

The Ellen Purse

Weave-Along: *Week Two*

Weaving Part One (.PDF
TWO)

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Weaving in Opposite Directions & Slit Tapestry

Weaving in opposite directions is in some ways the foundation of tapestry weaving. It is the technique that allows you to weave shapes. Your warps are a canvas which you will cover with weft. Unlike drawing on paper or painting, tapestry is woven strictly from the bottom up and all the wefts have to be in the correct relationship to one another. If not, you will run into trouble. So you can't just plop a shape anywhere in the tapestry. It has to relate correctly to the other shapes and wefts. Between each shape there will be a space. This is called **Slit Tapestry**. Slit tapestry allows you to build up separate shapes if you'd like since the shapes are not connected because of the slits in between them. With slit tapestry you can either weave all the shapes at once or weave the decreasing shapes first.

If you just randomly put in wefts without noticing which direction they are going in relative to their neighbors you will end up with lice (when the warp shows in spots) or two wefts in the same shed where again the warp might show through. You have seen weavings where weaving in opposite directions is not done correctly. It looks sloppy.

Weaving in opposite directions is a skill you want to perfect. You will use it in tapestry constantly. It takes a while to get it into your head. But once it's there your weaving adventure will be that much easier and fun.

Check out [this video](#) I made about weaving in opposite directions.

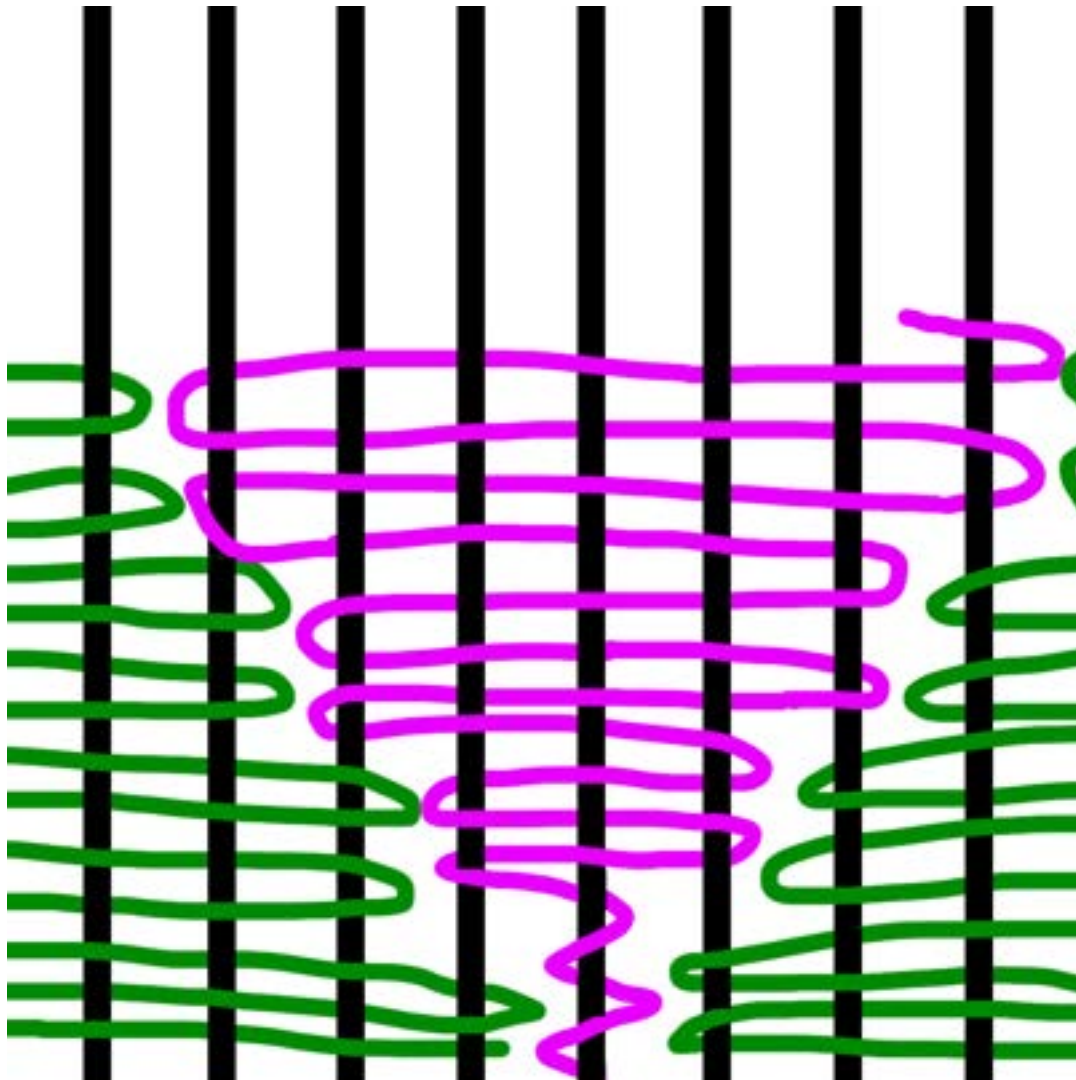
Before you begin weaving in opposite directions:

