light colors (like lime green, pink, light blue, lemon yellow). Now visualize that same design in dark green, navy blue, dark red, and gold. Does it seem different? How about the same design in lime green and navy blue? Does it seem different in style? The *intensity* of the hues we use in a design also affect the feeling we get from it. Intensity refers to the brightness or dullness of a color. Imagine a design in all bright colors—usually a design made of bright colors is more than our eyes can take! So, use bright colors sparingly!

Evaluate Your Plan—Pattern to Follow

Take a look at the materials you plan to work with—fibers, yarns, fabrics, or threads. What kind of feeling do you want to create with your design? Do the materials create that feeling in their textures and colors? Can you create the kinds of lines and shapes you want with your materials? Are the materials suitable for the space in which you've chosen to create? If you can say "yes" to these questions, you're on your way to a well-designed piece.

But it doesn't stop there. Because even with all the right materials together, designers still need some guidelines on *how* to use them together. You can think of these guidelines as a recipe for deciding just how much of each ingredient (colors, textures, lines, and other elements) to use and where to add them. These guidelines are called principles of design.

Principles of Design

- *Proportion*

Proportion is the relationship of all the parts of a design to each other and to the whole garment or article. Each part needs to be in proportion to the rest of the design. No part should overpower the others. If a garment does not have proportion, one part of the design might be too big for the rest of the design. Or, the design may be too big or too small to look good on the garment, or, there may be too much bright, shiny color that overpowers the other colors. Or, if the design is the entire garment or article, it may lack proportion because it is too overpowering for the person wearing it, or the decor in which it will be used.

- *Balance*

Balance is a feeling of steadiness, of everything in the design looking like it belongs. Balance can be formal (each side of the center is identical) or informal (the sides are different, but “weigh” the same).

- *Emphasis*

Emphasis is the creation of a center of interest. Without the center of interest, a design may seem cluttered and busy, or boring and uninteresting. If a design is not well-planned and is missing emphasis, it may be cluttered with too many colors, different textures, different lines, shapes or sizes. Or, there may not be sufficient contrast to attract attention.

- *Rhythm*

When we look at a design, the eye follows a certain route around the design. It notices differences in lines, shapes, textures, colors, and spaces. The route the eye follows is known as rhythm. In a well-planned design, the eye is led from one to another to the point of emphasis. That rhythm is created in a design by repeating something throughout the design—color, texture, shape, or size. If an item misses rhythm, it may have too many unrelated parts—too many unrelated colors or textures, shapes, lines or sizes. Or, the design may be placed so that it is spotty or scattered and doesn't seem to fit together.

- *Unity*

When we say that a design has unity, we mean that it is complete. Unity is the all the materials fitting together in a pleasing combination. If unity is missing, the characters of colors, textures, lines, shapes and spaces are not compatible, or there may not be a central theme.

Inspiration Sources

Now that you have learned something about a well-planned design, it's time to begin thinking about developing your *own* designs. How do you start?

Actually, there are several ways to begin. One of them is to become aware of the design of the objects around us. Take a good look; there are examples everywhere! Look at the grain of the wood on a table top. What kind of lines or shapes are created? How does the rhythm in the grain move your eye over the design? Can you create a similar design—perhaps with weaving or needlepoint or with embroidery?

There are many places to get ideas. Look outside at the patches of grass for ideas on shapes and colors, look at the sunsets and clouds for shapes and colors, or the cracks in sidewalks, the frost on windows, the bark on trees. Everywhere you look, there are ideas for colors and textures, shapes and lines. Design examples aren't limited to nature. Look at designs in things around the house like baskets or pictures. Perhaps there's a design on pottery that you'd like to try in embroidery, or the shape of an old bottle gives you an idea for an applique. You can find ideas in magazines, wallpaper and comic books. There are ideas everywhere if you'll just use a little imagination!

Doodle on paper to develop and crystallize a design, or try arranging yarns or scraps of fabric. Try cutting out shapes from construction paper to experiment with a design. It does not matter how, but it is important to plan a design first!

The designer whose work shows fine quality, adapts and stylizes a design to suit the materials used. A designer does not attempt to imitate real objects, such as flowers using thread. Instead, if a flower idea is chosen as a theme for the design, the designer alters it to suit the shape of the article, its purpose and the limitations of materials and tools.

Resources

There are lots of good sources to help you with the "How-to's" of the textile crafts. Your Cooperative Extension agent can help you locate commercial leaflets available for 4-H members on specific textile crafts. You may want to supplement the leaflets with films and slides. Some are available through your county Cooperative Extension office.

