



4-H Heritage Arts: Rug Making



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Table of Contents

Experiential Learning Process	1
Targeting Life Skills	2
Introduction	3
Project Objectives	3
Project Expectations	3
Textile Crafts	4
Creating a Design	4
Elements of Design	5
Evaluate Your Plan-Pattern to Follow	6
Principles of Design	7
Sources of Inspiration	8
Resources	9
Sharing What You Have Learned	10
Demonstration	10
Evaluation of Judging	10
Community Service	10
Fair Exhibit	11
Introduction	12
Project Evaluation	12
History of Rug Making	13
Hooked Rug Basics	14
Materials	14
Yarns	14
Canvas	14
Transferring a Design	15
Making a Latch Hook Rug	15
Four-Step Method	16
Finishing	17
Braided Rug Basics	18
Materials	18
Equipment	18
Making a Braided Rug	19
Preparing Fabric	19
Braiding	20
Size	22
Lacing the Braids Together	22

Experiential Learning Process

The 4-H program utilizes a process where adult leaders ask open-ended questions that challenge youth to think. Through this inquiry, youth can propose hypotheses and determine their own solutions. The Experiential Learning Model developed by Pfeiffer and Jones (1985) and modified by 4-H includes five specific steps that can be summarized into three main processes: Do, Reflect, and Apply.

The Experiential Learning Model encourages discovery with minimal guidance from others. A situation, project or activity is undertaken for individual thought and problem solving. Minimum outside assistance is provided, but support is offered to the individual by questioning at each stage. The youth participating in an activity reflect on what they did, and then assess how what they learned can be applied to a life situation. Below are questions that might help during each stage of learning.

1) Experience (Doing)

Questions: What sources of information are available?

What is possible? What do you expect to see?

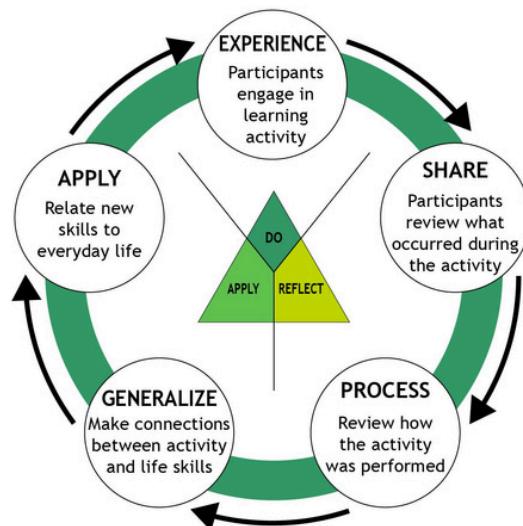
How is it working? What else might you try?

2) Share (Reflecting on What Occurred)

Questions: What was your goal for this project/activity when you began? What happened? What were the results? What was most difficult? How do you know?

What did you learn? What surprised you?

How did you share this project/activity with others?



3) Process (Reflecting on What's Important)

Questions: What problems seemed to reoccur? How did you solve them? What similar experiences have you had? How was the experience like or unlike experiences others had? Would you do anything differently? What did you learn about making decisions? What suggestions would you have for someone else who wanted to do a similar project/activity? What life skills were you developing through your project? Why are life skills important? What new questions do you have about yourself, others, and future goals?

4) Generalize (So what?)

Questions: What did you learn about yourself or about the activity? What key points have you learned? How did you decide what to do? What else could you have done? How does this relate to something else in life? Where have you faced similar challenges in your life? Where might this situation occur in the future? Why is it important to have plenty of information before making decisions? What did you learn about your own skill in communicating with others?

5) Apply (Now what?)

Questions: How does this project/activity relate to your everyday life? Why is this project/activity important to you? Where else can this skill be used? How will you use this in the future? What will you do differently after this experience? How can I make an impact? What will I create next? In what ways do people help each other learn new things? What are qualities you think are important in a leader? If someone helped or mentored you in this project, what would you tell them you learned and what difference it has made in your life? How would you express your appreciation?

Targeting Life Skills

A skill is a learned ability. Life skills are those abilities that assist individuals to lead successful, productive, and satisfying lives. In 4-H, we use the Targeting Life Skills Model to help youth become competent and prepared for adulthood. The Targeting Life Skills Model categories are based on the four H's from the 4-H clover (Head, Heart, Hands, and Health). Under each of these main categories, there are two general skill levels



Image: Hendricks, P. (1998) "Developing Youth Curriculum Using the Targeting Life Skills Model"
<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/4H/skls.eval.htm>

The main goal in 4-H positive youth development is to provide developmentally appropriate opportunities for youth to experience life skills and to be able to use them throughout a lifetime. The graph below represents a system for targeting skills that lead to mastery of life skills competencies. By understanding the importance of the 4-H framework and its structure, 4-H members, parents, professionals, and leaders will know the expectations and will be able to effectively use the 4-H delivery methods.

The following chart lists the specific skills that lead to mastery in the four categories and eight subcategories of the 4-H Targeting Life Skills Model.

HEAD	HEART	HANDS	HEALTH
Thinking Learning to learn Decision-making Problem solving Critical thinking Service learning	Relating Communications Cooperation Social Skills Conflict Resolution Accepting Differences	Giving Community Service-volunteering Leadership Responsible Contribution to group	Living Healthy life-style choices Stress Management Disease Prevention Personal Safety
Managing Goal setting Planning/organizing Wise use of resources Keeping Records Resiliency	Caring Concern for others Empathy Sharing Nurturing relationships	Working Marketable/useful skills Teamwork Self-motivation	Being Self Esteem Self responsibility Character Managing feelings Self Discipline



Introduction

Welcome to the 4-H Heritage Arts project. Without interested individuals, such as yourself, many historic arts and crafts would be lost with the passing of generations.