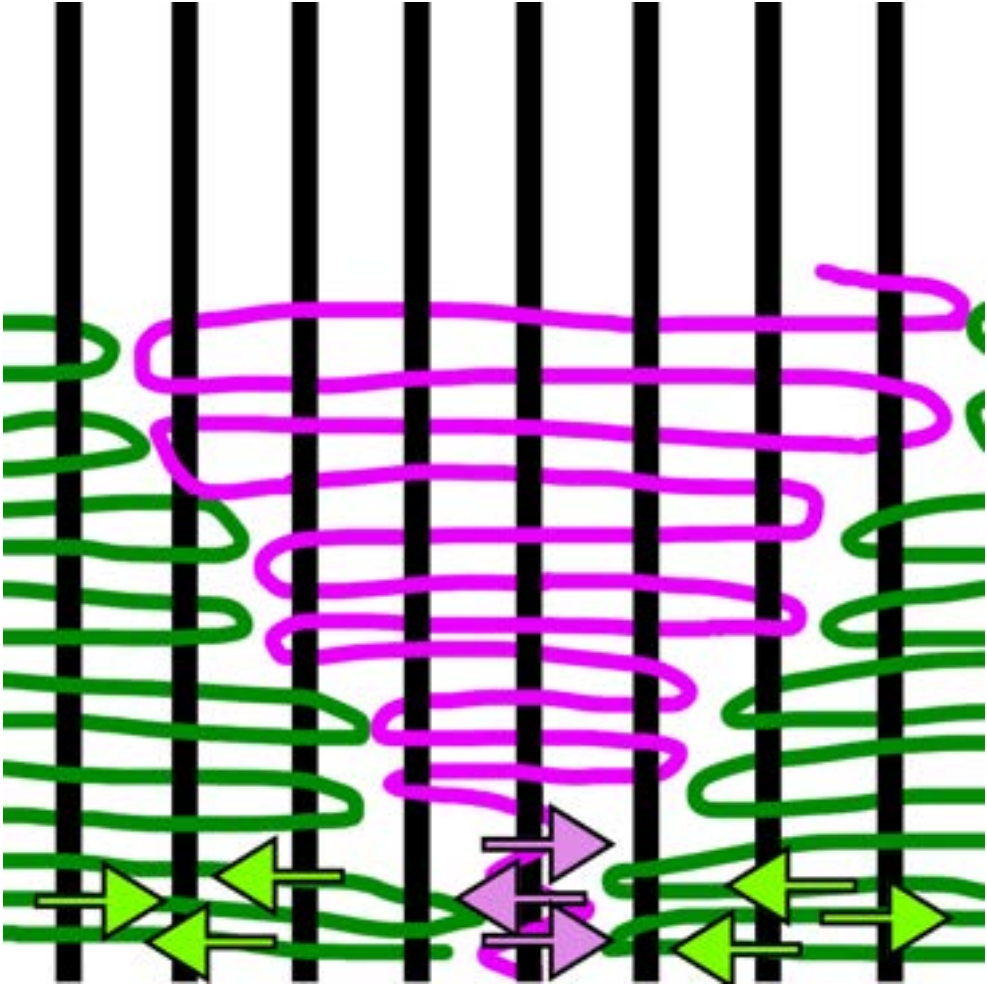
First Weave three full passes of the green (4) weft starting at the left selvedge and ending at the right selvedge. Then weave one full pass of the turquoise (1) weft starting at the left selvedge and ending at the left selvedge.

