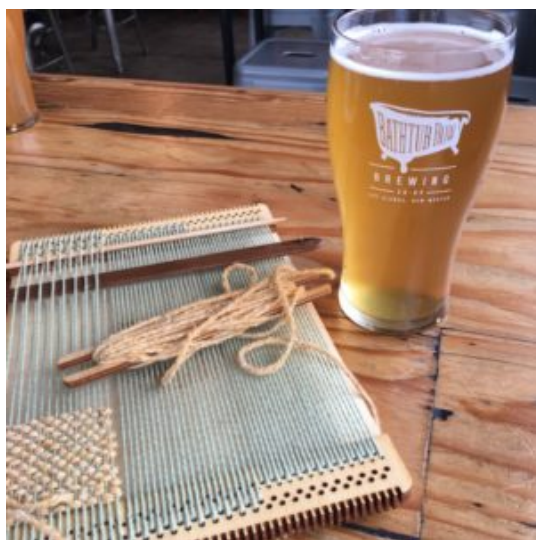


Using a Swatch Maker Loom to Design Handwoven Cloth

In 2016, I reached out to Purl & Loop to see if they could devise a tool that would help me swatch while working on my latest book. To date, there were no looms on the market that came in all three setts I worked with most—8, 10, and 12. Angela and I put our heads together and came up with the Swatch Maker Looms in two different styles—the **Swatch Maker** and the **Swatch Maker 3-in-1**. (Both looms are available with or without the Yarnworker branding.) I later wrote *A Weaver's Guide to Swatching* that outlines the swatching process, techniques for weaving on a frame loom, and tips for designing your own woven fabric.

The Design Process



When designing handwoven cloth, there is a matrix of decisions you need to make about yarn, sett, structure, and finishing. Oftentimes you are dealing with a number of constraints. You need to select among available yarns. The yarn needs to work up in the setts available to you and wear well for its intended use. Most of the yummy yarns available today were designed for knitters and crocheters, and although most any yarn can be used for a scarf or a wall hanging, when you branch out into wearables and interiors, the yarns need to hold up under very specific conditions.

I find myself on the fence all the time about which sett to use: 8 or 10? 10 or 12? In the past, I would warp and weave a small sample in each sett

available to me on my rigid-heddle loom, wash and finish, decide on which sett I liked best, then based on that information I would warp up again and experiment with color. This was time-consuming and for those of you who aren't writing for publication, sampling just seemed like a waste of time. I wanted to find a way to get at this information faster and offer weavers a valuable tool to learn about the base materials of their craft and how it operates in a woven structure. Purl & Loop offered me those tools and I think you will love them, too!

Swatch Maker 3-in-1

When using the Swatch Maker 3-in-1, I warp narrow strips of each sett and test all three at once. I'm not getting all the information that a larger sample would give me, but I'm getting enough to make a more informed decision to move on to the next step. Based on this information, I may weave a second sett of swatches, trying out different wefts (shown here), or I may warp up narrow warps in all the same setts and try different weft combinations.



The different setts and yarns cause the fabric to grow at

different rates, so I weave each strip one at a time. I use the same techniques described in *A Weaver's Guide to Swatching* to speed up the work—using a shuttle, pick-up stick, shed stick, and weaving comb. The work goes where I go, increasing my productivity. And I can be ready to capitalize on the flashes of inspiration that always accompany travel.

Each little strip is finished differently to help me decide how I want to treat the fringe. I'll also whip up a few swatches in my final selection and wash them differently. With this information in hand, I can head to the larger loom with much more confidence about my choice of yarn, sett, color, and finishing.

Everyday Swatching With the Swatch Maker Loom Set

You may or may not need such nuanced information. Swatching will, however, help you in two core areas of your everyday weaving life—yarn substitution and color work. This is why we developed two styles of looms. One that provides you with comparative information, and one that allows you to quickly and easily get information fast since warping the slots is faster than warping the holes.

Here is a real-world example from Emily Travis, a member of the [Yarnworker Patron community](#), who set out to weave the [Hands-Free Cowl pattern](#) from my “Get Warped” column in *Knitty*, using yarns from her stash:

“How to fail faster per Liz’s book: In my first sample, I only wove one-and-a-half repeats of the pattern and the blue yarn is already a nightmare—sticky, and the fluff gets dragged as the shuttle passes, then catches and sticks in the next shed. It might not be so bad on the rigid-heddle loom with a proper shed where I could beat it properly, but based on this sample, I’m very glad I didn’t use this yarn for a full warp! After further sampling, Zauberball was the winner. Here is the final product completed and well-received by my gran.”



Emily did a superb job testing out yarn from her stash to get the results she wanted. Weaving small helps us get the information we need to weave the cloth of our dreams with less fuss and more fun.

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