You will be given the opportunity, through the Heritage Arts project, to choose from a variety of fiber, fabric, yarn arts and crafts. The projects and activities you experience depend upon your enthusiasm and the availability of resources within your home and community.

Heritage Arts is defined as the practical skills passed down from proceeding generations that were developed to provide basic family needs, such as apparel, home furnishings, or decorations. It also is defined as a traditional craft and the methods that have been maintained throughout history and passed on to others, often by observation and example.

Classes on traditional crafts are available in many communities, taught by skilled local artisans. The techniques taught often incorporate new techniques and materials with the old, traditional methods to enhance the craft.

Project Objectives

The Heritage Arts project is designed to help you:

- Learn about a variety of historic arts and crafts.
- Create a craft that connects you to the past.
- Learn about historic influences on arts and crafts.
- Have fun learning.
- Gain skills that might lead to a home-based business.

Project Expectations

Members are encouraged to learn about and try a variety of different historic crafts. Think of fun places in your community where you can learn more. Ask about interesting, creative artisans who are willing to share their skills with you. Take a field trip to local museums that feature historic fabric and yarn displays. Take a trip to the library and look up interesting facts about a craft that is of particular interest to you. Evaluate or judge fabric and yarn crafts and do a demonstration to share your skills with others. The more activities you do, the more you learn.

To complete your project, respond to all questions on the Heritage Arts e-Record. Check with your Extension office for county fair requirements if you want to exhibit your project.

Textile Crafts

What is a textile craft? It is defined as any method of creating a unique design with fiber, fabric or yarn. Patchwork and applique quilting are examples of textile crafts that use fabric as the main design ingredient. Macrame, needlepoint, embroidery, knitting, crochet, and weaving are examples of textile crafts that use yarn. All textile crafts have one thing in common - they use fibers, fabric or yarn, to create a design.

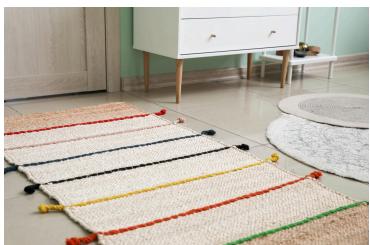
Some textile crafts focus on making fabric, such as weaving, crochet or needlepoint. Other textile crafts change an already existing fabric into something different. Quilting and embroidery create a design that changes the appearance of fabric.

Creating a Design

Once you decide on a heritage craft, it's time to think about the design. Many books show how to create a pleasing design. There also are many printed patterns that can be purchased. There's no better way to enjoy and understand design than to try it. Designing, like most activities, can come naturally once you understand what you are doing.

A design is really a plan - a plan for using all materials so they look good together. To begin planning the design, examine your materials - yarn or fabrics or some other material - in a special way. For example, regardless of what materials are used, the basic components of design are:

- Line
- Shape
- Space
- Texture
- Color





Elements of Design

The components below are called the elements of design. They are important to your plan because they are the visible details of a design that you work with. Without a design plan, these elements may seem haphazard or clash. Let's take a closer look at each of these elements of design.

Line

Line is an element that's found everywhere around us. In a garment, lines are created by a seamlne, a hem, a dart, a row of trim, a plaid or stripe. A row of embroidery stitches creates a line, as does a row of crochet stitches or the pattern in a quilt square. Some lines are straight and angular, others are curved. Some are thick and sturdy, others fine and delicate. The kind of lines used in a design will affect the character of that design.

Shape/Form

When lines are connected and overlapped, they create shapes: squares, circles, triangles, any shape imaginable. The outline of an applique is a shape, the pieces in a patchwork quilt are shapes, the outline of a garment is a shape, and so on. Just as lines create feelings, so can shapes.

Space

When we talk of space, we mean the actual space an object or a design occupies. When we design, we work within a specific space; so not only must the design itself be well thought out but so must the space around it. That space might be an individual quilt square or entire quilt.

Texture

Texture is the surface characteristic of an object; it may be smooth, fuzzy, soft, pebbly, scratchy, or one of many other textures. Sometimes we don't have to touch an object to know its texture. We can see the texture. In planning a design, texture adds character or feeling, just as lines and shapes do.

Color

When we think of colors, we usually think of color names (or hues) such as red, green, yellow or blue. We can create different feelings in a design by the colors we use. For instance, a design in yellow and green will give you a different feeling from the same design in purple and blue.

Value

There are other ways we use colors to give a design the feeling we want. The way we use color values also can affect a design. Value is the lightness or darkness of a hue. The same hue can have lots of different values. For example, think about the different kinds of blue - baby blue, light-blue, sky blue, peacock blue, navy blue and royal blue. Visualize a design in all light colors, such as lime green, pink, light-blue and lemon-yellow. Now visualize that same design in dark green, navy blue, dark red and gold. Does it seem different? How about the same design in lime green and navy blue? Does it seem different in style?

The intensity of the hues we use in a design also affects the feeling we get from it. Intensity refers to the brightness or dullness of a color. Imagine a design in all bright colors - usually a design made of bright colors is more than our eyes can take. So, use bright colors sparingly.

Evaluate Your Plan - Pattern to Follow

Take a look at the fibers, yarn, fabrics or threads you plan to work with. What kind of feeling do you want to create with your design? Do the materials create that feeling in their textures and colors? Can you create the kinds of lines and shapes you want with your materials? Are the materials suitable for the space in which you've chosen to create? If you can say yes to these questions, you're on your way to a well-designed piece.