For this piece we are using three wefts to weave in opposite directions. The two side green (4) wefts will be the background and the magenta (2) weft will be the diamond.

The green (4) wefts will be decreasing and the magenta (2) diamond will be increasing until you reach the midpoint of the magenta (2) diamond. Then the magenta (2) diamond will be decreasing and the green (4) weft will be increasing.

The diagrams below show how you will begin to weave the diamond and which direction your wefts will be pointing. The second one has arrows showing the direction your weft will be going for the first three half-passes.





The picture below shows the same thing as the diagrams with the weft expanded so you can better see where each weft wraps around each warp thread twice and the direction each weft is going in.



Now, let's begin weaving the diamond!

We are going to start all our wefts at once and weave to the midpoint. Both the green (4) and the magenta (2) will be stepping up after two full passes. This means each weft will go back and forth twice. The weft will wrap around a warp twice in all cases.

Before you begin, identify the middle warp (warp 28) and wrap a piece of yarn around it to be removed once you've woven a bit.

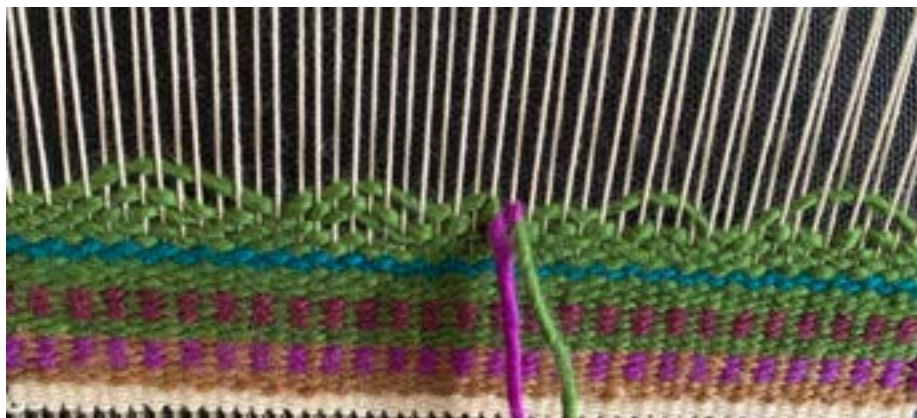


To start the diamond, enter the green (4) weft to one warp left of the center warp (warp 28) heading to the left selvedge. Insert the magenta (2) weft to the left of the center warp wrapping around it going to the right. The last green (4) weft will be inserted at the right selvedge and woven toward the magenta (2) weft. Because you will be stepping up two full passes, all the wefts will go around the warp threads twice before either increasing or decreasing.

Weave two full passes with all the wefts. Then you will decrease the green (4) wefts by traveling one warp to the left for the left green (4) weft and one warp to the right for the right green (4) weft. You will increase the magenta (2) weft by moving one warp left and then one warp right.



Something to remember when weaving the diamond: Decreasing areas must be woven first. The green (4) is decreasing. The magenta (2) diamond is increasing. Once you've reached the mid-point of the magenta diamond, it will start decreasing.



You will weave around the warps twice with each weft before decreasing the green (4) wefts and increasing the magenta (2) weft. Because the wefts are traveling in opposite directions they can encroach into a neighbor's territory as long as they do not go past the neighboring weft's working end. The photo below shows what it looks like if you cover a neighboring weft's working end.



You can see this clearly below how the magenta (2) has moved over one warp to the right.

