

Materials for Inkle Weaving

Inkle weaving on the loom we know is a rather modern invention. It was patented in the 1930s. Inkle refers to a narrow woven band, examples of which can be found throughout history. EJW Barber describes the history of such woven bands starting 4000 years ago (Barber, 2002). The term inkle is mentioned in household inventories and by Shakespeare, with various spellings. Reference is made to “pieces of white uncle for girdles and lates (laces) were purchased for 7d” and one penny was paid for “whyte inkle to make synes in books”, both in the 14th century (Verberg, 2017). Shakespeare mentions inkle in 3 of his works (DeGarmo, 2005)

Inkle loom

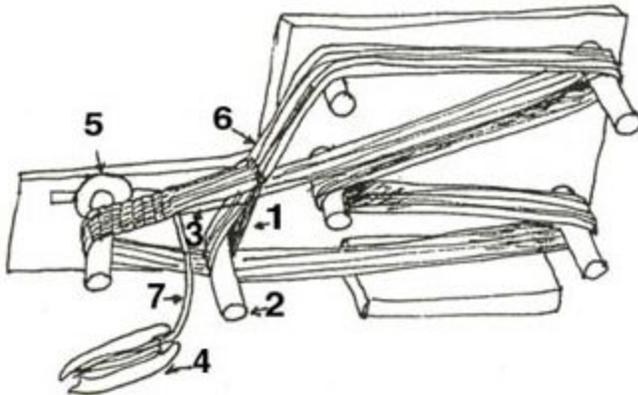
String for weaving: I recommend cotton to start because you will avoid the conflict of felting fibers as with wool, and it is less expensive than bamboo or silk. Choose how thick you want the string - cotton yarn, crochet thread, tatting thread. You will want at least two colors. The number of balls or skeins will be determined by how long or wide you want the finished piece. I recommend starting with at least 2 of each color.

String for heddles: I recommend a thicker cotton string

Shuttle

Scissors

Weaving



1. Heddles
2. Heddle bar
3. Shed
4. Shuttle
5. Tension bar
6. Warp thread
7. Weft thread

(Credit: Graphic Enterprises. graphicenterprises.net/html/inkle_loom.html)

Heddles (1) are made by tying the heddle thread in a loop from the heddle bar (2) to the top peg of the loom (just above 6). These are used to hold every other warp thread in a steady position.

The other warp threads can be moved up and down to create the shed - which is the space that the shuttle passed through to create the woven piece. These are the warp threads that go down and over the top peg at the back of the loom.

The warp threads are long, and I remember them because long boards can warp. The other pegs on the loom are used to create the length of weaving you want.

The shuttle holds the weft threads, which go from “weft” to right!

So to warp the loom, you will anchor the first warp thread on the tension bar by wrapping it tightly a few times. We will remove these wraps later. The first warp thread will go up and over the first top peg of the loom and around all the pegs you choose. The mate for this warp thread will go from the tension bar and down (under the first top peg) to the top peg at the back of the loom. You will hook one end of the heddle loop on the heddle bar, fold it one time over the first warp thread, and hook the other end of the heddle loop on the heddle bar. This effectively holds the first warp thread in a fixed position. To begin, I suggest putting the heddle on before warping the next pair. You are less likely to make a mistake.

The number of pairs of warp threads will be determined by the pattern you choose and how wide you want the finished piece. Width of the piece will also be determined by the string you choose; the thicker the string the wider the piece, the thinner the string the thinner the piece. When you have warped all the pairs, unwrap the first warp thread and tie it to the end of the last warp thread. This will basically make one giant looped thread.

To change colors, you will cut the warp thread with some extra at the tension bar and tie the next color to that end. Then warp the next color in the same manner

To begin, I suggest using the same color for the weft thread as you use on the outside of the warp threads. For example, if the first warp pair are brown, you would make the last warp pair brown and use the same brown thread for the weft threads.