

# Broken Warp Threads

Sometimes, through no fault of your own, a warp thread breaks. Perhaps it was a flaw in the thread or a knot that slipped past you during winding the warp. In any event, it's not the end of the world. Weaving is magic because the warp threads are discontinuous, which is a fancy way of saying they are cut at both ends. This means that you can replace part or all of one warp thread without affecting the others.

The first thing to do when you break a warp thread is stop and evaluate the situation. You have options at this point:

» **DON'T FIX THE BROKEN WARP THREAD.** Instead, toss it over the back of the loom, and weave a project one thread narrower than you'd originally planned. This typically is an option only when a selvedge thread breaks, if you intend to felt the fabric, if the project is a sample where a few missing threads won't be an issue, or when the yarn is so wild (think eyelash yarn in the weft) that you'd never know. Obviously, you wouldn't want to do this more than once or twice in a warp.

» **COMPLETELY REPLACE A BROKEN WARP THREAD.** If you decide to do this, cut a replacement warp thread the same length as you measured for the warp, insert it into the warp to replace the broken warp thread, and, after the cloth is off the loom, replace the broken warp thread entirely, making the mistake as if it never happened. This is an elegant fix that involves hanging weights off the back of your loom to tension the replacement thread. It yields the cleanest end result, but having one or more weights dangling off the back of a rigid-heddle loom can be cumbersome. (see facing page.)

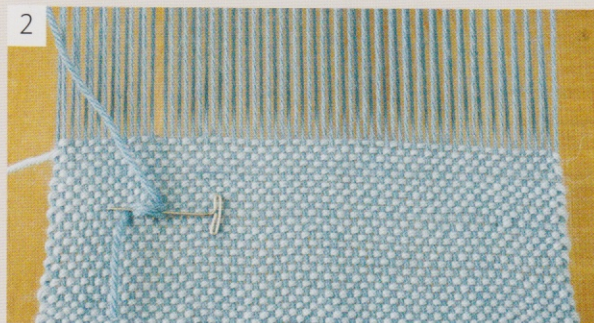
## THINGS TO AVOID

Some broken warp threads *are* totally your fault, like when you slam a shuttle into a warp thread or, in an extreme case, drop the loom and break a warp thread while trying to catch it on the way down. Other weaver contributions to broken warp threads include choosing the wrong thread for warp yarn. (For a list of things to consider when choosing a warp, see page 26.)

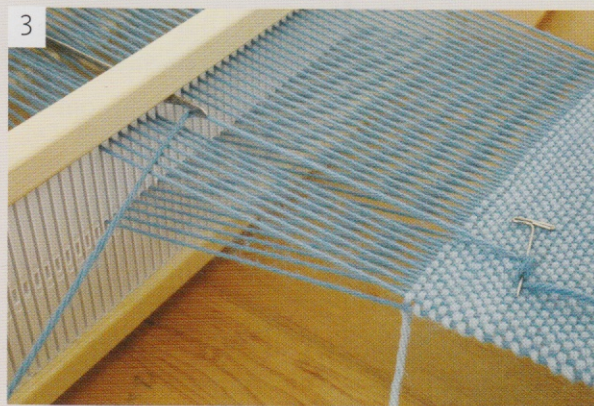
If the warp yarn snaps because it's weak, you may still be able to weave with it, but you'll have to be more careful and perhaps take other protective steps, such as sizing the yarn (adding a substance that acts as a temporary glue to strengthen the yarn during weaving and then washes out later).

## METHOD 1: *How to Replace a Broken Warp Thread*

- ① Cut a new warp thread the same length as the original warp.
- ② Push a T-pin into the already woven cloth and wrap one end of the new warp thread around the T-pin in a figure-8 pattern to secure it.



- ③ Thread the new warp thread in place of the broken one.



- ④ Secure and weight the rest of the new warp behind the loom. Some weavers use small canisters weighted with pennies inside, wrapping the excess yarn around the outside of the canister. I use kumihimo bobbins. The photo illustrates how to use washers laced on a split key ring. You want the weight to be enough to match the tension of the rest of the warp as closely as possible. Hang the weight off the back of the rigid-heddle loom, providing tension for the new warp thread. The broken warp thread also dangles off the back of the loom. You'll have to take care to unroll it when you advance the warp.



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