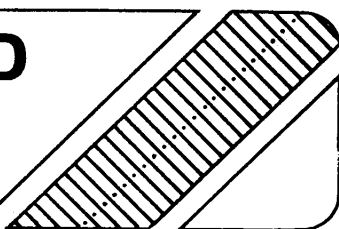


THE RIGID HEDDLE

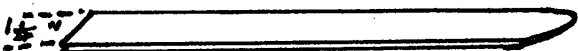


PICKUP WEAVES

by Cathy Ingebretsen

With a rigid heddle loom you basically have two sheds, heddle in UP position or heddle in DOWN position. These two sheds form the basis for weaving. There are times though, that you may want alternative sheds. For instance, if you have an interesting weft yarn that loses its interest when caught down by all the warp threads, you might want to put it in a shed that will only hold it down in a few places. If you know how to control your choice of sheds by use of the pickup stick (shed stick), you will have expanded the possibilities of your loom.

Basically the pickup stick is a flat wooden stick usually tapered to a rounded point at one end. It is used to open new sheds.



It can be used with any yarns at any sett. The appearance of your weaving will vary though, depending on the yarns and sett you choose.

Two of the most common reasons for wanting new shed openings are for variations in surface texture and patterns. Picking is done either in front of, or behind, the heddle.

Technique

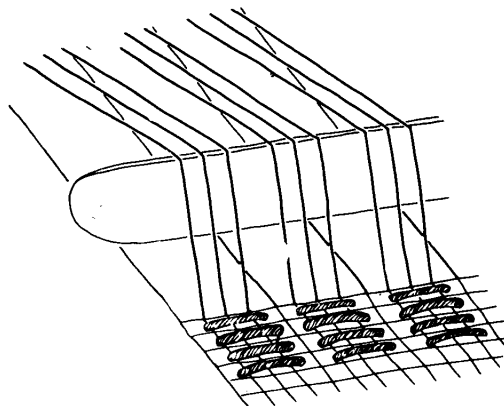
If you've taken Frame Loom Fundamentals, you should know now to pick in front of the heddle. Basically:

- 1) Push your heddle back against the warp beam.
- 2) Always pick from the same side (either right to left, or left to right).
- 3) With the wide, flat side of your pickup stick, pick up any warp threads that you desire. The threads on top of the stick (up) will be on top of the weft; the threads under the stick (down) will be under the weft. The weft will show wherever it goes over the warp, wherever the warp threads are down.
- 4) Turn your pickup stick 90° upward so that it stands on its narrow side.
- 5) Put your accent weft through this new shed.
- 6) Leave ample weft. The weft isn't forcing as many warp threads apart as in tabby, and the weaving tends to pull in.
- 7) Either
 - a) Pull the pickup stick out of the warp threads.
Beat your weft into place with the heddle.
Put through a shot of background weft using the opposite heddle shed (up or down) from your last heddle shed.
 - or
 - b) Push the weft into place with the pickup stick.
Leave the stick in but push it back by the heddle.
With another stick, pick all the threads into the opposite position as over and under the previous stick. (Those that went under the previous stick go over this stick; those that went over the previous stick go under this stick.)

- 8) Repeat steps 1 through 7 as many times as desired.

Note: In step 7b, the first pickup stick is pushed back by the heddle as a guide for picking the opposite threads. It can be left there (saved) if you are planning on using that shed again. The second pickup stick will have to be pulled out however, in order for you to use the first one again. A ruler can be used in place of a pickup stick.

In front of the heddle picking is a fairly slow process because you have to continually repick your desired shed(s). It does give you control though, of the over and under movement of each individual warp thread.



A faster way of achieving some of the same effects is by picking behind the heddle. The reason for picking behind the heddle is because you can leave the pickup stick in the warp and still use the heddle. This saves repicking if you are going to use the same pickup stick shed again. It is more limited in the picking possibilities, as I'll explain.

- 1) Place the heddle underneath the shed blocks (down shed).
- 2) Always pick from the same side.
- 3) With the wide, flat side of the pickup stick, pick up any, but not all, of the slot threads, picking behind the heddle.
- 4) Turn your pickup stick on its narrow side (90° upward).
- 5) Put your weft through this new shed, in front of the heddle. This is called your "stick" shed.
- 6) Turn the stick back onto its wide, flat side.
- 7) Push stick back against the back (warp) beam.
- 8) Beat the weft into place with the heddle.
- 9) Go back to weaving with the UP and DOWN sheds of the heddle.