Your talents are an excellent resource for the club. Share your know-how and special interests to help others. Bring the tools and let everyone experiment. Bring in others from the community to share their craft knowledge. A local craft or fabric store may work with you or help you contact someone with an interest in a specific textile craft. Members may decide to make a sampler, shawl, handkerchiefs, or monograms utilizing the various techniques.

Libraries can be an excellent source of information. You can broaden your knowledge of why and how heritage crafts began by reading through historic publications. Magazines are also a terrific source of ideas. Internet web pages provide lots of interesting information as well. Perhaps you will want to clip and file ideas to share and talk about. There also are many craft magazines and pattern books that can be good sources too. Craft Organizations and Councils often provide specific information that may be helpful. Check with your county Cooperative Extension office, library or craft store for contact information.

Sharing What You Have Learned

Now that you have learned many new things about a heritage craft, why not share? This helps you learn more about the topic and become more comfortable teaching others. Making an exhibit to show at the county fair is another way to share with others. You also may share your knowledge by giving a demonstration and show how to do something.

Demonstration

Select a topic that relates to something you learned about your project and plan a demonstration. Some ideas include:

- Use of design principles and elements
- Selecting fabric or yarn for a project
- Sharing the history of a craft
- Purchasing supplies
- Steps to complete a craft item
- Can you think of others?

Evaluation or Judging

Learn the standards of quality for your craft. The exhibit item will be compared to these standards at a fair or during craft competitions. Standards are printed in the 4-H craft project guidelines, or may be found in craft publications or fair judge's guides available through your county Cooperative Extension office. When you apply the standards to a craft item, you judge or evaluate that item against the standard of quality. Evaluating your project yourself will enable you to see how well you applied the skills you learned. How well did your item compare to the standards? What did you do well? Where can you improve? Answers to these questions will help you do a better job next time.

Community Service

You can learn a great deal about your community when you get involved to help others. You can:

- Make lap robes for elderly people or AIDS victims
- Make quilts for a homeless shelter
- Work on a fund raiser for a local cause
- Go to a local nursing home and visit residents
- Help an elderly or lonely neighbor with household chores
- Help younger members with their projects
- Can you think of others?

Fair Exhibit

Remember to record all of your activities during this year. It's easier to write them down as soon as you do them rather than wait until the end of the year and try to remember them. Be sure to include in your story not only the things you made, but the experiences you had, special things you learned and how you felt about them.

You must complete the History Page of the record. Plan early to begin your search for historic information. You have several options as to what you can learn about and share. You can find historic information on:

- the craft itself,
- tools used,
- new techniques developed,
- special uses of the finished items,
- influences of wars or trade,
- interesting artisans within the community, or
- any other related topic.

The key is that the information you provide is directly related to the craft you are exhibiting.

Two photos of your finished product(s) are optional. However, photos of Heritage Arts exhibits enable judges to see how well the items fit your intended use.

Projects will be divided into three age categories for exhibit based on age of the exhibitor as of December 31 of the year prior to the show. Age categories are:

Junior— 8 to 10 years of age

Intermediate— 11 to 13 years of age

Senior— 14 to 18 years of age

You may exhibit any type of rug in this project including hooked, braided, crocheted, knitted, rag, etc. Even though these techniques can be used for a variety of different projects, your exhibit item will be evaluated based on the evaluation standards for rugs listed later in this manual.

All exhibit items are to be fiber-, fabric- or yarn-based arts and crafts. Crafts exhibited must be those traditional crafts which have been passed down through generations. For a complete listing of Fair Exhibit Requirements, see page 2 of your *Heritage Arts Record Book*, RJ0700.

Introduction

Making rugs enables you to learn to express your creativity in a constructive way while developing a skill that is relaxing and fun. You will also have the opportunity to learn more about the history of rugs, when and where they originated, how skills have passed through the ages, etc.

You may want to experiment with different techniques as well as different materials to make rugs for your home. Visit with others within your community who make rugs to learn about the projects they have made and what suggestions they have for a beginner. Locate resources in your local Cooperative Extension office, the Internet, library and yarn shops as well as on the Internet. Most importantly, have fun!

