

# Pattern Drafting on an Inkle Loom

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What we call “Inkle Weaving” is actually a “Warp Faced” weave. It can be done on a number of different loom types, the most familiar are the back strap loom and inkle loom.

Warp faced weave means that the only threads that show in the weaving are the warp threads (the threads that you put on the loom before you start weaving); the weft (or shuttle) threads only show at the sides of the weaving.

Patterning on warp face weave is done in 3 ways:

**Warped in Patterns:** The easiest method, the pattern is created by how you warp the threads on the loom.

**Pickup Work:** The pattern is created by changing select threads between the up and down sheds

**Brocading:** The pattern is created by laying an additional weft thread on top of select parts of your weaving.

Warped in patterns on an inkle loom are a repeat of 2 alternating rows, what I call a 1,2 repeat. The repeat is made up of the up shed and the down shed patterns. A “shed” is the opening between the warped threads that is created as you move the non-heddled threads above the heddled threads (the up shed) or below the heddled threads (the down shed).

As an example: A loom warped with black heddled threads, and white unheddled threads would weave up as alternating lines of black and white.

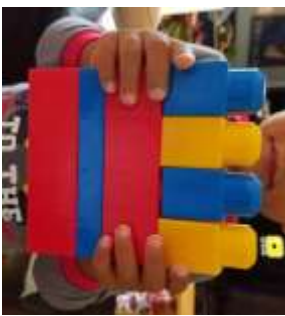
Using the 1,2 repeat, you can create different elements ... lines, chains, bars, and more ... and you can combine these elements into unique and interesting patterns.

## Pattern Drafting

Pattern drafting is creating the chart of what color threads will be warped where to form your pattern. Pattern drafting for warped face weaving is a matter of creating a two line design (that 1,2 repeat) and figuring out how to warp it up.

Usually, I color my design idea on graph paper or in a spreadsheet; and I color the 1,2 repeat lines several times to see how the pattern will look after it is woven.

You are not limited to graph paper or spreadsheets; you can create your color pattern anyway that works for you.



Recently this photo was posted to a Facebook group as an example of finding warping patterns in unusual places, in this case, her son's Lego sculpture.

The pattern is:

- A wide band of red
- A narrow band of blue
- Another wide band of red
- A bar pattern of blue and yellow

By the end of this paper you'll know how to warp up each of those elements.

## A Word About Graph Paper

On the last page I've included page of graph paper designed for inkle weaving patterns; it's handy because it shows the offset that occurs when weaving: a straight line in warp faced weaving wiggles back and forth instead of running straight. More about that later.

I usually do my inkle patterning on regular graph paper, just because it's handy and easy. Either works fine as long as you remember that there is a bit of an offset between the threads in the up and down sheds.

## The Pattern Draft

The pattern draft is a diagram, or chart, that tells you how to warp the loom to get the pattern you want woven.

If you've done any inkle weaving, you've probably already used a pattern draft that you've gotten from a book, a friend, or a webpage. The draft looks similar this:

Unheddled	<b>b</b>	<b>b</b>	<b>b</b>	<b>b</b>	<b>b</b>	<b>b</b>	<b>b</b>	<b>b</b>	<b>b</b>	<b>b</b>	1
Heddled	w	w	w	w	w	w	w	w	w	w	2

It tells you that you'll warp an unheddled black thread, then a heddled white thread, and repeat that 9 more times. It weaves up to look like this:



(Bonus points if you noticed that this is the draft for the example on page 1.)

## The Pattern Elements

The draft above creates alternating bars of black and white that are perpendicular to the warp threads.

But the Legos pattern had bands of color that ran parallel to the warp threads in addition to the perpendicular bars.

This directional difference adds variety and interest to the inkle band. So let's check out some different warp pattern elements.

### Stripes

We'll start with something you've probably warped up many times. Most inkle patterns have a stripe of color on the edges of the band.

They are usually the same color as the weft thread so that they hide the weft thread turnarounds. But stripes can be placed anywhere in your pattern.

A stripe is made with multiple repeats of the same color in both the heddled and non-heddled threads. The more repeats, the wider the strip. The draft looks like this:

Unheddled	<b>b</b>	<b>b</b>	<b>b</b>	w	w	w	w	<b>b</b>	<b>b</b>	<b>b</b>	1
Heddled	<b>b</b>	<b>b</b>	<b>b</b>	w	w	w	w	<b>b</b>	<b>b</b>	<b>b</b>	2

And weaves this:



## Lines

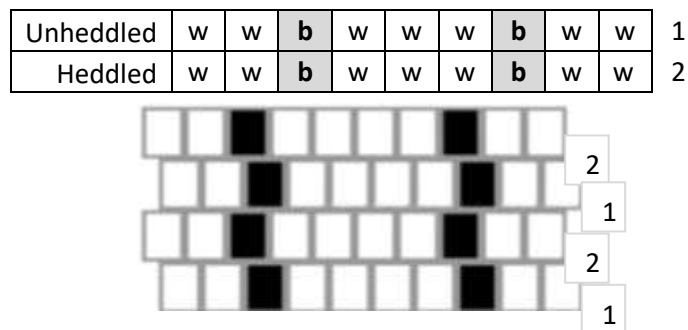
A line is a stripe that is a single thread wide. It can be very effective in between stripes; it is also great as you change from one element to another, such as from a strip to a bar pattern.

A line is made with a single instance of the same color in both the heddled and non-heddled threads.

As I mentioned earlier: it won't be exactly a straight line, it will wiggle a bit as each shed comes into play.

The line wiggles because the heddled and unheddled threads are not sitting exactly on top of each other in the woven piece. They have to move past each other when you switch sheds, so one shed's threads will be a little bit to the right of center, and the other shed's threads will be a little bit left of center.

