

Weaving on a Cardboard Loom

By Eva Joan Henderson

Is it real weaving? My dictionary defines weaving as the lacing together of strands of materials. So the loom type doesn't seem to matter.

Who would want to weave on a cardboard loom and why?

- Anyone of any age who enjoys fibers and likes to see how they interact should enjoy weaving on a cardboard loom.
- It is very portable so any spare minutes can be enjoyed, relaxing and interweaving those fibers. Wait times need not be just "empty" waiting time.
- It is also very inexpensive so extra looms and yarns can be in a work bag to give to those who express an interest. We never know who we will spark to try something we love and they may also find it a love.
- It can be used to sample fibers or yarns that we think we would like to weave in a larger project. It's a quick and easy way to check the interactions.

I have used many types of loom materials that would all be considered cardboard. My first experience with this type of weaving was on regular layered cardboard box material. A friend who was teaching art would get pizza boxes from the local dealer and use those to teach her 8th grade students the basics of weaving. They loved it and would carry their weaving from class to class, working when finished with other lessons. I also tried it and found it to be a fun thing to do.

I still use that type of material some but have also used other types. I wove a small amulet type bag on a center roll from toilet tissue. Paper towel centers or plastic wrap cores could also be used. For a larger bag, a salt or oatmeal container would give a nice loom.

Mat boards also make nice looms that can be cut to the size wanted. Most small sizes can be gotten from frame shops as "fall out" for free or very cheaply.

As you begin to weave on found objects and cardboard, your imagination will take over and you will see looms everywhere to make those projects that inspire you.

This can be a very kid friendly activity for a rainy day when the grands are with you. Imagine letting them weave with you for some great bonding time.

Another favorite of mine, using the cotton yarn and weaving a square or rectangle to use as a dishcloth or mug rug.

Materials and techniques for weaving on cardboard or other found objects.

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Loom material, cardboard of any type,
matboard or foam core board
Large head pins or small nails, if wanted
Tapestry needle, metal or wood
Scissors
Assortment of threads and yarns



Prepare the loom by making slots along the opposite sides or all the way around. I like slots that are ¼ inch apart. Closer

slots can be used but will soon lose the rigidity needed to hold the threads. Materials like the foam core can accept pins or nails to hold the yarns.

For a bag, ¼ inch slots on opposite sides will hold the warp threads well, you will be weaving around the board so side slots are not needed. Bags can be any size but larger takes a lot longer to weave if the yarns are packed in tight enough for good stability. Use a warp that does not stretch for better weft packing.

The bag I wove on the round core, I cut slots in the top and bottom, using a ruler to line them up vertically. I also measured to be sure I would have an odd number of slots, adjusting as needed.

For flat items and younger children, it helps to have the slots on all sides. They will not pull the yarns as tight and cause the item to draw in at the sides.

Warping the loom

Directions will be for a flat board bag woven in the round. The only adaptation for a round core will be that you are ending at the same place where you began. Use a non stretchy thread that is about the size of carpet warp or perle cotton, size 3. Begin at a top corner, leave a 6 inch length of thread and pull through the first slot, go down to the bottom of the board, through the first slot there and up to the top again on the back side. Circle around the first tab by pulling through the first slot, around the tab and back through the next slot. Make the warp taut, but do not stretch it tight. Bring the warp thread to the bottom, through the next slot on the bottom, back up to the top front of the

card. You will go through the same 2nd slot that the thread circled through from the back. Pull through the slot toward the back, circle around the next tab, and back to the front. Be very careful that the top of the card warp circles the tabs so that the top is open when finished. The bottom of the card will have the warp going through the slots but not circling.

When using a circle form, do not try to go on the back side of the form but go around the slots on both ends. Finish it by leaving enough warp to tie together for a bottom. Plan accordingly for that extra warp length.

When you get to the opposite end of the card, you will end your warp at the bottom of the card. This will give you an odd number of warp threads. Count carefully at this time to be certain of your number. I tie the end of the warp at the bottom to the thread next to it after pulling through the last slot. When I am finished weaving I can untie and thread the end into the weaving. For a very close warp, you can double the threads across the loom, keeping the loops at the top and ending with an odd number of warp threads.

Beginning Weaving, top row of the bag.

Weave the first row in plain weave, under one, over one around. When you get to the beginning, you should be ready to go over the next thread. Go over the next thread, put the needle above the weaving thread and under the next warp thread exiting under the weaving row and twine the threads for a secure edge row. Finish that row around by twining and then continue weaving in plain weave. Pack the

weaving yarns to a weft faced fabric to have nice body in the finished bag.



As you can see, I like to use a pointed dowel as a lifter for the warp threads. When you are almost finished with the bag, you can finish the bottom in several ways. If the board is long enough or you get tired of the weaving, you can clip the warp threads a few at a time and knot them together, from the front and back to close the bottom.

You could also remove the bag from the mat board and tie an overhand knot in each loop of warp thread. I put beads on the photo bag and intended to do that, then wove all the way to the end.

If you want to weave all the way to the bottom, the last few rows will be really tight. Pack in as many as you can, then move some of the higher strands closer to the bottom to close the remaining gap. Be sure that the last row across is opposite the weaving from the front and back so that the threads don't overlap each other.



You can make a handle in many ways if wanted. Inkle weaving would be nice but a longer strip of mat board, maybe even 2 layers since it will be longer, could be woven on one or both sides for a strap. Again you would want a tight weft to maintain body.

Closures could be many things, A nice bead or button with a loop or add a zipper to a lining which I would suggest. I also used wool yarn for this bag, intending to wash and felt it. Then I decided I like it better without the felting. It should make a very nice felted bag. That would tighten the bag and keep it in shape well.

Please feel free to use these instructions and share them with others. All I ask is that you respect my copyright and keep my name and email with them. Thanks.

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