P Project Evaluation

Quilts will be evaluated on:

Overall Appearance

- Clean
- Lies flat
- Color and design are appropriate for a rug
- Blocked and finished

Materials

- Durable
- Fabrics of harmonizing nature

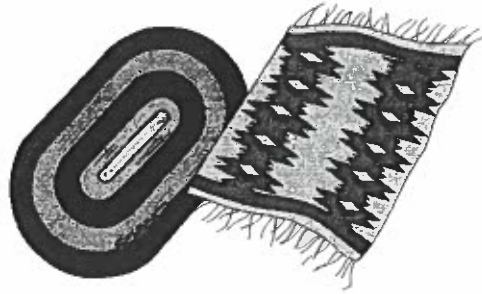
Design

- Balanced
- Shape and weight in proportion to size

Workmanship

- Firm
- Method and stitches, both well done and even
- Neat and durable joining, free of bulk
- Neatly finished edges
- Durable and secure edges

History of Rug Making



Rug making is an ancient craft and is shrouded in mystery. As our ancestors moved indoors, the desire to create a warmer, more comfortable atmosphere emerged. Early house dwellers used animal skins to cover stone floors and crude wall hangings to keep wind from coming in between the stones in their walls. Eventually, dyes were made from plants and berries to add the beauty of color to early rugs.

The Near East was the center of rug making during the time of the prophets. The basic method of producing these ancient rugs was used for many centuries and some of the knots used to tie tufts of wool into a woven backing are still in use today. The best known knots are the *even ghiordes knot* and the *one-sided sehna knot*.

As early as 6000 B.C. rush fabrics were plaited, or braided like basket work, one of the most ancient of arts. Rush is a stiff marsh plant. The plaited mats became popular, and in medieval times in the Near East, they were dyed and commanded high prices. Even today in South India, floor and sleeping mats are plaited from rush in beautiful colors. They also are found in Mexico and South America. In the United States, plaited mats made of cornhusks are made and still used.

Rug making was a country housewife's work and pride in parts of the world where bare floors would have meant a dull environment. The nomadic people of the Steppes made rugs for their tents which now bring high prices as antiques. The pioneering families of Africa, America and Australia made rugs for their cabins and huts. This part of history is proudly displayed in museums around the world.

Early American settlers first followed the English designs, but had difficulty in obtaining materials from Europe, and created their own style to suit their needs and surroundings. Bundles of clean, usable cloth, salvaged from old clothes, were transformed into warm lap robes, rugs and coverlets. The rugs often were sturdy and withstood constant use for a hundred years or more, passing from one generation to the next virtually unaltered.

The people who made rugs did not think of themselves as artists, but they created designs and color effects like a professional artist using whatever ideas and materials were available. While women originally made rugs to cover bare floors, later rug makers created pieces specifically to sell. (Family histories in cloth and wool have been beautifully pieced into rugs.)

Hooked Rugs Basics

Materials

Yarns

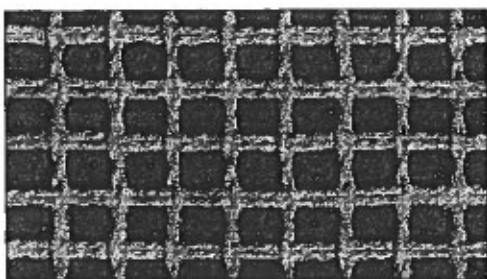
Wool or synthetic yarns in rug- or bulky-weight yarn are used for latch hooking. Worsted weight may also be used in double strands or in single strands to accent designs. Rug- or bulky-weight yarns are preferred for rugs because they are durable and resilient. Lighter weight yarns may be used in rugs that will be used as wall hangings since they will not be walked on.



Yarn for latch hooking may be purchased in packages of pre-cut pieces that are usually 2½ inches long. Yarn may also be purchased in skeins and cut into desired lengths of 2½ to 4 inches. When cutting yarn, make a large supply to avoid stopping frequently to cut more strands.

Small amounts of old yarn and fabric may be washed and worked into designs to create character in latch hooking. Latch hook kits are available which include a patterned canvas and pre-cut yarn.

Canvas



Latch hook is worked on canvas, also referred to as rug net. It is made of durable fibers that form a series of open spaces or squares. Canvas made with double-weight strands is preferred because it is stronger than single-stranded canvas.

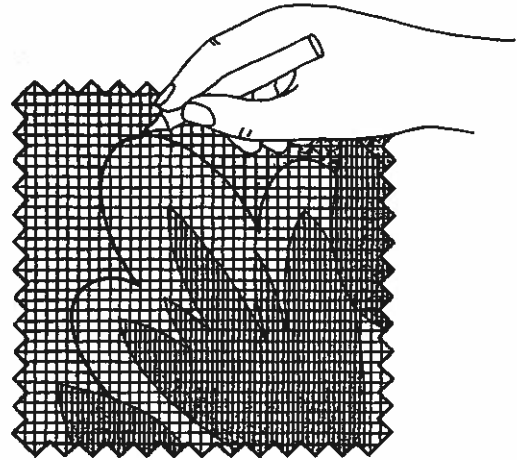
The ideal canvas has 16 square spaces to the square inch. Canvas widths vary from 14 to 45 inches. Very large projects may require that two or more pieces of canvas be joined together.

