

Clasped Weft

This is a fun technique you can use to make designs in your cloth. You'll use two different yarns. They're often different colors, but you can play with other aspects such as shiny/matte, smooth/textured, and so on. The point is they must be visibly different, or the technique won't show up well. Clasped weft is a technique that works independently of the weave structure. The basic idea is that one weft goes through the shed, wraps around a second weft, and then pulls the second weft partway into the shed.

In the following instructions, the loom is warped for plain weave and the weaving pattern is plain weave: the heddle alternates between up and down. If you look closely at the resulting fabric, however, you'll see that the weft is doubled in each pick. The actual weave structure of clasped-weft fabric is half basketweave. You'll also notice a bump in the fabric where the two yarns join. That extra bit of thickness is the inevitable result of the yarns bending

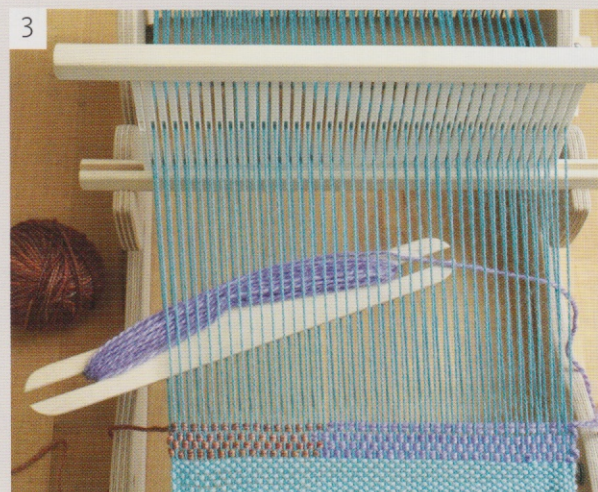


around each other and adds a bit of textural outline to your design.

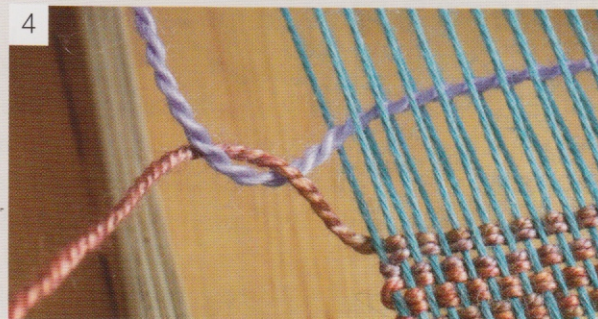
You can weave many different patterns with the clasped weft technique. My designs tend toward the organic, because I like to play around and design on the fly with clasped weft, but you could also create controlled and precise patterns, such as diamonds and checkerboards.

How to Weave Clasped Weft

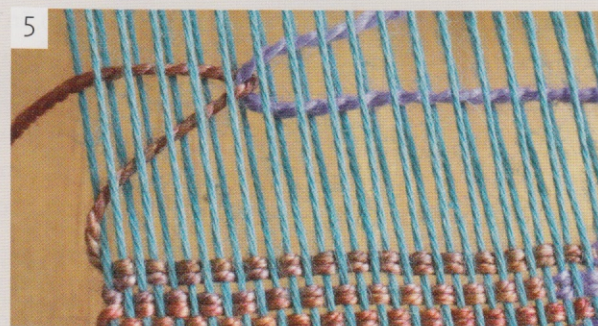
- ① Wind one of the yarns onto a shuttle.
- ② Have the other yarn in a package that can freely feed yarn, such as a ball or cone. If the yarn is in skein form, wind it into a ball before you begin.
- ③ Open a shed and pass the shuttle all the way through the shed.



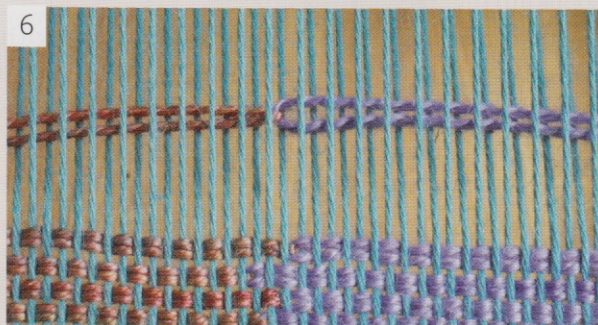
- ④ Wrap the shuttle around the yarn coming from the other yarn source so the two wefts bend around each other. This is the “clasp”: it’s as if the two yarns are holding hands.



- ⑤ Put the shuttle back into the open shed. It is important that you not change the shed between steps 3 and 5. Pull the shuttle out of the shed on the side that it started on in step 3. Keep pulling until the other yarn is drawn into the shed.



- ⑥ Stop pulling when the other yarn is where you want it in your design.



- ⑦ Beat, then change sheds. Continue from step 3 to weave the rest of the cloth, alternating between up and down sheds.

CLASPED WEFT VARIATIONS

After weaving with the extra yarn package on one side of the design, break the weft and start it on the other side. This lets you alternate the sides the colors appear on.

You could do interesting work with clasped weft using yarns of different shrinkage. For example, weave in triangles with yarn that will felt on the edges of a fabric woven with otherwise non-felting yarn.

