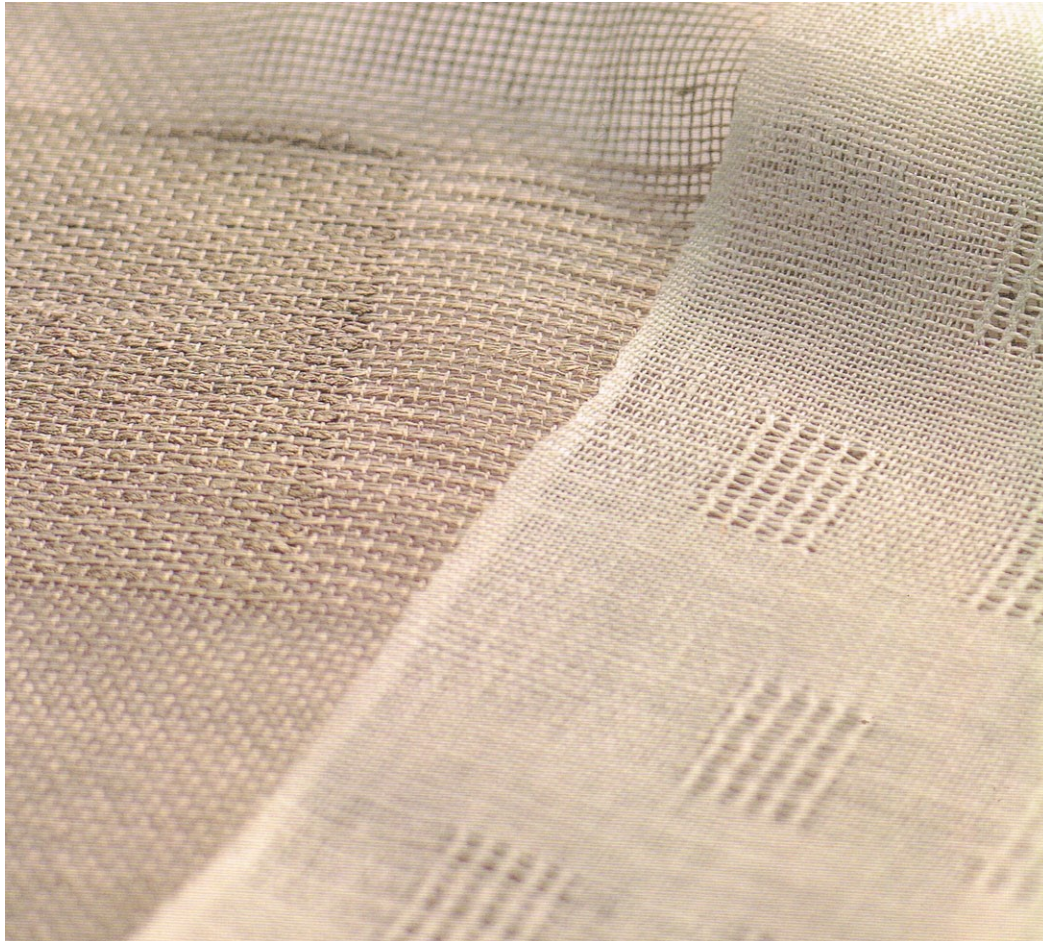


## Open(Lace) Weaves on Simple Looms – workshop preparation and handout



Rigid heddle looms and small table looms are ideal for making open, lacy fabrics using linen, hemp or cotton yarns. This workshop will explore several techniques to make an attractive runner or wall/window hanging. We will first experiment with various techniques including hand manipulated leno, Brooks' bouquet, Spanish lace, Danish medallions and inlay as it is used in transparencies. From there we will design a simple runner or hanging with the rest of the warp.

If you have a choice of rigid heddle(with good ratchet/pawl tension) or a table loom, the rigid heddle - in spite of being less sophisticated - is perhaps nicer to work with than a table loom.

**Level** - Beginner and up. Weaver should be able to put a warp on the loom with even tension. If you can do plain weave, you have enough experience.

**What to Bring****Loom**

Warped rigid heddle loom(or small table loom, preferably not more than 4 shafts and 16" wide).

**Warp**

Prepare the loom with a warp about 2 yards long (can be more, but don't cram too much on the loom).

Weaving width should be about 10-12" wide using 12 dpi heddle or reed. 8" would be minimum width.

**Structure** will be basic plain weave - no need for double heddles, and table looms can easily be set up with just 2 shafts.

**Suitable warp materials** 8/1 or 16/2 linen or hemp, 5/2 cotton. Color - natural or white. (Suitable warp materials are available from Sara prior to workshop - The Woolgatherers, [info@woolgatherers.com](mailto:info@woolgatherers.com)).

**Weft** - same as warp plus some additional small quantities of contrasting colors in cotton, linen or wool.

**Tools needed**

Shuttles(stick shuttles), pickup stick, scissors, tapestry needle, tapestry or Navajo beater (kitchen fork can be substituted).