It is important that the selvage edges (closely woven and smooth) are used as the right and left sides of the work, rather than as the top and bottom. If the canvas piece is cut from a large roll, the selvage edges will be smooth, while the top and bottom edges will be rough and uneven.

Canvas size for a project is determined by adding four inches beyond the design on all sides. These edges will be folded under for finishing.

Transferring a Design

To transfer a design, use waterproof felt-tip pens or waterproof non-staining ink. Waterproof ink will not run onto the yarn or discolor it. If tracing an intricate pattern, find the exact center strand, vertically and horizontally, on the canvas. Mark this point with a straight line to correspond and mark the design center to match them up. Looking through the spaces in the canvas, carefully trace the pattern outline onto the net.



If you draw a curved line on the netting, when it is hooked it will make steps diagonally on the canvas. It is sometimes easier to follow the line if you draw it as a series of steps. When the outline has been traced, darken it if necessary. Compare the net to the design to see if they look the same.

The canvas can be shaded with the appropriate colors. Acrylic paints work well, especially when the design is intricate. Acrylics are used with water but are waterproof when dry. Permanent felt-tip markers may also be used. Allow the canvas to dry completely before hooking.

Hooks

The hook end of the latch hook has a hinged bar or latch that closes over the point of the hook, enabling the yarn to slip smoothly into place. The hook handle may be plastic or wood and is rounded to fit the hand. A straight or bent-shank hook can be used.



Making a Latch Hooked Rug

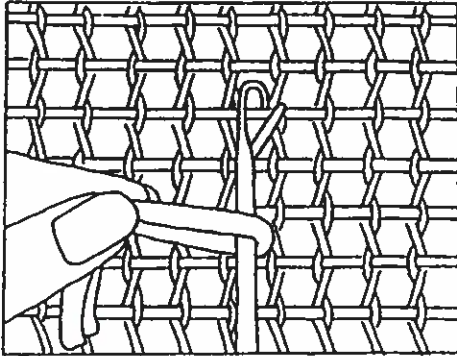
After determining the size of canvas and amount of yarn needed or purchasing a kit, prepare the canvas backing, leaving at least 4 inches on all sides for the hem. To prevent the edges from fraying, cover them with masking tape.

Work from left to right through every hole across the canvas, beginning in the lower left corner. If you are left-handed, start in the lower right corner and work from right to left. Check your progress by looking at the back of the canvas to see if you missed any holes. Always work complete horizontal rows, changing the color of yarn as the design indicates. Do not try to work one color at a time on the entire rug, because it is difficult to fill in the small areas as the work nears completion.

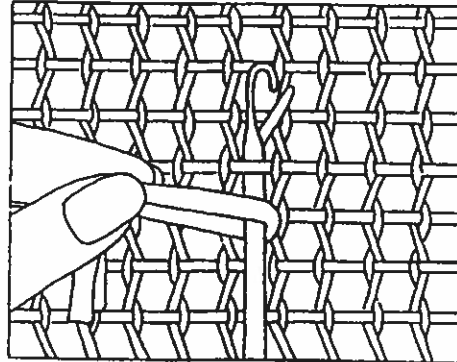
While there is more than one method to do latch hooking, the Four-Step Method is suggested, as follows.

Four-Step Method

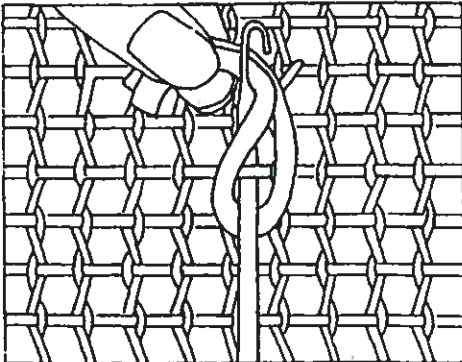
1. Fold yarn exactly in half and loop it around the shank of the hook.



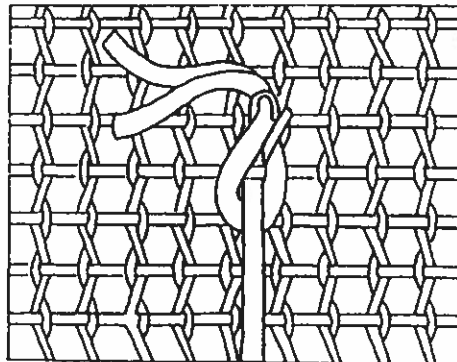
2. Push the hook under the lower thread of the first square with the latch open.



