

# Arts

**Weaving**

RecyCOOL Lessons

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# Weaving

## Description of the lesson

First we are going to see a little history of weaving. After that, we are going to learn about the basic elements of weaving and how variety can be achieved. Then we will see some artists who work with the technique of weaving. After that we will do a craft making a piece of cloth with our own hands. And finally, we will explore the other uses for weaving, discussing where else it can be applied in our everyday lives.

## Objective

The objective of this lesson is to understand weaving, its history, to see its use in old and modern times, some artists that use it, and also to try out the technique and learn how to apply it in our own lives

## After this lesson you will be able to

- tell what types of clothes woven materials are used for
- talk about the basics of weaving and its tools
- name some weaving artists
- weave a basic pattern

## Tools and materials

piece of textile (60x30 cm or bigger), strong string of any colour, scissors, ruler 30 cm long, 15x20 cm or bigger cardboard



## WEAVING:

Weaving is a method of textile production in which two distinct sets of yarns or threads are interlaced at right angles to form a fabric or cloth.

Have you ever wondered what the clothes you are wearing were made of and how those materials come into existence? There are different textiles that are manufactured with different techniques, and nowadays it is woven and knitted fabrics that are the most frequently used ones.

Generally, clothes that have to fit close to the body, like underwear, hosiery, sportswear and casual wear are made of knitted fabric, which are elastic, and the more stable pieces, like trousers and jackets are made of woven fabrics. It doesn't mean they cannot be elastic, because they often use elastic threads, but knits are elastic because of the structure of the textile.

We are looking at one of these methods – weaving – in this lesson. Do you know how it is done? What is the method that weaving uses, what are the tools and what possibilities there are in the design of a woven textile? Have you ever tried your hands at this craft?

We wear clothes every day, but many of us can't even imagine how they were sewn, let alone the manufacturing of their base material. From anthropologists and archeological findings we know that in the very beginning, humans started to wear animal skins and other materials from nature: fur, grass, leaves, bones, and shells.

Later, when people settled down and started growing crops, they discovered how they can turn them into cloth. They harvested the fibre, cleaned it, spun it into thread, and with the same method they were making baskets, they wove the threads into fabric, which they could then use for various purposes.

As people experimented with different materials and weaving techniques, a variety of textiles and patterns emerged that they could now choose according to their needs, whether they wanted it for a certain function or a certain aesthetic.

The craft of weaving has been done with the help of an equipment, called the loom, already in Ancient Egypt in 4400 BC.

Later the loom became mechanised and developed into modern electric types, even automated ones were invented.



Photo credit: [Woolery](#)

The floor loom is adequate for weaving large pieces of cloth and rug. You can find other types of looms [here](#).

From the earliest handloom to the automated machines and power looms of today, the basic principles have remained the same.

Essentially a woven material is composed of a warp and a weft, and it is made by interlacing the two. The warp is a set of threads (or yarns) that hang vertically and the weft is a set of threads that run in a perpendicular direction to the warp, that is, horizontally. While the warp threads are hanging tightly from a frame or loom, the weft threads are running left and right and alternate between being drawn over and under the warp.

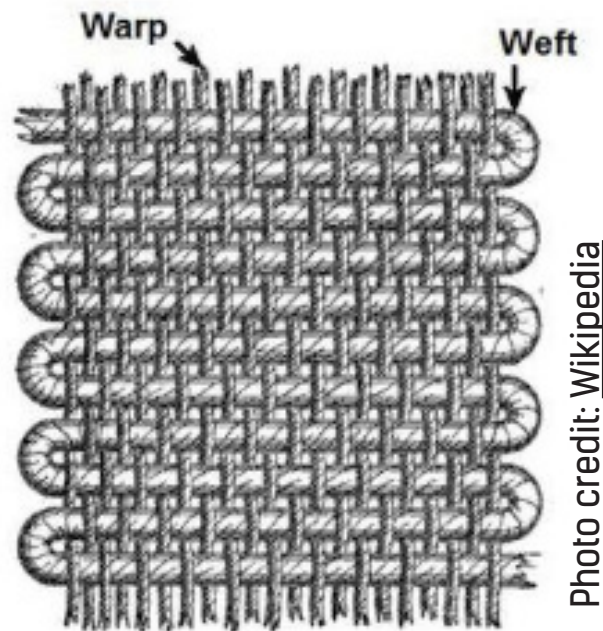
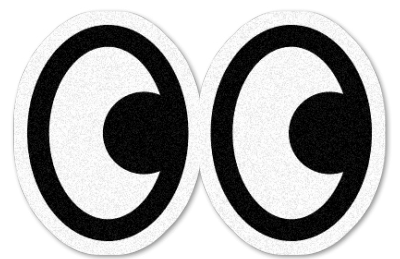