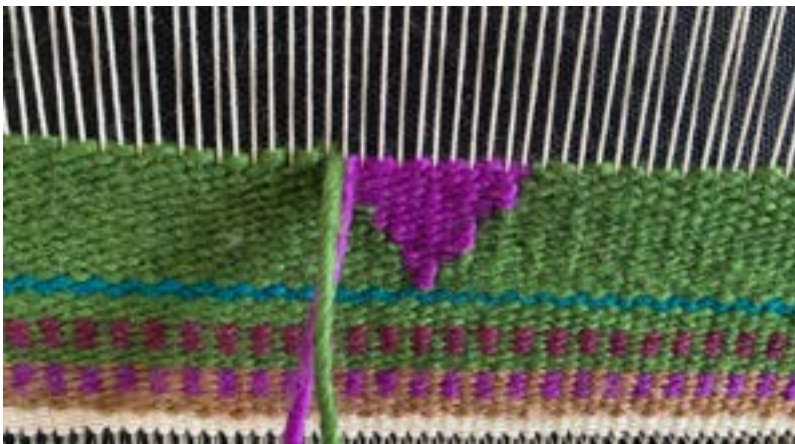


Note how the magenta (2) weft has traveled into the green (4) weft territory on the left. We ran out of the right green weft (4) so we have stuck its end to the back of the piece and begun a new weft by sticking its tail to the back one warp to the left of the tail you just ended.



Keep building up the diamond two wefts at a time and decreasing the green (4) two warps at a time.





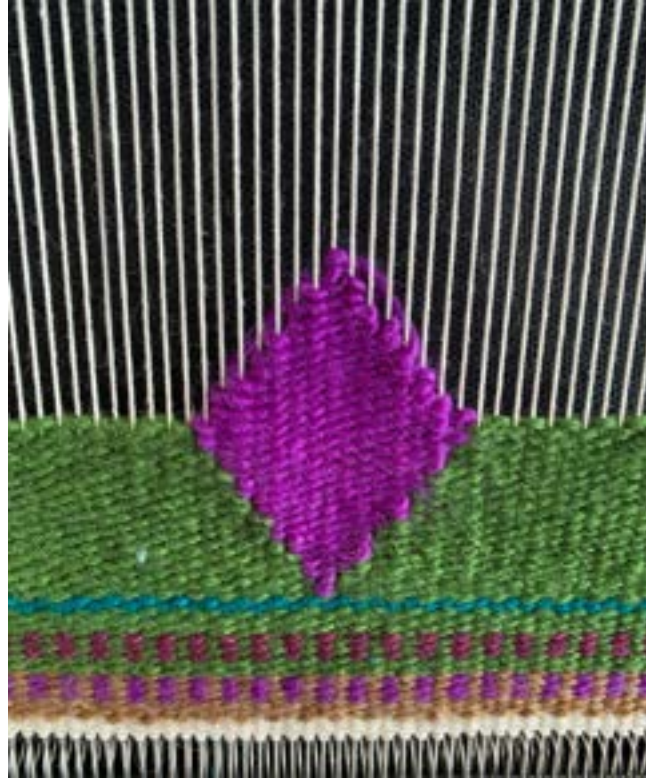
Once you have woven eight full passes of the magenta (2) and green (4) wefts, you can start decreasing the magenta (2) diamond and increasing the green (4) weft.



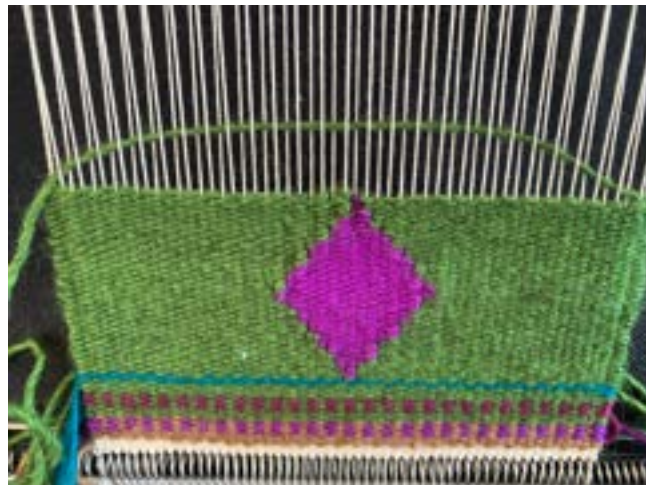
Now try just weaving the diamond to experience what it is like to build a single shape. You can then fill in with the green (4).



In order to complete the diamond you need to wrap around the final warp twice.