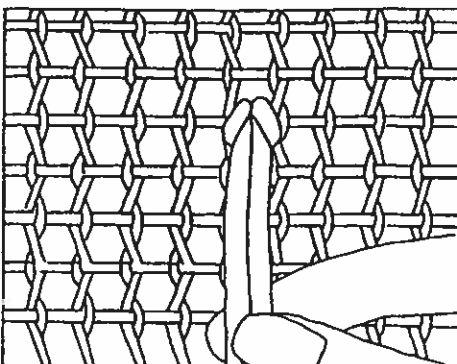
3. Twist the hook slightly to the right. Place the cut ends of the yarn into the open hook and let the latch close.



4a. Pull the hook through the loop of yarn wound around the shank and push the hook forward to release it.



4b. Pull the ends of the yarn tightly to make the knot firm.



Finishing

Because latch hooked rugs are not worked on a frame, the rug can pull out of shape and may need to be straightened before finishing. The rug may need to be blocked to bring it back into the correct shape. Cover a board that is 6 to 8 inches larger than the rug with towels. Lay the rug face down on the towels. Thoroughly moisten the back of the rug, but be sure not to get it soaking wet. Nail or staple the rug to the board, with the edges straight and the canvas stretched tightly. Leave the rug on the board until it is completely dry.

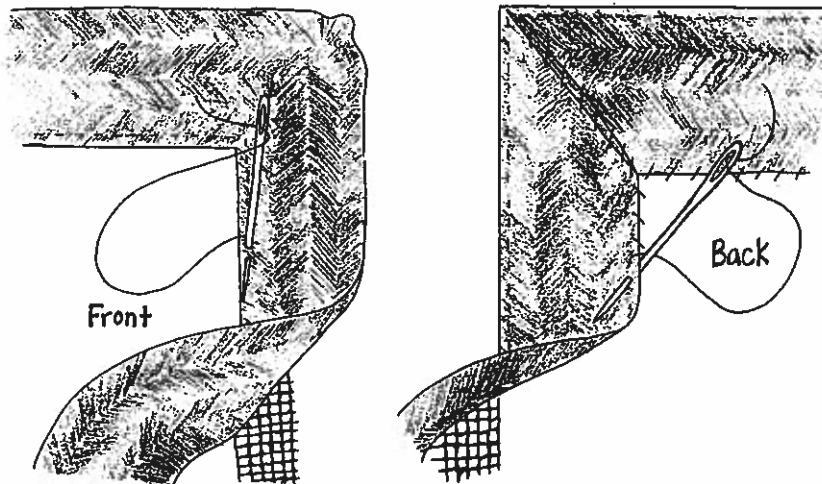
After blocking and drying, the rug is ready to bind and finish. The hooked rug can be finished in several ways, with binding or backing suggested for beginners.

For binding, as heavy needle and strong thread are needed, in addition to rug binding. Select a rug binding tape 1½- to 2-inches wide, long enough to go around all sides of the rug, plus about 6 inches.

Fold in the selvage edges on the left and right sides of the rug, leaving a one-inch border of canvas. Fold in top and bottom edges in the same manner. The edges may be hand stitched under for easier handling.

Place the rug on a flat surface right side up with the one-inch wide edges extended out. Beginning in the middle of one side, hand stitch the binding type to the edges, working from the outside of the rug so that the stitches will be hidden when finished. Stitch as closely as possible to the hooked knots. Stitch all the binding in place around the rug in one piece, overlapping one to two inches where the ends meet.

Turn the rug top side down, and fold in the sewn binding to touch the back of the rug. The binding should cover the canvas allowance completely. Hand stitch the binding to the canvas backing. When reaching a corner, miter it by folding the center of the binding corner in toward the rug. Fold down the flap that is sticking up and sew in place.



The rug may also be finished with a backing made from a durable nonslippery fabric, such as burlap. A backing may be used in addition to the binding or without a binding. Cut the backing fabric one inch wider than the rug on all sides. Press the edges under to fit the rug and hand sew in place, using a heavy needle and strong thread.

Braided Rug Basics



Materials

Note: Because of the difficulty in finding resources on how to make braided rugs, instructions are included in this section.

The most economical materials are fabrics from recycled clothing and household goods. Other fabric may be purchased depending upon the intended use of the braided rug, the resources available, and the experience of the braider. The amount of material needed depends on the desired size of the rug. Durable carpet thread is recommended for the most pleasing effect and extensive use.

Wool is preferred by many rug braiders, but is not as readily available in recycled clothing as it once was. Men's and women's suits, military uniforms and wool blankets are good sources. Heavy cotton fabric also makes durable, long-wearing rugs. While any type of fabric went into Colonial rugs, it is not recommended to mix fabrics because the rug will wear unevenly. A rule-of-thumb to determine the correct weight of fabric is to weigh it and select those that weigh 14 to 16 ounces per yard.

