

Weaving on a Cardboard Loom

2018 Fall Docent Project

Weaving on a cardboard loom is really fun and easy to do. Today we're going to make a cardboard loom and weave on it. It's a great activity for long car rides, waiting at the doctor's office, or classroom arts and crafts. Weaving on a cardboard loom is also great for people of all ages - you can make lots of modifications, or changes, for any skill level.

Supplies

- yarn
- scissors
- large plastic or metal needles
- cardboard
- a ruler

The yarn, scissors and needles can be changed as necessary to suit the age of the person you're going to be doing the weaving with. Today, we're making it simple and using a rainbow yarn that will change colors without changing out the yarn.

Making A Cardboard Loom

(Note: Looms have been pre-made for this activity)

1. Cut cardboard to any size. Today, we're using a 3 x 6 inch piece of cardboard.
2. Draw a line $\frac{1}{2}$ inch in on every side of the loom. These will be your guides and will make holding it a little easier.
3. Draw the lines for the notches. In most cases you want these to be $\frac{1}{4}$ inch apart. However, you can make them as big as you want. The wider they are the easier the weaving will be. For today's lesson, we've cut them $\frac{1}{2}$ inch apart.
4. Start at the $\frac{1}{2}$ inch line, and make marks every $\frac{1}{2}$ inch all the way across the top and the bottom of the loom. Cut on the marks, stopping at the $\frac{1}{2}$ inch line you've drawn.

Warping the Loom

1. With the marked side of the loom facing up, thread a bit of yarn into the first notch on the upper left side. There should be a tail of a few inches on the back side of the loom. Tape this to the back of the loom.
2. Carry the thread down to the bottom left notch on the loom and pull it into that notch.
3. Bring the thread back over to the front by bringing it up through the notch directly to the right of the leftmost bottom notch.
4. Continue doing this all the way across the loom. The front side of the loom will have yarn going from notch to notch, the back side of the loom will just be small segments of yarn looped around the notches.
5. Leave a tail of the end of the yarn and also tape that to the back of the loom.

Weaving

1. Cut a length of yarn (shorter is easier to work with at first - no more than 2 feet) and thread the yarn through the needle. Tie a knot in the yarn the end of the needle.
2. Use the needle to guide the yarn through the loom in an under-over pattern. (Under the first string, over the second, under the next, etc.)
3. Once the needle has passed through all of the strings, pull the yarn through and leave a tail of a few inches at the end. Push the yarn up on the loom so that it's about 1/4 inch away from the notches.
4. Bring the needle and yarn back through the loom from the side you just exited using an over-under pattern that's the opposite of your first line and pull the yarn through. (If your first line of yarn goes under the last string to the right, it needs to go over the last string to begin the second row.) Note: Don't pull too hard on the yarn - will warp the strings on the loom.
5. Push the second line of yarn up to meet the first.
6. Continue each row, alternating the over-under pattern, making sure not to pull the yarn too tight.
7. Every few rows, it's a good idea to use your thumbs to push the yarn up the strings so that it looks nice and uniform.

(Optional) Changing Colors

1. When you get to the end of a color, take it to one edge of the loom and leave a tail of a few inches hanging off to the side. You can either cut a length of yarn that is the same color or introduce a new color.
2. Take your new length of yarn, and insert it into the same side where your ending tail is.
3. You'll be following the same over-under rules as before. So if the tail of the yarn ended going under the last string, you'll start your new yarn going over it.
4. Pull your yarn through and make sure to leave a tail at the end.
5. Continue weaving as usual.

Finishing Your Weaving:

1. Thread the end of the yarn through the needle.
2. Insert the needle into the side of the weaving, on the outside edge of the string.
3. Pull the needle through the edge of the weaving
4. Pull the yarn through, pull it tight, and cut off the end.
5. Use your fingers to rub the edges of the weaving and make things look nice and neat.

Removing Your Weaving from the Loom

1. Remove the tape from the long strings on the back of the loom.
2. Release the top loops first, and then the bottom.
3. Hold the weaving near the top, and pull up on the top loops.
4. Pull the string through the weaving, so that the bottom loops are brought up to be flush with the bottom of the weaving, and the top loops gain extra length.
5. Once the weaving is pushed down to the very bottom of the strings, you can cut the top loops in the middle and tie them off.
6. Tuck the strings into the weaving using the needle.

Tips for Making Weaving Easier:

1. Tie your yarn to the needle.
2. Use your fingers to hold the last string on the loom while pulling the yarn through. This is prevent you from pulling the yarn too tightly and warping the strings. If you don't leave the yarn a little loose on the left and right strings on the loom, it can warp your work. It won't lie flat when you're done and it might not turn out the shape you intended.

3. Use short lengths of yarn.
4. Use your fingers to push your work up quite often. This makes the finished weaving look much cleaner and you'll be able to get more rows of yarn on your loom this way.
5. Leave at least 1/4 inch of empty space at the top and bottom of your work. This will make finishing your weaving much easier.

Students may take home their needle, weaving, yarn, and loom with a challenge to keep creating at home!