

## Basic Block Weaving

### 2. Preparing weaving elements...



There are 2 approaches to preparing your weaving strips. You can plan ahead or tear/cut as you go. This is a personal preference and really depends on how much cloth or confidence you have. In the beginning, I found it easier to have strips pre-torn or pre-cut to the approximate length of my block or smaller. (Smaller pieces can be combined). It also a good idea to customize the width of your strips to mathematically fit to your canvas. For instance, with a 12" block I generally work with 1", 2" 3" and 4" wide strips. 12 is divisible by all these numbers and all these widths are easy to handle and give me many options for free form or engineered designs. For free form design, none of

this matters, you can just wing it.



Example: for a nine patch i use three 4" strips in each direction. As you work you will find the best option for your intent.

Most plain cotton and silk fabrics tear easily; fancy weaves and linen are a bit more difficult. I usually start the tear by cutting into the fabric about 1" with a scissor. This gives you something to hold on to and starts the tear process more easily. The nice thing about a tear is that it is straight. If the tear is difficult, move to a shear or a rotary cutter. Don't worry if the cut is a bit crooked. It is ok. If you want precision, you might draw your lines first, but really I never do that. (well, you never know...) If you choose to play with wool, you can cut, but note that tearing very light weight wool can yield lovely results.

You can use a variety of fabrics, all different weights and fibers, patterns, and colors. Because there are no seams here, fabrics can move around and find their comfort zone, there is less tension created by differential shrinkage etc. you can mix weights and you will be able to feel whether it is working or not before securing. Make sure to test your needle through all fabrics first, and don't use the ones that are not stitching friendly. It's not worth it no matter how beautiful they look.

Pull all the obviously loose threads from the raw edges as you work. Raw edges will eventually find a comfortable fray. I will talk more about that later. Some fabrics will not work. This will be obvious early on. Just pay attention and you will know.

**Tip** : strips may be folded to adjust width. Smaller pieces can be sewn together or overlapped to make a longer piece. No scrap is too small.