Photo credit: [Wikipedia](#)

By leaving out certain overs or unders and repeating the same sequence, patterns are created. The weaver can play with different colour combinations to achieve patterns of a different kind, and forms are also possible to be woven. The textiles will be different when using threads made from different raw materials and of differing thickness. Interesting effects can be achieved by combining them in a certain way, thin and thick, shiny and matte, pink and green, metal and cotton. What if not only warp and weft were different, but the thread itself was spun in an unusual way?



Photo credit: [Centering with Fiber](#)



Let's see how artists who specialised in weaving perfected their craft.

Tapestry is a form of textile art, intended to be hung from walls or cover furniture as decorative elements. In the **Middle Ages** it was the most expensive medium for two dimensional figurative images.

This tapestry is titled: The Lady and the Unicorn and was made ca. 1500.





More images and information [here](#).

If you think tapestry should be long forgotten, look at this [video](#) and think again.

There are young artists nowadays who are working with the technique of weaving, who make trendy and stylish wall decorations.

Photo credit: [Crossing threads](#)

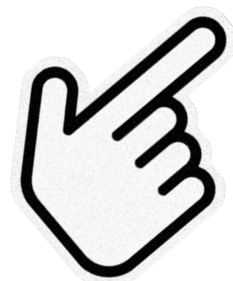


**"And how is it connected to fashion?"** – you may ask. Outside using the woven textiles as the raw material to design the clothes from, several fashion designers use this technique in a bolder, more visible, artistic way, like the following ones. Can you guess which outfits belong to which designers?

**Match the pictures to these names: Chanel, Dior, Jean Paul Gaultier, Alberta Ferretti, Viktor&Rolf, Dries Van Noten.**

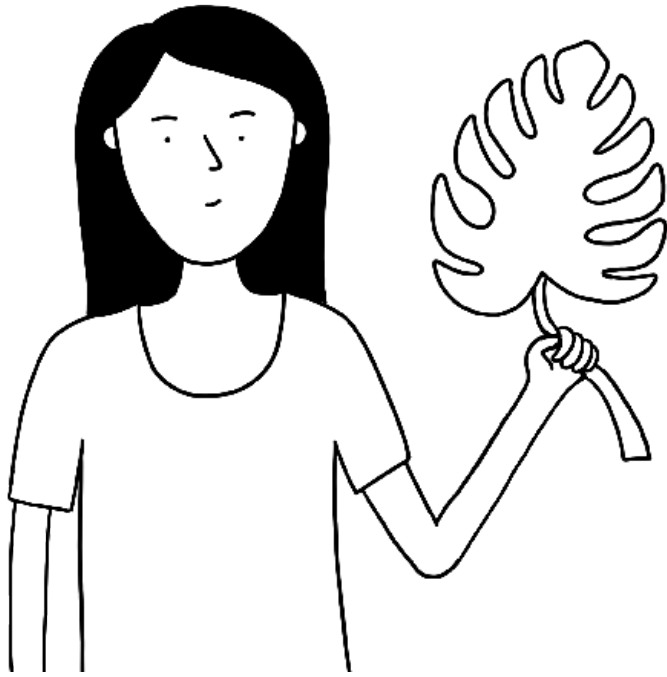
**One of these fashion houses made this into an upcycling project, showing how haute couture can be done in a sustainable way. Can you find out which one?**

(The solution is in the attachment with a link to more pictures, video of the runway show and description.)



Click on picture  
to find out more





The most common use of woven materials in fashion however is through readily available fabric rolls made in factories. Textile manufacturing has become a major industry and is mostly done by machines, taking place in industrial areas, isolated from towns and villages.

But it doesn't mean we cannot try it out, because all the previous methods that were used since the beginning of textile weaving are still available, and we can easily make some simple tools for ourselves.

**So in the next part of the lesson, we are going to do just that, experience this age-old craft with our own hands.**

# Task

Please consider, this task might take up to 30–45 minutes from start to finish!

Let's weave a dishcloth just like our (great) grandmothers!