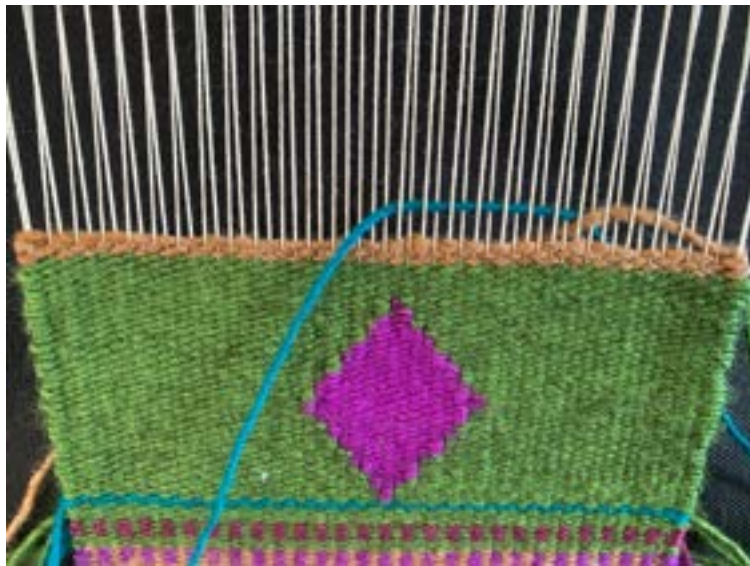


Once you have completed the diamond, fill in with the green (4) on the sides and then weave four full passes of just green (4) weft.

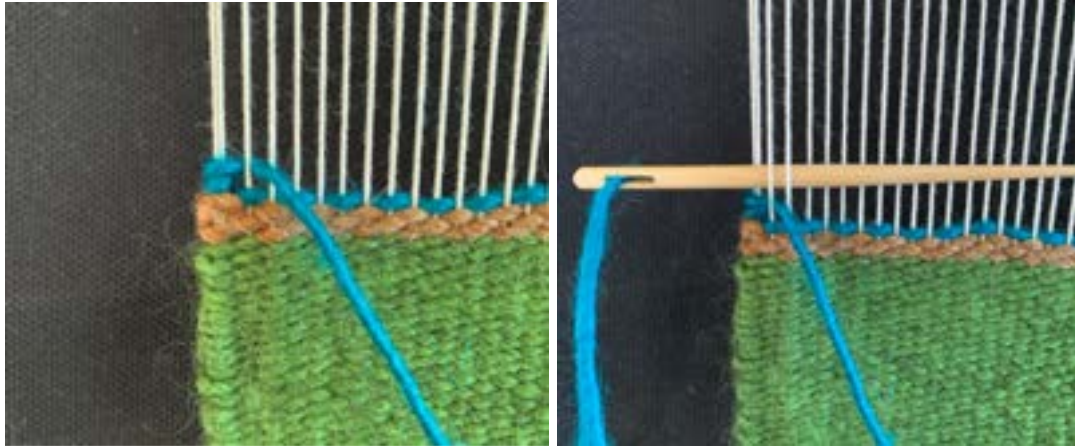


Continuing to Weave

End the green (4) weft at the selvedge and start a brown (5) weft for two full passes. End the brown (5) weft and start the turquoise (1) weft by Sticking the working end of the brown (5) weft to the back and start the turquoise (1) weft by sticking its tail in between the set of warps to the left of the brown (5). It will look like one continuous weft.



Weave the turquoise (1) weft to the left and then get prepared for some soumak knotting. Take your weft around the first warp and then under the second warp. Then take the weft under the third warp. Continue this pattern until you get to the right selvedge and then do another set of soumak knots heading toward the left selvedge.



Eccentric Wefts

For this part of the tapestry, you will be making random shapes and then covering them with soumak knotting. Here is a little sneak preview of how this will look:



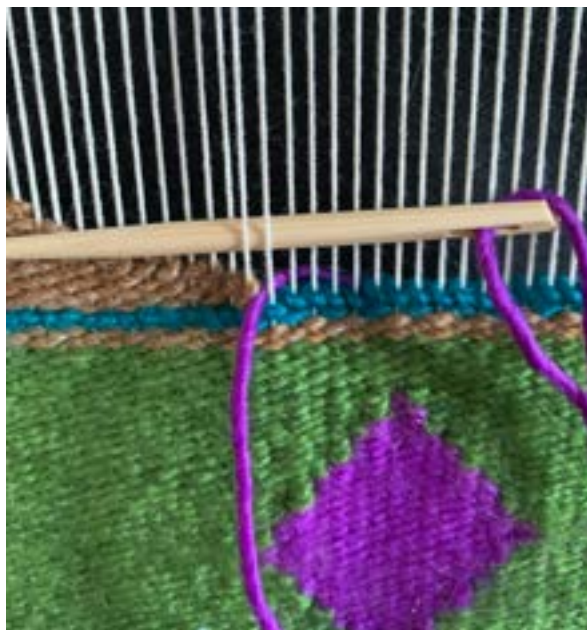
The concept is you make hill-like shapes (from $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 inch high) and then cover each one completely with soumak knotting. Because of the soumak knotting covering the shapes you will not have to follow the “weaving in opposite directions” rule as each new shape will be built on soumak. Unlike weaving a regular woven pass, soumak knotting accomplishes what two woven passes do: it makes one straight line as it covers every warp thread, not just every other warp thread.

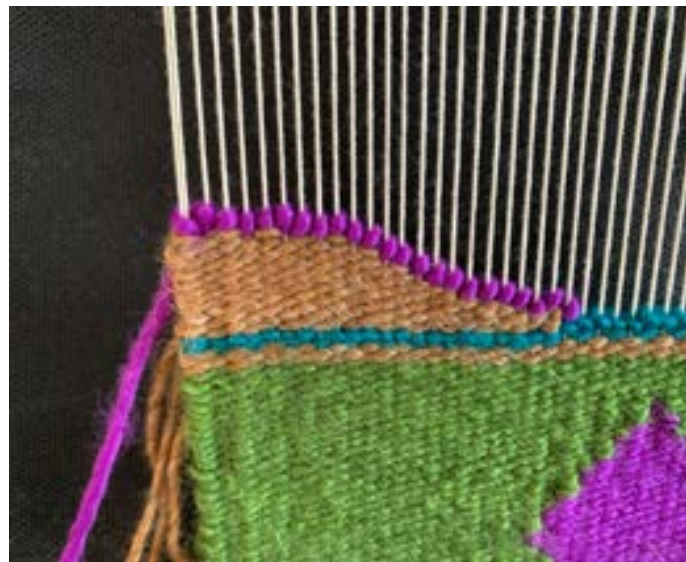
Therefore, whatever shed you weave in above the soumak will be correct.

Insert the brown (5) weft at the left selvedge. Make a triangle like shape by weaving back and forth to the left selvedge decreasing by one warp at a time. The highest point of my brown (5) shape is one inch and it is two inches long. You can decide the exact size of your shapes keeping them within the two inch wide and one inch high range.

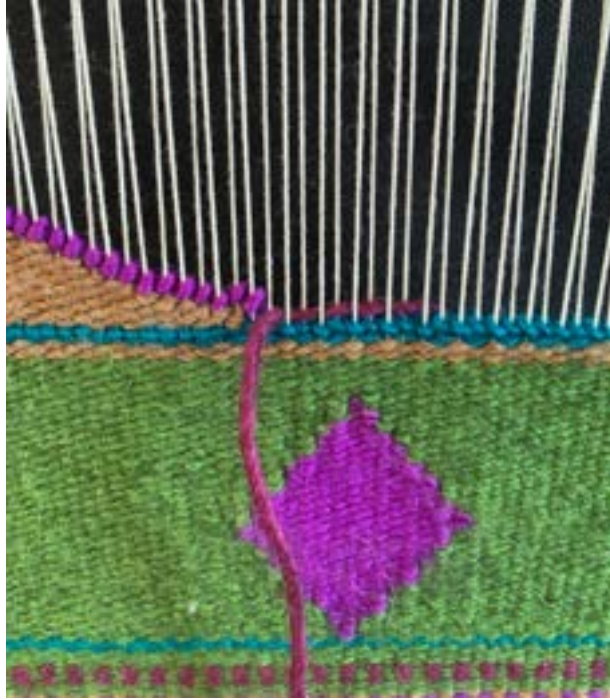


Cover the brown hill with soumak knotting.