But it doesn't stop there. Because even with all the right materials together, designers still need some guidelines on how to use them together. You can think of these guidelines as a recipe for deciding just how much of each ingredient (colors, textures, lines, and other elements) to use and where to add them. These guidelines are called the principles of design.



Principles of Design

While the elements of design are the visual components you work with, the principles of design are “the how.” They are the guidelines for arranging the elements effectively.

Proportion: Proportion is the relationship of all the parts of a design to each other and to the whole garment or article. Each part needs to be in proportion to the rest of the design. No part should overpower the others. If the piece designed does not have proportion:

- One part of the design might be too big for the rest of the design,
- The design may be too big or too small to look good for the space,
- There may be too much bright, shiny color that overpowers the other colors,
- The design is too overpowering for the person wearing it or the decor in which it will be used.

Balance: Balance is a feeling of steadiness, of everything in the design looking like it belongs. Balance can be symmetrical in either a formal way when each side of the center is identical, or in an informal way when the sides are different, but weigh the same. Balance can be asymmetrical when the weight of the composition is not evenly distributed around a central axis.

Emphasis: Emphasis is the creation of a center of interest. Without the center of interest, a design may seem cluttered and busy, or boring and uninteresting. If a design is not well-planned and is missing emphasis, it may be cluttered with too many colors, different textures, different lines, shapes or sizes. Or there may not be sufficient contrast to attract attention. The center of interest doesn't have to be centered in the design.

Rhythm or Movement: When we look at a design, the eye follows a certain route around the design. It notices differences in lines, shapes, textures, colors and spaces. The route the eye follows is known as rhythm. In a well-planned design, the eye is led from one to another to the point of emphasis. That rhythm is created in a design by repeating something throughout the design - color, texture, shape or size. If an item misses rhythm, it may have too many unrelated colors, textures, shapes, lines or sizes. Or the design may be placed so that it is spotty or scattered and doesn't seem to fit together.

Unity: When we say that a design has unity, we mean that it is complete. Unity means all the materials together in a pleasing combination. If unity is missing, the colors, textures, lines, shapes and spaces are not compatible, or there may not be a central theme.

Sources of Inspiration

Now that you have learned something about a well-planned design, it's time to begin thinking about developing your own designs. How do you start? Actually, there are several ways to begin. One of them is to become aware of the design of the objects around us. Take a good look; there are examples everywhere! Look at the grain of the wood on a tabletop. What kind of lines or shapes are created? How does the rhythm in the grain move your eye over the design? Can you create a similar design, perhaps with weaving colors through your rug?

There are many places to get ideas. Look outside at the patches of grass for ideas on shapes and colors, look at the sunsets and clouds for shapes and colors, or the cracks in sidewalks, the frost on windows, the bark on trees. Everywhere you look, there are ideas for colors and textures, shapes and lines. Design examples aren't limited to nature. Look at designs in things around the house like baskets or pictures. Perhaps there's a design on pottery that you'd like to try in embroidery, or the shape of an old bottle gives you an idea for an applique. You can find ideas in magazines, wallpaper and comic books. There are ideas everywhere if you'll just use a little imagination!



Doodle on paper to develop and crystallize a design or try arranging yarns or scraps of fabric. Try cutting out shapes from construction paper to experiment with a design. It does not matter how, but it is important to plan a design first!

The designer whose work shows fine quality adapts and stylizes a design to suit the materials used. A designer does not attempt to imitate real objects, such as flowers using thread. Instead, if a flower idea is chosen as a theme for the design, the designer alters it to suit the shape of the article, its purpose and the limitations of materials and tools.

Resources

There are lots of good sources to help you with the "How-to's" of the textile crafts. Your Extension specialist or 4-H leader can help you locate resources for rug making crafts including specialized tool suppliers, instructional platforms such as online magazines or tutorials, and community groups.

Your talents are an excellent resource for the club. Share your know-how and special interests to help others. Bring the tools and let everyone experiment. Bring in others from the community to share their craft knowledge. A local craft or fabric store may work with you or help you contact someone with an interest in a specific textile craft. Members may decide to make a sampler, shawl, handkerchiefs, or monograms utilizing the various techniques.

Libraries can be an excellent source of information. You can broaden your knowledge of why and how heritage crafts began by reading through historic publications. Print magazines are also a terrific source of ideas. Internet web pages provide lots of interesting information as well.

Perhaps you will want to clip and file ideas to share and talk about. There also are many craft magazines and pattern books that can be good sources too. Craft organizations and councils often provide specific information that may be helpful. Check with your county Extension office, library or craft store for contact information.

Sharing What You Have Learned

Now that you have learned many new things about a heritage craft, why not share? This helps you learn more about the topic and become more comfortable teaching others. Making an exhibit to show at the county fair is another way to share with others. You also may share your knowledge by giving a demonstration and show how to do something.

Demonstration

Select a topic that relates to something you learned about your project and plan a demonstration. Some ideas include:

- Use of design principles and elements
- Selecting fabric or yarn for a project
- Sharing the history of a craft
- Purchasing supplies
- Steps to complete a craft item
- Can you think of others?

Evaluation of Judging

Learn the standards of quality for your craft. The exhibit item will be compared to these standards at a fair or during craft competitions. Standards are printed in the 4-H craft project guidelines or may be found in craft publications or fair judge's guides available through your county Extension office. When you apply the standards to a craft item, you judge or evaluate that item against the standard of quality. Evaluating your project yourself will enable you to see how well you applied the skills you learned. How well did your item compare to the standards? What did you do well? Where can you improve? Answers to these questions will help you do a better job next time.

