

# Abstract weaving

Create intricate fabric by pin weaving

**M**ake your own colorful and artistic fabric from yarn and leftover fabric pieces with pin weaving. The technique is surprisingly easy to master and produces lovely yardage for garments, accessories, and even framed art pieces.

Pin weaving doesn't require much equipment; you only need a padded board for a base that will act as your "loom." The pin-woven fabric is formed over a piece of fusible interfacing. Once you are happy with your design, iron it to fuse it to interfacing and hold everything together. The result is a soft, pliable fabric.

You can use this technique to weave a rectangle as I demonstrate here, or you can trace a garment pattern

piece onto your board to weave a unique design specifically made for your garment, such as a collar or cuff. It's the perfect way to add texture and color to any of your sewing projects. It's portable so you can work on your lap while watching TV or pack it in a tote to take on vacation. Pin weaving is the perfect on-the-go craft for sewers looking to use up scraps from their stash.

---

*Shirley Adams travels extensively teaching seminars and workshops. To see her patterns and Fiber Dance kits that include all you need to create your own pin-weaving motif, visit [SewingConnection.com](http://SewingConnection.com) and [ShirleyAdamsFiberDance.com](http://ShirleyAdamsFiberDance.com).*



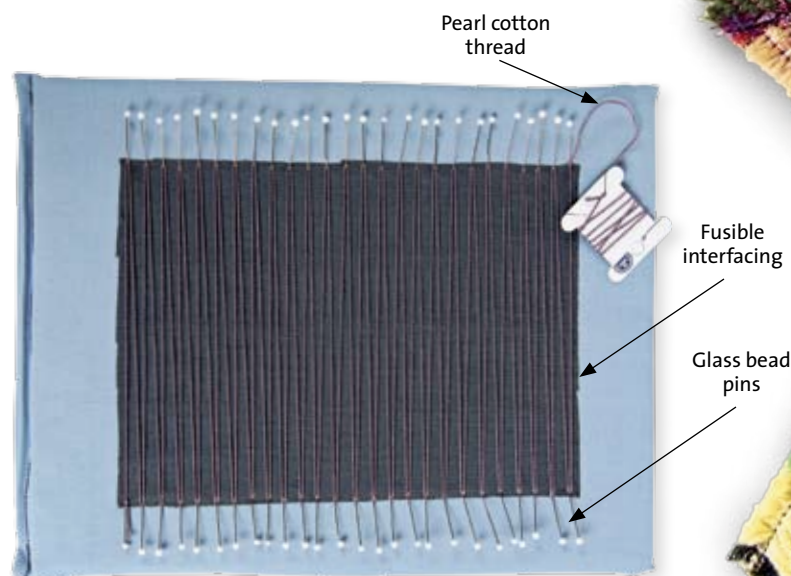
# Build a loom

To make the loom, you need fusible interfacing in the size and shape of your desired weaving and glass-head straight pins (glass-head pins are a must because you will iron the piece later). You can use recycled cardboard for the base, and be sure to use a durable fabric to cover it and pearl cotton thread to create the warp loom strings.

**1 Cut the cardboard.** Cut two, 11-inch by 14-inch rectangles from corrugated cardboard with the corrugation running in a opposite directions on each piece—vertical on one, horizontal on the other—to make the loom sturdier. Make the rectangles larger or smaller depending on the size you want your weaving.

**2 Cover the board.** Cut a 24-inch by 16-inch rectangle from a durable fabric such as denim. With right sides together, fold the rectangle in half aligning the 16-inch edges. Sew a narrow seam on the raw edges and leave one 12-inch end open. Turn it right-side out, and insert the cardboard layers. Turn the open end inside, and sew it closed.

**3 Position the interfacing and pins.** Lay a piece of lightweight, fusible interfacing (the shape and size of the intended weaving plus seam allowance) on the board, fusible side up. Insert straight pins  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch apart to hold the interfacing edges in place. They should lay flat in a row along the longer edges, as shown below.



**4 Weave the thread.** Tie a pearl cotton knot to the first pin. Next, lace the thread back and forth between the pins, as shown at left. Then tie another knot on the last pin. Now, your “loom” is ready.

*Combine yarn colors, textures, and fibers for eye-catching results.*

# Weave a unique design

To weave the design, you need 20 to 30 pieces of yarn (1 to 2 yards each) and a no. 16 tapestry needle. Choose a collection of yarns, ribbons and fabric strips with contrasting textures—thick, thin, fuzzy, smooth, matte, glitz—and a harmony of colors, including light and dark choices. If you find creating the perfect color combination difficult, start with a print fabric or magazine ad which features colors you love, and duplicate this in the yarns you choose.



**1 Start the weave.** To begin, choose a yarn which blends with the rest of your selected yarns. Thread it through a tapestry needle and start a simple over-under weaving process, as shown above. Weave the yarn into a curve across the look.