Note: It is more limiting in the picking possibilities because you can only pick (control) the slot threads. Every stick shed will always have all the holes threads under the weft. You can not pick opposites behind the heddle. (The Intermediate Frame Loom Course deals with behind the heddle picking.)

There is another shed variation, besides STICK, that is picked behind the heddle. It is called "UR and STICK". Follow steps 1 through 3 for the behind the heddle picking. Now, instead of step 4, put the heddle in UP position and slide the pickup stick flat up against the back of the heddle. (Do not turn the pickup stick up on its narrow edge.) UP and STICK brings the slot threads that are on top of the stick, up even with the hole threads, giving you more warp threads on the upward surface of your weaving. Notice the longer lengths of weft on the underneath side.

continued

Surface Texture

Experiment with different kinds of picking to change the length of weft(s) "floating" on the surfaces of your weaving. Use regular yarns, novelty yarns, fleece, fur, leather, groups of wefts, ribbons, beads strung on weft yarn, basketry materials, plexiglas,

There are hundreds of picking variations, but one of the most common weaving sequences is:

- heddle UP (background weft)
- heddle DOWN (background weft)
- pickup stick shed (accent weft)

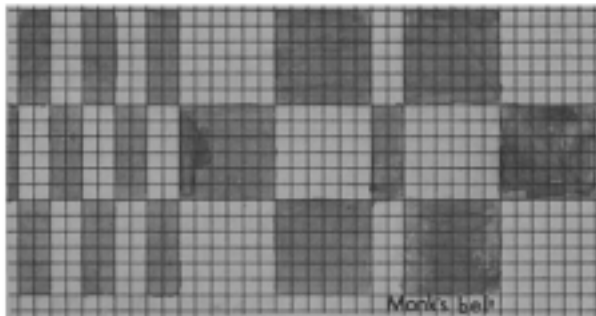
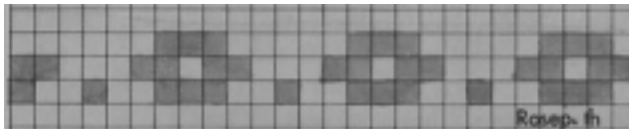
In many practical weavings, weft floats should be limited to 1" in length. The weft used in the pickup shed can be the same as the background weft or contrasting in fiber, texture, weight, and/or color.

Patterns

In pickup stick patterns, you purposefully position the weft floats to form a design. At least two colors are used—one for the pattern, one for the background. A high value contrast of dark and light will make the pattern more "readable."

Probably the easiest way to design these patterns is to use a piece of graph paper.

- 1) Designate each vertical row as a warp thread. Each horizontal row will represent weft threads. You will have at least 2 weft shots per row: one pattern, one background.
- 2) Darken in the pattern you'd like to weave.
- 3) Because all the darkened areas are pattern weft shots, all those warp threads are down (under the stick). The other threads are up (on top of the stick).
- 4) The first weft shot will be the pattern weft in the stick shed.
- 5) The second weft shot will be the background weft in either the opposite pickup shed, or a tabby shot.
- 6) Read your graph paper design as you would weave it. (Start at the lower right or left hand corner.)
- 7) When you have completed one visual horizontal row of your pattern, move up one square vertically and continue the pickup stick process.



Uses

The application of pickup stick weaving is as varied as plain weave. It is commonly used for borders and accents. Multi-harness weavers often use the pickup stick for sampling before threading a certain sequence through the harnesses. Whether you are making up new patterns, combining pickup with inlay,

enriching a fabric through surface texture, or using more than two pickings to complete a visual row, there are many possibilities for pickup to enhance your weaving with greater depth and interest.

Books for Reference

You may want to refer to some of these books for specific pickup patterns and information. Many of these books are published by the author(s) and are not available through regular bookstores. They are available from most of the stores advertising in this newsletter and their cost is minimal.

Kircher, Ursula Weaving on Kircher Looms, 1970, Germany.

Baizerman, Sue and Searle, Karen Latin American Brocades, 1976, Dos Tejedores.


Skoy, Mary Weaving on a Frame Loom: A First Project, 1975, author-publisher.

Steedsman, Nell Patterns on a Plain Weave.

Temple, Mary Weaving Ideas for a rigid heddle frame loom, 1976, the Myers Corporation.

White, Alice Weaving is Fun, 1959, reprinted 1975, Dover.

*Mary Skoy's, Mary Temple's, and Sue Baizerman's/Karen Searle's books are available at the Guild office.




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