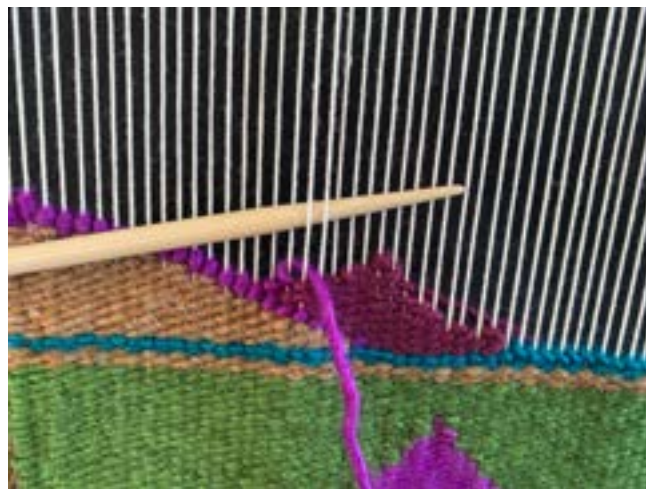




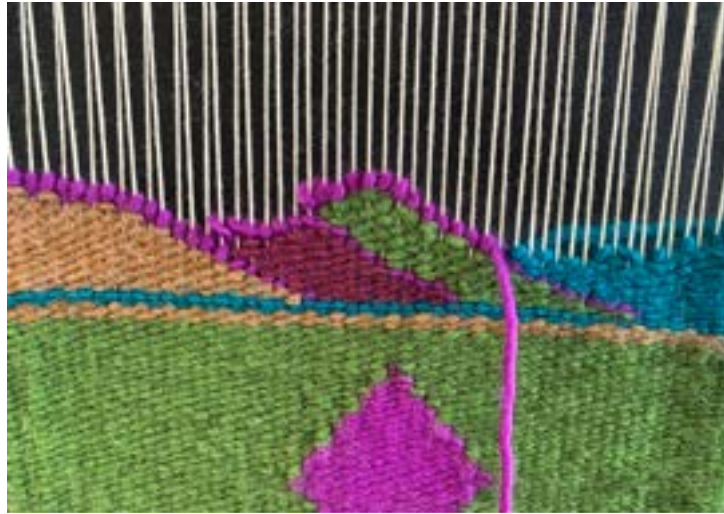
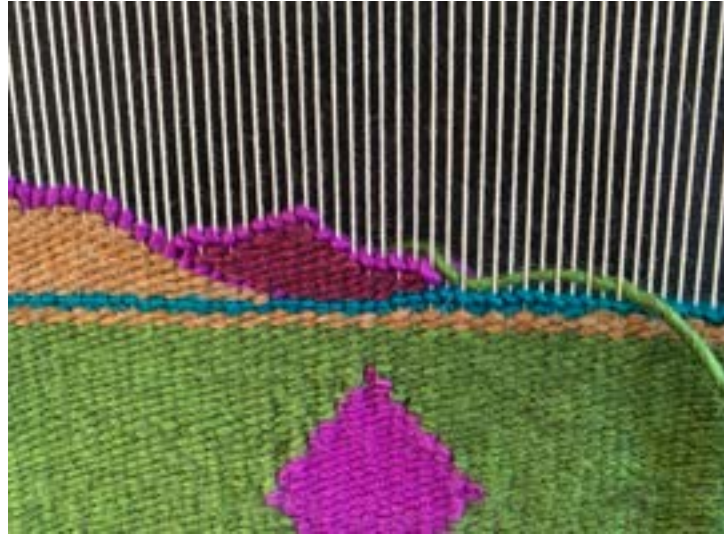
Insert the burgundy (3) weft heading toward the left. You can insert it anywhere because it is being built on top of soumak knotting. You can choose any shed but what I prefer to do is to lift up the soumak knotting and see what the shed before it was. I then open the opposite shed.



Cover this shape with magenta (2) soumak.



Continue making shapes and covering them with soumak.





The eccentric weft/soumak section is 4 ¼ inches tall. We will be finishing that section and the rest of the piece in week three. If you just can't put your weft down and are having too much fun with this section, weave 4 ¼ inches of it. You want this section to end as it began, with a straight line, which we will discuss next week.

Remember: We encourage you to ask us questions via email and social media and post pictures of your progress to Instagram (use the hashtag #theellenpurse), Facebook or Ravelry. You do NOT need a social media account to participate.