Community Service

You can learn a great deal about your community when you get involved to help others. You can:

- Make lap robes for elderly people or disaster victims.
- Make quilts for a homeless shelter.
- Work on a fund raiser for a local cause.
- Go to a local nursing home and visit residents.
- Help an elderly or lonely neighbor with household chores.
- Help younger members with their projects. Can you think of others?

Fair Exhibit

Remember to record all of your activities during this year. It's easier to write them down as soon as you do them rather than wait until the end of the year and try to remember them. Be sure to include in your story not only the things you made, but the experiences you had, special things you learned and how you felt about them.

You must complete the Heritage Arts page History of the Heritage Art selected. Write a brief history report about the specific craft you selected as your project. Attach the history report (no longer than two pages) with the references after the Heritage Art page in your record. List references you used:

Junior members, include at least one or two references.

Intermediate members, include two or three references.

Senior members, include three or more references.

Plan early to begin your search for historic information. You have several options as to what you can learn about and share. You can find historic information on:

- The craft itself
- What tools are used to make it
- New techniques that have been developed
- special uses of the finished items
- influences of wars on trade
- interesting artisans within the community
- Or any other related topic

The key is providing information directly related to the craft you are exhibiting.

At least four photos are required. Photos of Heritage Arts exhibits enable judges to see how well the items fit your intended use. Include some photos showing the process or techniques used in making your project.

If you used a pattern, please securely attach a clear copy to your record to help judges evaluate the project.

All exhibit items are to be fiber, fabric- or yarn-based arts and crafts. Crafts exhibited must be those traditional crafts which have been passed down through generations. For a complete listing of Fair Exhibit Requirements, go to your county fair book or the Colorado 4-H State Fair Exhibit Requirements posted on the Colorado 4-H website.



Introduction

Making rugs enables you to learn to express your creativity in a constructive way while developing a skill that is relaxing and fun. You will also have the opportunity to learn more about the history of rugs, when and where they originated, how skills have passed through the ages, etc.

You may want to experiment with different techniques as well as different materials to make rugs for your home. Visit with others within your community who make rugs to learn about the projects they have made and what suggestions they have for a beginner. Locate resources in your local Extension office, the Internet, library and yarn shops as well as on the Internet. Most importantly, have fun!

Project Evaluation

Rugs will be evaluated on:

Overall Appearance

- Clean and neat
- Lies flat
- Color and design are appropriate for a rug
- Blocked and finished

Materials

- Suitable for intended use
- Durable
- Fabrics of harmonizing nature

Design

- Use of texture, colors and materials
- Shape and weight in proportion to size

Workmanship

- Compatibility with the ethnic group where the craft originated (if applicable)
- Method and stitches, both well done and even
- Quality or mastery of techniques
- Durable and secure edges

There are other techniques for making rugs besides latch hook and braiding that are covered in this manual. Your research may help you find other types of heritage rugs to make. Rugs can be woven on a loom using heavier yarns than blankets. Rush weaving was used to make mats and chair seats as well as to finish mattresses. Rug tufting is a newer method first introduced with the development of the tufting gun in the 1960s-70s. Whatever method you choose for making rugs, they will provide enjoyment in your own living space or as gifts for friends and family.

History of Rug Making

Rugmaking is an ancient craft and is shrouded in mystery. As our ancestors moved indoors, the desire to create a warmer, more comfortable atmosphere emerged. Early house dwellers used animal skins to cover stone floors and crude wall hangings to keep wind from coming in between the stones in their walls. Eventually, dyes were made from plants and berries to add the beauty of color to early rugs.

The Near East was the center of rug making during the time of the prophets. The basic method of producing these ancient rugs was used for many centuries and some of the knots used to tie tufts of wool into a woven backing are still in use today. The best-known knots are the even Ghiordes (Turkish) Knot, which is symmetrical, and the one-sided Sehna (Persian) Knot, which is asymmetrical and allows for finer detail in the rug.

As early as 6000 B.C., rush fabrics were plaited, or braided like basket work, one of the most ancient of arts. Rush is a stiff marsh plant. The plaited mats became popular, and in medieval times in the Near East, they were dyed and commanded high prices. Even today in South India, floor and sleeping mats are plaited from rush in beautiful colors. They also are found in Mexico and South America. In the United States, plaited mats made of cornhusks are made and still used.

Rug making was a country housewife's work and pride in parts of the world where bare floors would have meant a dull environment. The nomadic people of the Steppes made rugs for their tents which now bring high prices as antiques. The pioneering families of Africa, America and Australia made rugs for their cabins and huts. This part of history is proudly displayed in museums around the world.

Early American settlers first followed the English designs, but had difficulty in obtaining materials from Europe, and created their own style to suit their needs and surroundings. Bundles of clean, usable cloth, salvaged from old clothes, were transformed into warm lap robes, rugs and coverlets. The rugs often were sturdy and withstood constant use for a hundred years or more, passing from one generation to the next virtually unaltered.

The people who made rugs did not think of themselves as artists, but they created designs and color effects like a professional artist using what ever ideas and materials were available. While women originally made rugs to cover bare floors, later rug makers created pieces specifically to sell. (Family histories in cloth and wool have been beautifully pieced into rugs.)

Hooked Rugs Basics



Materials

Yarns:

For latch hooking, and yarns like acrylic or wool, often pre-cut into consistent lengths (3-5 inches), with acrylic being budget-friendly.