**Notes**

These are relatively easy techniques using hand manipulation. While not fast weaving, learning how to place open weave sections into any project can and will make your weaving more interesting.

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## Open Weaves on Simple Looms

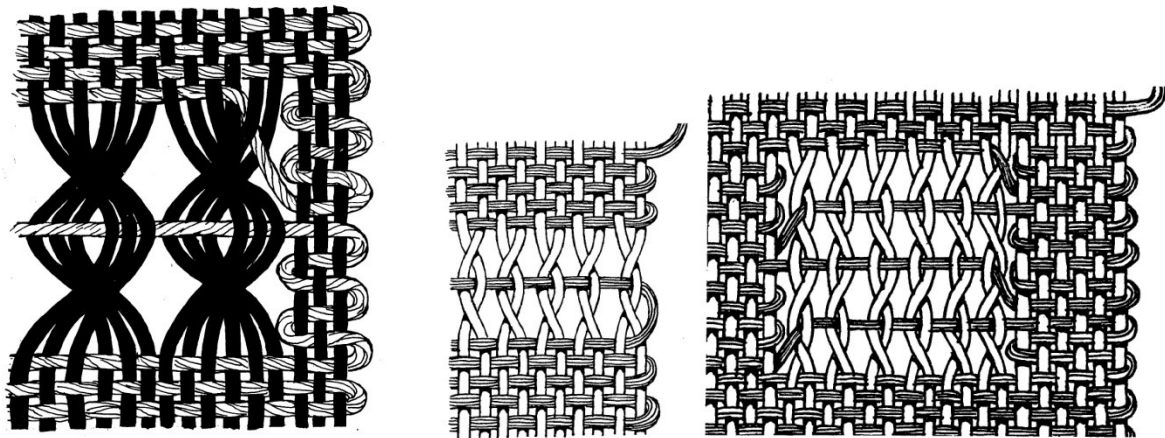
Rigid heddle looms (and simple table looms) lend themselves very well to small wall hangings, art pieces, window coverings, scarves and table runners that incorporate the use of intentional openings and weft deviations for decorative purposes.

Open weave structures can be worked over the whole piece or only in selected areas, giving the weaver a nice option to perk up plain weave pieces that are otherwise bland. A row or two of leno or Brooks Bouquet at the end of a scarf or runner are especially nice.

In the 70's, "casement cloths" were quite popular for small doublehung windows in homes and apartments. With a bit of a macrame look they afforded a bit of privacy while letting light into the room.

The techniques described here are the basic thread movements involved. Most of them have "simplified" forms or shortcuts to make production of larger pieces more efficient. For now we will be simply creating the open weave effect in its basic form. You can later decide to try one of the shortcuts as desired.

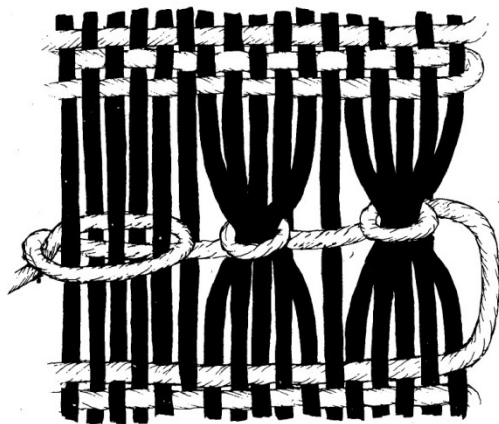
### 1. Leno



Leno is probably both the easiest and the most versatile of these openwork techniques. Two or more warp threads are twisted around each other and a stick is placed in the center of the twist to hold it. The next pair is twisted, the stick moved into the center of that twist. This procedure continues until no more twisted warps are desired in that row. Enter weft through the twists and any unaffected warp ends in that shed. Beat. Then change shed, weave the next tabby. Because of the twists, the weft will not pack down all the way, creating the row of open twists.

Begin the row with two to six warps unaffected and end the same way. Or, the first twist can occur at the selvedge. The number of threads to be twisted can be just two(1 x 1), or four (2 x 2), six (3 x 3) or even eight (4 x 4). Fewer threads in a group make smaller holes. Several threads make larger statements.

2. Brooks Bouquet - this structure requires circling small groups of warp ends with the current weft.



"You can create a lace-like effect by wrapping warp yarns into a Brook's bouquet. For this weave, put your heddle in an up position. With a small shuttle, wrap under, over, and around a group of three of the top warps. Stick the shuttle down through the weft loop made in wrapping. Pull. This knots the grouping. Go to the next group and wrap the top warps in the same way. Continue across the width of your weaving. The down warps lie beneath the wrapped ones. A single warp between each group becomes prominent.

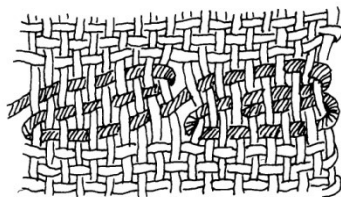
A popular variation is to have all warps at the same level (heddle in neutral) and to wrap groups which include the whole warp, not just the top layer."