## Cardboard loom video:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jSjFF\\_5Nm0k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jSjFF_5Nm0k)

## Video for weaving:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nQd0bcf780A&list=PLI9XMtTrljTf-88GOugNqtH7\\_MYRA9gxjo&index=25](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nQd0bcf780A&list=PLI9XMtTrljTf-88GOugNqtH7_MYRA9gxjo&index=25)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w42IPWyfrfA&list=PLI9XMtTrljTf-88GOugNqtH7\\_MYRA9gxjo&index=23](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w42IPWyfrfA&list=PLI9XMtTrljTf-88GOugNqtH7_MYRA9gxjo&index=23)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mKt9oRtRUsY>



## Step by step instructions:

**1**

Take a piece of cardboard and cut it into a 15x20 cm rectangle. Then draw half circles on the bottom and at the top every 1 cm (that will be 13 half circles.) Now cut those circles to make holes.

**2**

Please get your string out and stretch it between the cut slots of the loom on the top and the bottom. You start with a knot and then just go all the way down and turn it, then go to the top, always moving further in the next hole. When you finish, knot it to the starter knot, or tie the strings together.

**3**

Get your textile and your scissors and cut it to make 15 stripes, dimensions: 30 cm long and 1,5 cm wide.

**4**

Now we are ready for weaving. Get your textile stripes and start weaving between the stretched yarn with your hands. Place the textile stripe under the first string then above the next one, and continue like this until you have to turn back, then you make the second row. When you finish with one stripe, tie it to the next one, continue weaving with the elongated stripe. Try to hide the knot in the weaving! Continue until you have textile stripes or you used up the space on the loom.

When you are finished, cut the strings all around the dishcloth, tie them together and take the dishcloth off the loom.

You can start using it!

Hope you like your product :)

After making this cloth, think about what you can use it for or what you can make out of it. **Try to imagine some variations, what if you fold it a certain way and sew something on it or to it, maybe attach a zipper or buttons, what could it be?**

Would you use it or would someone in your surroundings be happy to get it as a gift?

(pencil-case, bag, phone-cover, etc.)

How did your weaving project turn out? Is it similar to the fabrics you see around you? Can you imagine doing this on a bigger scale, with more warp threads and finer weft yarns? If it was wider and longer, what could you make out of it?



Photo credit: [Crossing threads](#)

# Reflection

In this lesson we have learned about a textile-making method, called weaving. We have seen how it came about, how it evolved, what equipment was used in their creation, how it was technically made, some examples from art history and we were able to try it out by our own hands.

**Do you see weaving as an important part of the fashion industry?** After this lesson, would you make other weaving projects as well (with your own hands and with some yarn or old textiles you have at home)? How about these?



Click on  
picture  
to find out  
more





Would you consider mending your clothes visibly with the method of weaving?

**Possible solutions for a long standing wardrobe:**

- upcycle your old clothes and make something new out of them
- learn how to use a sewing machine
- try crochet and knitting, or the weaving you practised today
- take care of your clothes when using, washing and storing them

Did you know that woven and knitted textiles might need a different method of care? [Find out why and how to do it right!](#)



# Resources

Wikipedia. Weaving. Available at:  
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Weaving>

Mary Bellis. The History of Clothing. 2019. Available at:  
<https://www.thoughtco.com/history-of-clothing-1991476>  
<https://marylana.com/blogs/news/history-of-the-loom-know-how-your-clothes-are-made>

Wikipedia. Tapestry. Available at:  
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tapestry>

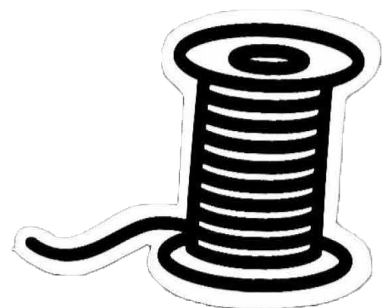
## Recommendations:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jlbu-dJuEh0>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nQd0bcf780A&list=PLI9XMtTrljTf-88GOugNqtH7\\_MYRA9gxjo&index=25](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nQd0bcf780A&list=PLI9XMtTrljTf-88GOugNqtH7_MYRA9gxjo&index=25)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w42IPWyfrfA&list=PLI9XMtTrljTf-88GOugNqtH7\\_MYRA9gxjo&index=23](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w42IPWyfrfA&list=PLI9XMtTrljTf-88GOugNqtH7_MYRA9gxjo&index=23)

<https://www.contrado.com/blog/what-is-woven-fabric/>



# Attachements



Alberta Ferretti 2016



Christian Dior 2019



Jean Paul Gaultier 2010



Viktor&Rolf 2016



Dries Van Noten 2017



Chanel 2017

## Upcycled Haute Couture Collection: Viktor&Rolf

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# Partners



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