Acrylic yarn holds up well to regular use and is resistant to mold and mildew. It is machine washable and holds color well. The smooth feel can be slightly stiff, but is plush when hooked. The more expensive wool yarn offers a classic, bulkier feel. It is durable and wears well over time, but it can pill or fray more easily than acrylic. Wool requires more care, like hand washing, to avoid shrinkage. It is a soft and luxurious natural fiber.

Alternatively, even old fabric strips work for a rustic look. Worsted weight may also be used in double strands or in single strands to accent designs. Rug- or bulky-weight yarns are preferred for rugs because they are durable and resilient. Lighter weight yarns may be used in rugs that will be used as wall hangings since they will not be walked on.

Yarn for latch hooking may be purchased in packages of pre-cut pieces. Yarn may also be purchased in skeins and cut into desired lengths of 3 to 5 inches. When cutting yarn, make a large supply to avoid stopping frequently to cut more strands.

Small amounts of old yarn and fabric may be washed and worked into designs to create character in latch hooking. Latch hook kits are available which include a patterned canvas and precut yarn.

Canvas:

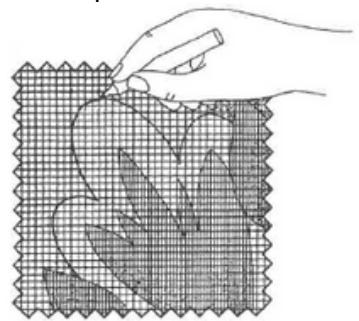
Latch hook is worked on canvas, also referred to as rug net. The best materials are durable, gridded canvas (like burlap, monks cloth, or carpet warp) as a base. The canvas should have durable fibers that form a series of open spaces or squares. Canvas made with double-weight strands is preferred because it is stronger than single-stranded canvas. The ideal canvas has 16 square spaces to the square inch. Canvas widths vary from 14 to 45 inches. Very large projects may require that two or more pieces of canvas be joined together.

It is important that the selvage edges (closely woven and smooth) are used as the right and left sides of the work, rather than as the top and bottom. If the canvas piece is cut from a large roll, the selvage edges will be smooth, while the top and bottom edges will be rough and uneven. Canvas size for a project is determined by adding four inches beyond the design on all sides. This edge will be folded under for finishing.

Transferring a Design

To transfer a design, use waterproof felt-tip pens or waterproof non-staining ink. Water-proof ink will not run onto the yarn or discolor it. If tracing an intricate pattern, find the exact center strand, vertically and horizontally, on the canvas. Mark this point with a straight line to correspond and mark the design center to match them up. Looking through the spaces in the canvas, carefully trace the pattern outline onto the net.

If you draw a curved line on the netting, when it is hooked it will make steps diagonally on the canvas. It is sometimes easier to follow the line if you draw it as a series of steps. When the outline has been traced, darken it if necessary. Compare the net to the design to see if they look the same.



The canvas can be shaded with the appropriate colors. Acrylic paints work well, especially when the design is intricate. Acrylics are used with water but are waterproof when dry. Permanent felt-tip markers may also be used. Allow the canvas to dry completely before hooking.

Hooks:

The hook end of the latch hook has a hinged bar or latch that closes over the point of the hook, enabling the yarn to slip smoothly into place. The hook handle may be plastic or wood and is rounded to fit the hand. A straight or bent-shank hook can be used.

Making a Latch Hooked Rug

After determining the size of canvas and amount of yarn needed or purchasing a kit, prepare the canvas backing, leaving at least four inches on all sides for the hem. To prevent the edges from fraying, cover them with masking tape.

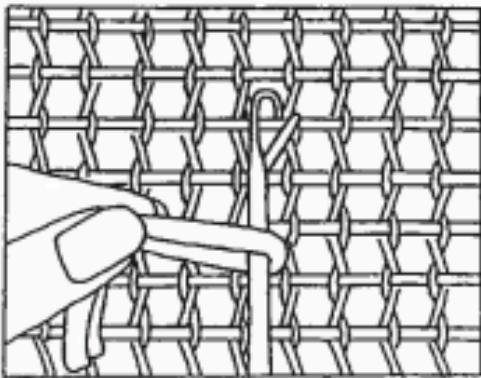
Work from left to right through every hole across the canvas, beginning in the lower left corner. If you are left-handed, start in the lower right corner and work from right to left. Check your progress by looking at the back of the canvas to see if you missed any holes. Always work complete horizontal rows, changing the color of yarn as the design indicates. Do not try to work one color at a time on the entire rug, because it is difficult to fill in the small areas as the work nears completion.

While there is more than one method to do latch hooking, the Four-Step Method is suggested, as follows.

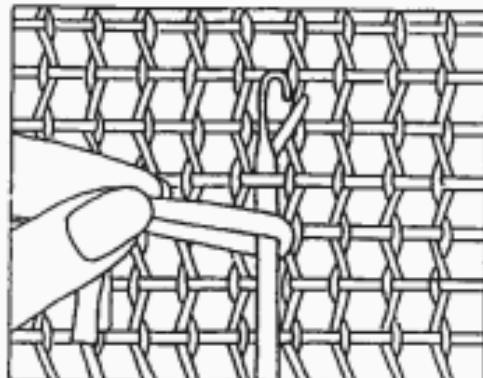


Four-Step Method

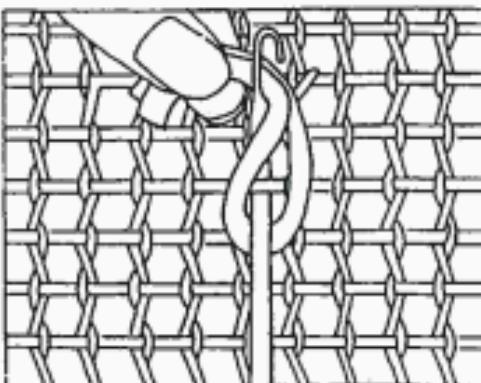
1. Fold yarn exactly in half and loop it around the shank of the hook.