Nina Holland, "Weaving Primer" p. 91

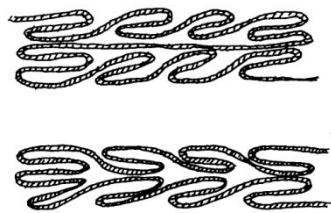
Important is the step where you stick the shuttle down through the weft loop. If this is not done, the loop loosens quickly.

It is quite possible to execute this loop with four or five threads in a group when desired.

3. Spanish Lace



*Spanish lace*



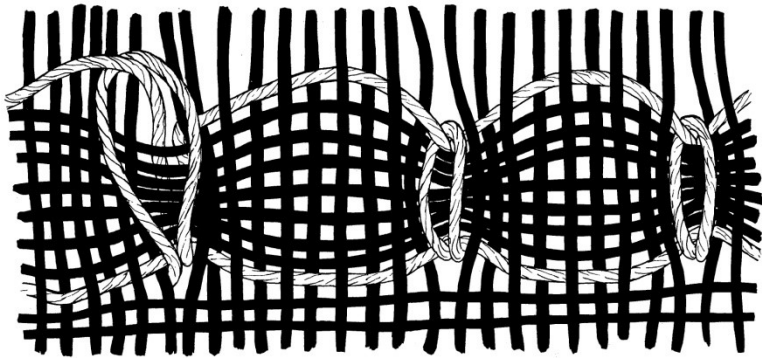
Spanish lace allows the weaver to divide the warp into small groups and snake the weft back and forth within that group and proceed to a new group - this proceeds across the warp. As pictured above, using a small shuttle, the weft is entered back and forth as much as desired, pulling the threads together to create a section. Then the same procedure is duplicated in the next group.

For a first try, choose about 10 warps in each group. A weft yarn in a contrasting color, perhaps also a bit thicker than the base weft shows off the lace best. The arrangement of the weft as well as the size of the

bundles is open. The diagram at right shows that the snaking wefts do not all need to move in the same direction.

Areas of Spanish lace between sections of leno are very attractive.

#### 4. Danish Medallions

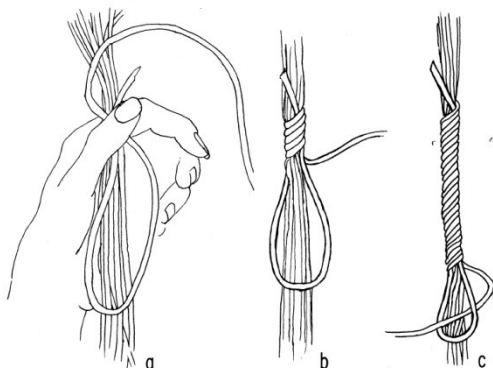


Danish medallions are bordered ovals in the weaving. They are formed by using a thick contrasting yarn (or possibly the base weft) to frame groups of threads on all sides. For one set of medallions, take a length of framing thread about three times the width of the woven piece. To begin the medallion lay the framing thread loosely in the open

shed.

Weave about one inch in the basic tabby. Then take the framing thread. As with Spanish lace, groups of about 10 warp threads are good for starters. Insert the framing thread about 10 threads (5 up, 5 down). Now take a crochet hook or similar item and enter it from the bottom of the medallion, catching the upper framing thread. Pull a loop. Enter the shuttle through the loop and pull it as tight as desired around the group of threads. This loop determines the roundness or squareness of the medallion. When this section is finished, proceed to the next group of threads and repeat.

#### 5. Wrapped warp



Rather than just wrap a piece of yarn around selected warps, it is neater to make a loop as shown in step a.

Begin wrapping leaving a small tail of the loop showing as in step b.

When the desired length of wrapping has been reached, pull the end through the bottom loop to secure the wrapping as in step c. Clip.

Wrapping warps in selected areas can make a lovely statement in a wall hanging or window covering. The wrapped sections can alternate with warps simply left alone. Objects can be fastened in the wrapping - beads, buttons, other ornaments.

## 6. Creative insertions

Inlay is when decorative weft is laid in the shed between ground weave weft rows. This is best seen in transparencies, though it can be used in any piece where the ground weave is somewhat open.

Generally, the weaver prepares a sketch or cartoon indicating the inlay placement and works each row according to plan.

In addition to the techniques outlined here, it is also interesting to play with other forms of opening up a plain tabby. Skipping sections of the heddle produces interesting empty spaces. Short sections of warp can produce interesting borders for other effect areas. The rigid heddle (or simple table loom) offers endless possibilities to manipulate the warp and weft to produce desired effects.

Sources:

Nina Holland, "Weaving Primer"

Betty Davenport "Hands on Rigid Heddle Weaving"

Nell Znamierowski, "Step by Step Weaving"

Rowena Hart, "Ashford Book of Rigid Heddle Weaving"

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