



## PRO TIPS FOR RUG HOOKING

*I've been fortunate to learn from some exceptional rug hookers and teachers. Plus, I'm a bit of a fanatic about reading books, magazines, watching videos and taking workshops. I have belonged to various wonderful Guilds and I strongly recommend having a hooking group to meet with in person or online. Here is my list of pro tips for rug hooking - partially because I need to keep reminding myself about some of them!*

1. **Ancient mosaics, designs in fabrics, or pottery, can be good inspirations for designs or motifs for borders.** I tend to look in the BC era or up to about 1000 AD (Christian era.) No copyright issues.
2. **After you have purchased a design, you can adapt it to suit your own design aesthetics.** Really! Note this in your record of the rug, "Adapted from So-and-So Pattern. Designer: A. Hooker." This does not give you any additional rights to the design like being able to sell the pattern, or claim it's your design. Your rights remain the same as what is granted by the person selling you their original pattern. Give credit where credit is due.
3. **Don't hook too tightly.** It detracts from the impact of a beautifully finished rug if it is curled due to "packing" in the loops." This is one of those situations, where if I am hooking too tightly, I do take some loops out while I am hooking. I don't wait until the end. (Yes, you can do steaming to flatten out an overly packed rug.)
4. **Keep a file of rugs by teachers you admire.** Use it to follow or contact teachers to learn of workshops.
5. **Look on the backside, when you are finished to find "holidays."** Those are places you have skipped.
6. **Put your pattern on the straight of grain as you transfer it to your backing.** I first use a soft pencil to drag through the "gutter" between the weave to mark straight lines. Then I use a marker over the pencil line. I often make a vertical and horizontal line at the halfway marks in soft pencil, too. It makes it easier to center a pattern. I don't use the marker on those lines and they disappear while I'm hooking.
7. **In your purse or car, keep a bundle of small wool scraps of the rug(s) you are working on.** If you are in a fabric store, Goodwill, or yard sale, and you see a garment or resources that seem "perfect" you'll have your snippets for comparison. (Don't leave it in with your hooking materials, or you won't have it when you need it.)

8. **Even a few minutes of hooking each day adds up.** Nova Scotia hooker Deanne Fitzpatrick often features an event called “Hooking 10 Minutes a Day.” It helps develop a habit. And you realize that in just a few minutes, you can actually make a bit of progress on your rug. It’s fun to join in when Deanne hosts it, but you can do it on your own anytime too.
9. **Don’t make it harder than it needs to be.** If you need to turn your work while you hook, or if you need to use wider or narrower noodles, or a different hook, DO IT. If the wool is too flimsy or too “shred-y” don’t use it on that project. Later you may want a “shred-y” wool. Use it then.
10. **Change wool (color or texture) as many times as you want.** You don’t have to use the full length of the noodle/worm.
11. **Don’t take a “questionable” passage out until you are finished with the rug.** Things always look different when everything around them is completed.
12. **Hook outside when you can.** Let the wool dust be carried in the wind, throw the biodegradable wool snippets onto the woodland floor.
13. **Which direction is the hook-part of your hook facing?** That determines which way the loop will sit in the hole on your backing. It can sit horizontally, vertically, or cattywampus in the hole.
14. **Give a recognition of appreciation** to the sheep who shares this wool, to the person who sheared the sheep, the carder, the spinner, the mill who dyed and wove it into yard goods, and whatever the journey was that brought this wool to you for your creative endeavors.