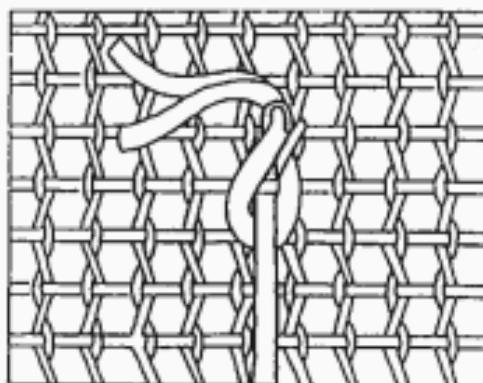
2. Push the hook under the lower thread of the first square with the latch open.



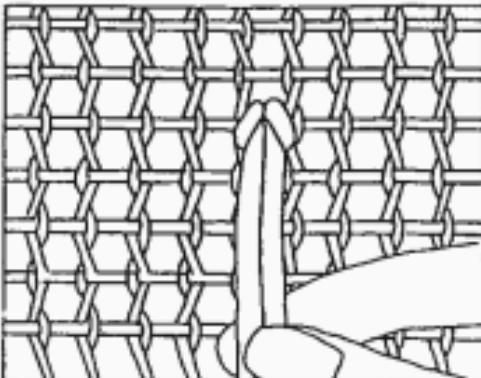
3. Twist the hook slightly to the right. Place the cut ends of the yarn into the open hook and let the latch close.



4a. Pull the hook through the loop of yarn wound around the shank and push the hook forward to release it.



4b. Pull the ends of the yarn tightly to make the knot firm.



Finishing

Because latch hooked rugs are not worked on a frame, the rug can pull out of shape and may need to be straightened before finishing. The rug may need to be blocked to bring it back into the correct shape. Cover a board that is six to eight inches larger than the rug with towels. Lay the rug face down on the towels. Thoroughly moisten the back of the rug, but be sure not to get it soaking wet. Nail or staple the rug to the board, with the edges straight and the canvas stretched tightly. Leave the rug on the board until it is completely dry.

After blocking and drying, the rug is ready to bind and finish. The hooked rug can be finished in several ways, with binding or backing suggested for beginners

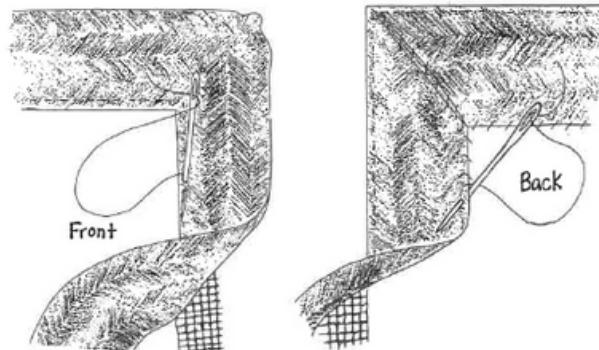
For binding, a heavy needle and strong thread are needed in addition to rug binding. Select a rug binding tape one to two inches wide, long enough to go around all sides of the rug, plus about six inches.

Fold in the selvage edges on the left and right sides of the rug, leaving a one-inch border of canvas. Fold in top and bottom edges in the same manner. The edges may be hand stitched under for easier handling.

Place the rug on a flat surface right side up with the one-inch wide edges extended out. Beginning in the middle of one side, hand stitch the binding type to the edges, working from the outside of the rug so that the stitches will be hidden when finished. Stitch as closely as possible to the hooked knots. Stitch all the binding in place around the rug in one piece, overlapping one to two inches where the ends meet.

Turn the rug top side down, and fold in the sewn binding to touch the back of the rug. The binding should cover the canvas allowance completely. Hand stitch the binding to the canvas backing. When reaching a corner, miter it by folding the center of the binding corner in toward the rug. Fold down the flap that is sticking up and sew in place.

The rug may also be finished with a backing made from a durable non slippery fabric, such as burlap. Backing may be used in addition to the binding or without a binding. Cut the backing fabric one inch wider than the rug on all sides. Press the edges under to fit the rug and hand sew in place, using a heavy needle and strong thread.



Braided Rug Basics

Materials

Note: Because of the difficulty in finding resources on how to make braided rugs, instructions are included in this section.

The most economical materials are fabrics from recycled clothing and household goods. Other fabric may be purchased depending upon the intended use of the braided rug, the resources available, and the experience of the braider. The amount of material needed depends on the desired size of the rug. Durable carpet thread is recommended for the most pleasing effect and extensive use.

Wool is preferred by many rug braiders but is not as readily available in recycled clothing as it once was. Men's and women's suits, military uniforms and wool blankets are good sources. Heavy cotton fabric also makes durable long-wearing rugs. While any type of fabric went into Colonial rugs, it is not recommended to mix fabrics because the rug will wear unevenly. A rule of thumb to determine the correct weight of fabric is to weigh it and select those that weigh 14 to 16 ounces per yard.

When old materials are used, remove all seams, buttons, worn areas and other trim. Wash the material in warm sudsy water and rinse in clear warm water. Hang in fresh air, if possible, to remove wrinkles and avoid pressing.

Equipment

A blunt-pointed needle is necessary to form the braids into rugs. This was the only tool used in Colonial times, but today, numerous gadgets are available to help produce an attractive rug in less time.