When old materials are used, remove all seams, buttons, worn areas and other trim. Wash the material in warm sudsy water and rinse in clear warm water. Hang in fresh air, if possible, to remove wrinkles and avoid pressing.

Equipment

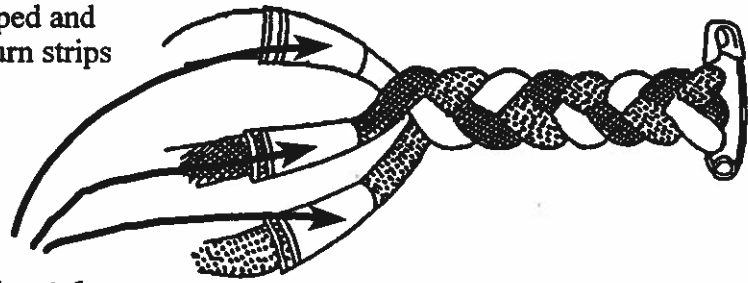
A *blunt-pointed needle* is necessary to form the braids into rugs. This was the only tool used in Colonial times but today, numerous gadgets are available to help produce an attractive rug in less time.

During the Civil War period, the *sewing bird* made braiding easier and faster. It was made of metal and about the size of a small bird. It had a velvet pincushion on its back, a spring in its beak to hold the braid, and a clamp on its feet which could be attached to a table. The bird, or its updated version, is still available and used today.

Other equipment useful for rug braiding

- Medium-sized scissors
- Thimble
- Small pointed pliers
- Metal cones (braid-aids)
- Medium safety pins
- Tape measure or guide
- Heavy lacing or carpet thread
- Braid holder
- Clip-type clothespins
- Color guide
- Blunt straight or curved carpet needles

A *braid-aid* is metal, cone or flat shaped and is used to fold under raw edges and turn strips of material into tubular strands. It can be useful for individuals with weak hands or wrists and for beginners. There is a newer Redi-Braid, a plastic holder that turns under raw edges and unwinds the rolls without tangling.



braid-aids

A *braid holder* is a clamp that holds the braid taut on a table or arm chair. It reels to keep the strands from tangling. It is made of wood, metal or a combination of both. There also is an upright model that stands on the floor and can be used from an easy chair.

You can make a *measuring guide* cardboard to aid in marking the width of the strips.

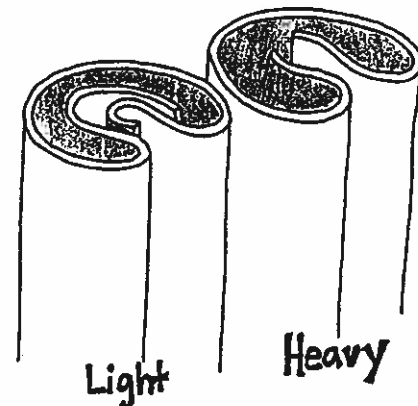
Making a Braided Rug

Rug braiding is not an exact craft because there is more than one way to do it. In talking to 10 different braiders, one may hear 10 different ideas on the proper method. Most methods are good and produce excellent results. A firm and evenly-braided rug is preferred over a loosely-braided irregular one. It not only looks neater and more appealing, but lasts longer.

Preparing Fabric

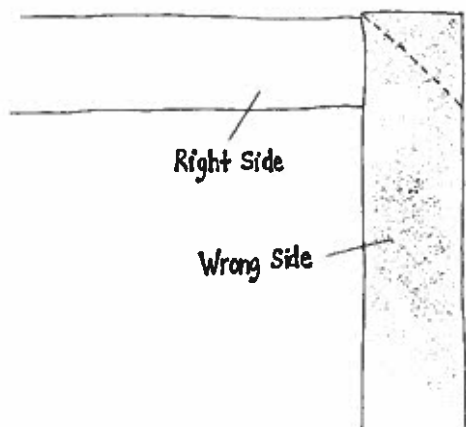
A multicolored undesigned rug is traditional, and the easiest and most economical to make. You will need about one pound of heavy, tightly-woven fabric per square foot of the finished size of the rug. Collect a variety of colors: bright, dull and neutral, in patterned and solid colors. Fabrics may be used or new, or a combination of both. Pre-wash all fabrics prior to working. For used fabrics, remove linings, buttons, etc., and cut apart along the seams.