**2 Always begin and end on the outside.** Don't start or stop in the loom's center because it throws off the weave's over-under sequence. Leave the yarns dangling on the sides. Use glass-head pins to secure yarns in place and avoid pulling the in the motif's sides. If a yarn is thick or you include a strip of fabric or ribbon, weave it across in one strip, not going back and forth. As the design builds, push new rows close to the previous ones to tighten the weave.



**3 Highlight your favorite yarn.** Choose a "star" yarn (one that stands out), and weave it to fill in a space along the curve you made in step 1. Weave this yarn back and forth with each pass extending one warp yarn nearer or farther to smoothly blend it into the space; it has more impact if used in a concentrated area.



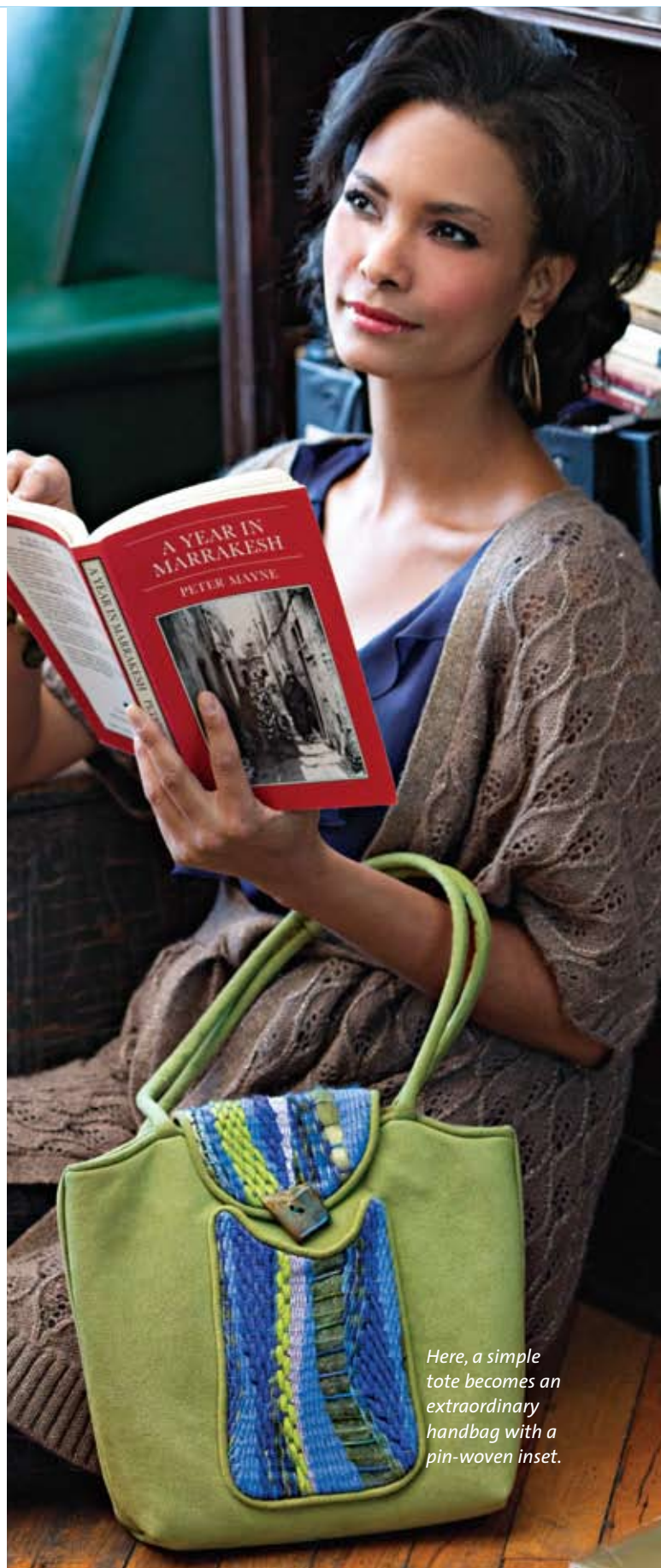
**4 Change the curve direction.** To avoid monotony, change the curve direction at the sides by weaving wedge shapes from the edge to fill in the void.

**5 Check your design.** Turn your board periodically so you fill in areas equally. When deciding which texture or color yarn to use next, “try it on” by placing a circle of the new yarn on top of different areas to see where it will best complement before you weave it into the piece.



**6 Remove unwanted yarns.** These abstract waves often grow on their own, sometimes in surprising and delightful ways. If, however, you regret that bit you just added, remove it and substitute something more to your liking. You can also push sections around as they freely slide on the warp threads if you want to change a curve direction.

**7 Press to finish the piece.** Pull out the straight pins on each side, leaving the top and bottom pin rows in place. Cover it with a press cloth, and steam-press to secure it to the fusible interfacing. The press cloth is necessary because direct contact with the iron could melt some of the yarn fibers. Remove all the pins. Press again on both sides, and your woven piece is ready to be used as you please.



*Here, a simple tote becomes an extraordinary handbag with a pin-woven inset.*