During the Civil War period, the sewing bird made braiding easier and faster. It was made of metal and about the size of a small bird. It had a velvet pincushion on its back, a spring in its beak to hold the braid, and a clamp on its feet which could be attached to a table. The bird, or its updated version, is still available and used today.



Other Equipment Useful for Rug Braiding

- Medium-sized scissors
- Thimble
- Small pointed pliers
- Metal cones (braid-aids)
- Medium safety pins
- Tape measure or guide
- Heavy lacing or carpet thread
- Braid holder
- Clip-type clothespins
- Color guide
- Blunt straight or curved carpet needles



[eBay Image](#)
of Vari-folder tool

A braid-aid is a metal, cone or flat shape and is used to fold under raw edges and turn strips of material into tubular strands. It can be useful for individuals with weak hands or wrists and for beginners. There is a newer Redi-Braid, a plastic holder that turns under raw edges and unwinds the rolls without tangling. You can also find Veri-Folders made by Braid-Aid.

A braid holder is a clamp that holds the braid taut on a table or arm chair. It reels to keep the strands from tangling. It is made of wood, metal or a combination of both. There also is an upright model that stands on the floor and can be used from an easy chair.

You can make a measuring guide cardboard to aid in marking the width of the strips.

Making a Braided Rug

Rug braiding is not an exact craft because there is more than one way to do it. In talking to ten different braiders, one may hear ten different ideas on the proper method. A firm and evenly braided rug is preferred over a loosely braided irregular one. It not only looks neater and more appealing but lasts longer.

Preparing Fabric

A multicolored undesigned rug is traditional and is the easiest and most economical to make. You will need about one pound of heavy, tightly-woven fabric per square foot of the finished size of the rug. Collect a variety of colors: bright, dull, neutral, in patterned and solid colors. Fabrics may be used or new, or a combination of both. Pre-wash all fabrics prior to working. For used fabrics, remove linings, buttons, etc., and cut apart along the seams.

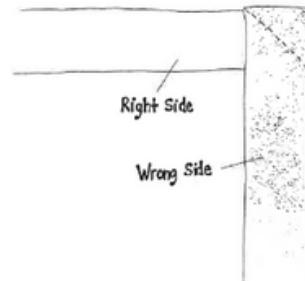
To fold fabric for rug braiding, cut or tear your fabric into long strips, then fold the raw edges inward towards the center and fold the whole strip in half lengthwise, creating a flat, neat band where raw edges are hidden. To determine the correct width, tear a test strip about one to two inches wide. The folded strip should form a plump, round cable used for braiding. If the strip is wide and flat, try forming a narrower strip. Once the correct width has been determined, use the cable it forms as a model. Quality depends upon the plumpness and uniformity of the cables.

Fabrics that are lighter in weight will need to be torn into proportionately wider strips and their edges overlapped to form cables of the proper thickness. Fold strips so that edges meet and then in half again to form the cable.

When tearing the strips, start each rip with scissors, then tear the rest of the way along the fabric grain with your hands. Weave a test braid with a few strips before tearing all the fabric to be sure that the final strips make a firm and full braid.

To join the strips, place them at 90 degree angles with right sides together. Stitch on a diagonal with matching thread, then cut off outer corners.

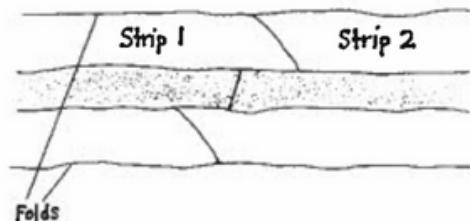
The joined pieces open into straight strips.



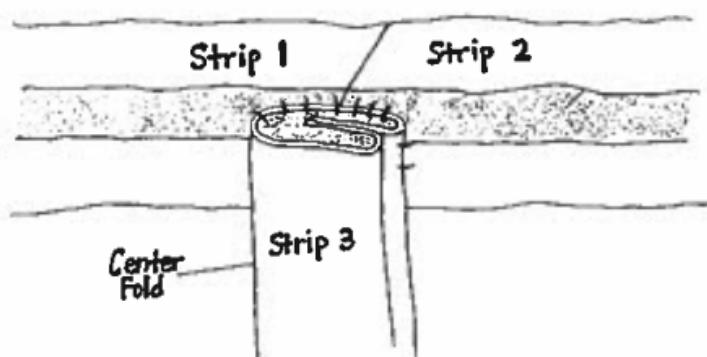
After the strips are torn and joined, wind them into five-inch rolls. Tie the rolls with string until ready to use to keep them from unwinding.

Braiding

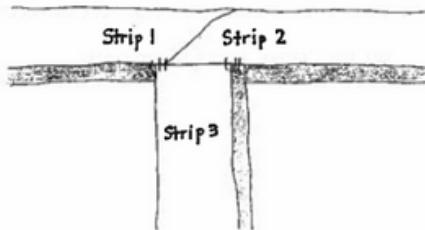
When ready to begin braiding, use the bias seam method to join the ends of the two different-colored strips. Fold edges inward so that they meet at center of strip.



Fold a third strip into a cable. With the center fold to the left, place the third strip on the center of the seamlne of the first two attached strips to form a "T" and stitch in place.