Tear the fabric into strips; these strips will be folded into cables for braiding. It is important to use the proper width strip, because the quality depends upon the plumpness and uniformity of the cables. To determine the correct width, tear a test strip about 1½ inches wide and fold it as illustrated to the right for the heavy-weight strip. It should form a plump, round cable. If the strip is wide and flat, try forming a narrower strip. Once the correct width has been determined, use the cable it forms as a model.



Fabrics that are lighter in weight will need to be torn into proportionately wider strips and their edges overlapped to form cables of the proper thickness. Fold strips so that edges meet and then in half again to form the cable as shown in the illustration to the right for the light-weight strip.

When tearing the strips, start each rip with scissors, then tear the rest of the way along the fabric grain with your hands. Weave a test braid with a few strips before tearing all the fabric to be sure that the final strips make a firm and full braid.



To join the strips, place them at 90 degree angles with right sides together. Stitch on a diagonal with matching thread, then cut off outer corners.

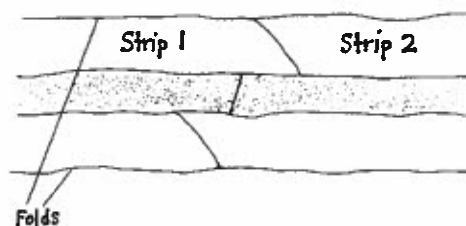
The joined pieces open into straight strips.



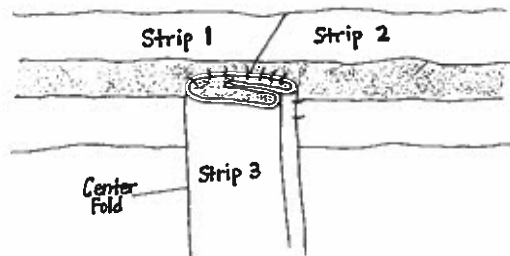
After the strips are torn and joined, wind them into 5-inch rolls. Tie the rolls with string until ready to use to keep them from unwinding.

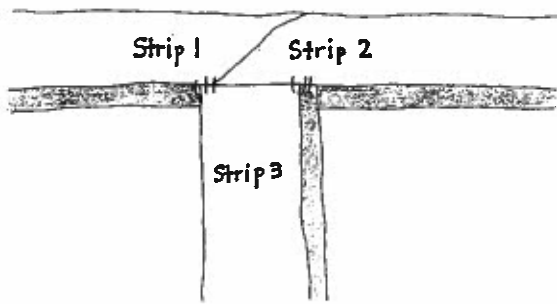
Braiding

When ready to begin braiding, use the bias seam method to join the ends of two different-colored strips. Fold edges inward so that they meet at center of strip.



Fold a third strip into a cable. With the center fold to the left, place the third strip on the center at the seamline of the first two attached strips to form a "T" and stitch in place.



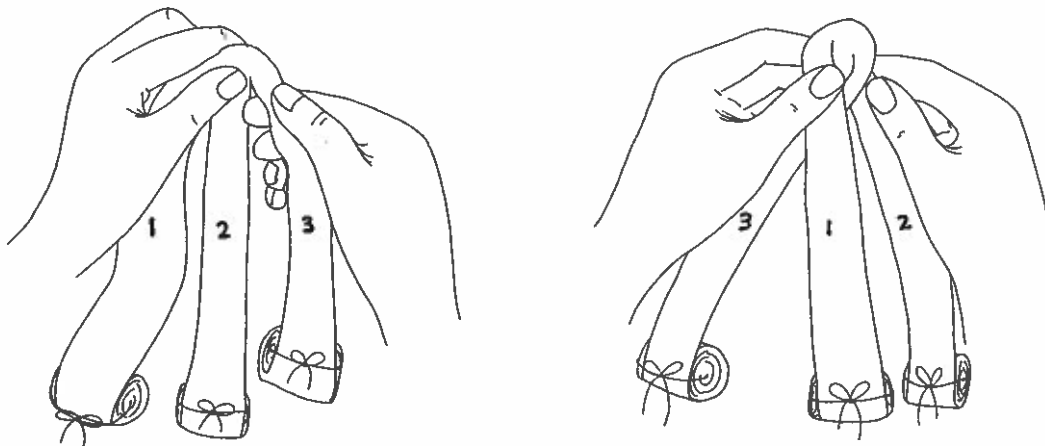


Fold the crossbar strip in half lengthwise to enclose the end of the third strip and stitch at inner corners of the "T".

Fold the right arm of the crossbar down and to the left, so that it lies between the other two strips and its center fold faces left. If braid-aids are used, they may be placed on the three strips at this point.

Hold the start of the braid in the left hand, keeping the center folds facing left. Fold the right-hand strip to make a cable. Note that strips are folded as they are braided.