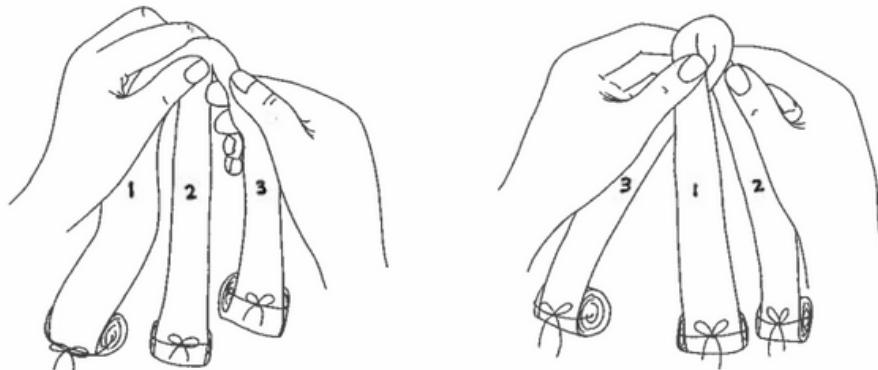


Fold the crossbar strip in half lengthwise to enclose the end of the third strip and stitch at inner corners of the "T".



Fold the right arm of the crossbar down and to the left, so that it lies between the other two strips and its center fold faces left. If braid-aids are used, they may be placed on the three strips at this point.

Hold the start of the braid in the left hand, keeping the center folds facing left. Fold the right-hand strip to make a cable. Note that strips are folded as they are braided. Bring the right-hand cable (3) over the center cable (2), twisting it so that the center fold stays to the left. Push the cable snugly against the one above.

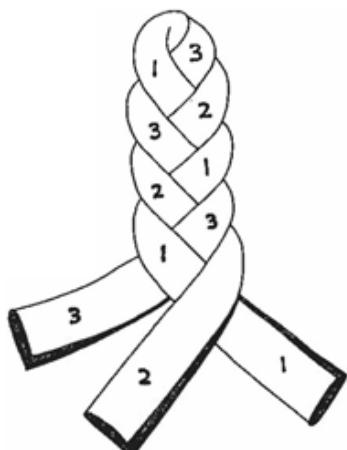


Shift the already-braided cables to the right hand and use the right little finger to help fold edges inward on the left strip, forming more cable.

Bring the left-hand cable over the one in the center, twisting it to keep the center fold on the left. Continue bringing cables over, pushing each against the completed braid.

Additional strips may be added as needed during the braiding process.

The above braiding instructions are for right-handed people. If left-handed individuals find the directions awkward, the directional instructions may be reversed. Keep the center folds to the right and lace from left to right around the rug.



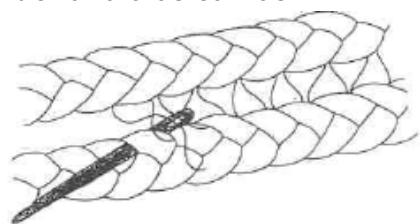
Size

The length of the middle cable of the rug determines the finished size of the rug. Once the desired size is decided, subtract the width from the length to decide how long to make the center braid. For example, if the finished size is to be four feet by six feet, subtract four from six to determine that the middle cable should be two feet long.

Lacing the Braids Together

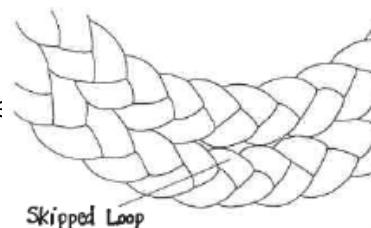
Lacing may be started after several strips are braided together. Additional braids can be added at any point to increase the size of the finished rug.

Always lace on what will be the back of the rug, because the lacing will create a slightly flattened look. Join the braids by lacing with heavy carpet thread using a blunt or curved carpet needle,

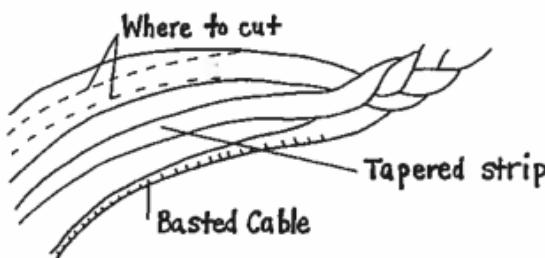


whichever is most comfortable. Insert the needle under the braid loop and draw the thread between the loops and out the top of the braid. Work back and forth between the loose braid and the core of the rug, lacing through each loop and pulling each stitch down into the crevice of the braid.

An occasional loop on the braid being laced must be skipped because each successive round is longer than the preceding one. When a loop of the braid being added falls opposite another braid loop instead of in a notch between two loops, do not lace the outer loop. Skip it and lace the next loop instead. Skip only on shoulders where the rug curves and only one loop at a time. Mark the skips with pins to avoid skipping at the same point in following rounds. If the rug edge ripples, too many skips have been made. If the rug edge turns up, not enough skips were made.



The final step is to taper the last braid around a shoulder. Start by cutting off strips so they are 1 1/2 times as long as the distance around the shoulder. Use scissors to taper the strips along each side. Strip should be barely wide enough to fold at their ends, widening gradually to full width at the top of the shoulder. Fold and baste tapered strips into cables, then braid and lace. Pull braid ends through loops on the rug edge, sew into place and trim the excess.



Colorado 4-H Mission

4-H empowers youth to reach their full potential by working and learning in partnership with caring adults.

Colorado 4-H Vision

A world in which youth and adults learn, grow and work together

4-H Pledge

I pledge.....

My head to clearer thinking,
My heart to greater loyalty,
My hands to larger service,
 My health to better living
for my club, my community,
 my country and my world.

Promesa 4-H

Prometo usar mi mente para pensar con más claridad,
 mi corazón para ser más leal,
 mis manos para ser más servicial,
 mi salud para cuidarme más,
por mi club, mi comunidad, mi país y mi mundo.

4-H Motto

“To Make the Best Better.”