Bring the right-hand cable (3) over the center cable (2), twisting it so that the center fold stays to the left. Push the cable snugly against the one above.

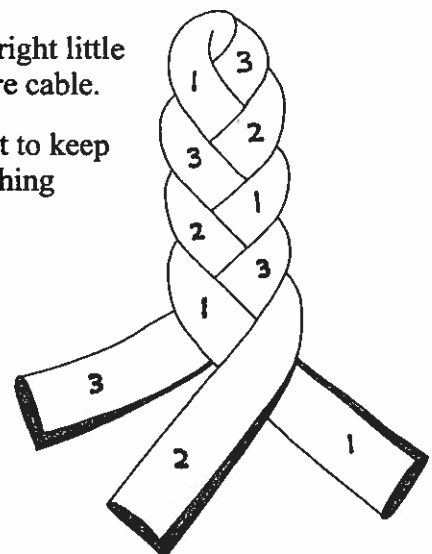


Shift the already-braided cables to the right hand and use the right little finger to help fold edges inward on the left strip, forming more cable.

Bring the left-hand cable over the one in the center, twisting it to keep the center fold on the left. Continue bringing cables over, pushing each against the completed braid.

Additional strips may be added as needed during the braiding process.

The above braiding instructions are for right-handed people. If left-handed individuals find the directions awkward, the directional instructions may be reversed. Keep the center folds to the right and lace from left to right around the rug.



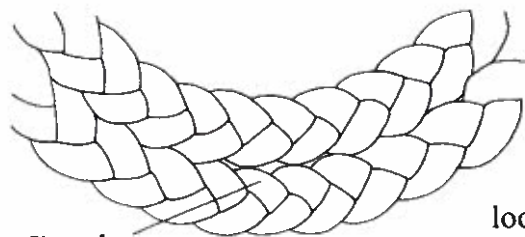
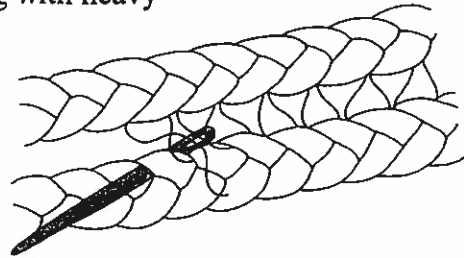
Size

The length of the middle cable of the rug determines the finished size of the rug. Once the desired size is decided, subtract the width from the length to decide how long to make the center braid. For example, if the finished size is to be 4 feet by 6 feet, subtract 4 from 6 to determine that the middle cable should be 2 feet long.

Lacing the Braids Together

Lacing may be started after several strips are braided together. Additional braids can be added at any point to increase the size of the finished rug.

Always lace on what will be the back of the rug, because the lacing will create a slightly flattened look. Join the braids by lacing with heavy carpet thread using a blunt or curved carpet needle, which ever is most comfortable. Insert the needle under the braid loop and draw the thread between the loops and out the top of the braid. Work back and forth between the loose braid and the core of the rug, lacing through each loop and pulling each stitch down into the crevice of the braid.

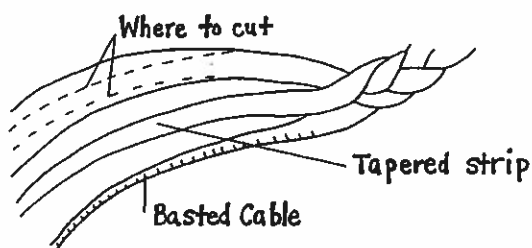


Skipped Loop

An occasional loop on the braid being laced must be skipped because each successive round is longer than the preceding one. When a loop of the braid being added falls opposite another braid loop instead of in a notch between two loops, do not lace the outer loop. Skip it and lace the next loop instead. Skip only on shoulders where the rug curves and only one loop at a time. Mark the skips with

pins to avoid skipping at the same point in following rounds. If the rug edge ripples, too many skips have been made. If the rug edge turns up, not enough skips were made.

The final step is to taper the last braid around a shoulder. Start by cutting off strips so they are $1\frac{1}{2}$ times as long as the distance around the shoulder. Use scissors to taper the strips along each side. Strips should be barely wide enough to fold at their ends, widening gradually to full width at the top of the shoulder. Fold and baste tapered strips into cables, then braid and lace. Pull braid ends through the loops on the rug edge, sew into place and trim the excess.



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Reader's Digest Complete Guide to Needlework; Reader's Digest Association, Inc.: New York (1992).



4-H PLEDGE

I pledge my head to clearer thinking,
my heart to greater loyalty,
my hands to larger service,
and my health to better living,
for my club, my community, my country, and my world.