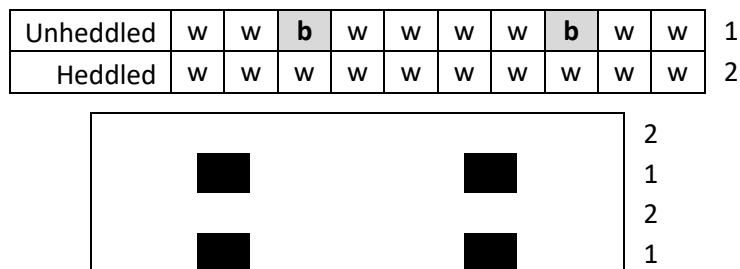
The wiggle can be minimized by using thinner thread and tighter side to side packing



## Broken Lines

A broken line is created by adding only one half of the line element, either the heddled or unheddled thread, either one works, and it depends on where you want the thread to fall in your pattern.

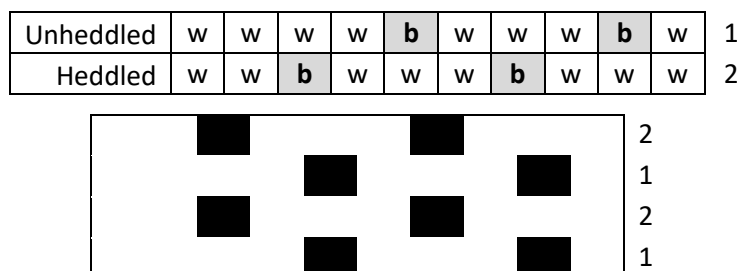
It works well when placed at the near a bar; either use a third color and use it right next to the bar to cap each end; or using the same or different color, move it a row or two away from each end of the bar to accent the bar, see **Combining Elements** for an example .



## Spots

Spots are broken lines offset from each other. A very effective use I've seen of this was an American flag based pattern: one side of the band was blue with white spots; the other side had alternating red and white lines.

Spots are made by alternating the broken lines between heddled and non-heddled threads.

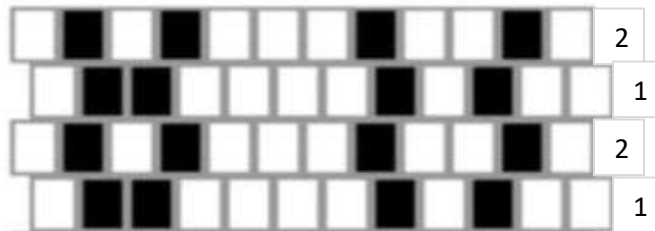


## Chains

Chains take advantage of the fact that straight lines are not exactly straight, putting the lines side by side, with the zigzags opposite each other. It can be a connected chain (left pattern below) or an outline chain (right pattern below).

The chain will be wider with a thicker thread and looser side to side packing

Unheddled	w	b	w	b	w	w	w	b	w	w	b	w	1
Heddled	w	b	b	w	w	w	w	b	w	b	w	w	2

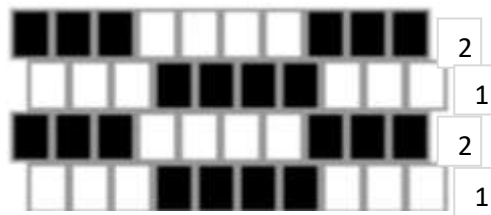


## Bars

Remember the original pattern? We're back to it again.

But bars don't have to go all the way across the band, they can go partway across. And they can change between rows.

Unheddled	b	b	b	w	w	w	w	b	b	b	1
Heddled	w	w	w	b	b	b	b	w	w	w	2

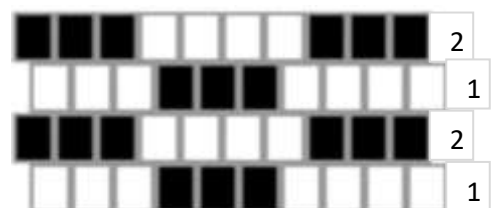


Remember the not so straight lines? Well that issue can also come into play with bars.

Notice how the middle and right bars overlap, but the left and middle bars don't?

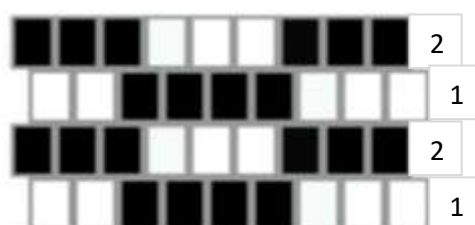
The way around that is to not have the bars meet exactly.

Unheddled	b	b	b	w	w	w	w	b	b	b	1
Heddled	w	w	w	b	b	b	b	w	w	w	2



Or have them overlap on both sides.

Unheddled	b	b	b	w	w	w	b	b	b	1
Heddled	w	w	b	b	b	b	w	w	w	2



## **Checks**

Checks are created by making the alternating bars of equal width and height, so the number of threads warped on for a check would depend on what height your beaten row will be.

They have the same problem as bars, so you want to overlap on both sides, or don't overlap on either side.

## **Weaving Samples**

If you want to learn more about the elements and how the draft pattern translates into a woven pattern ... make samples.

Here's where a small inkle loom comes in handy.

If you don't have a small loom, then warp your sample as the shortest length you can get on your loom. Probably the front peg, to the top back peg, and back to the front peg using the regular heddle configuration pegs.

Warp up the elements alone, or in combinations and try them out.

- How do they look?
- How you expected?
- Did elements meet up as you expected?
- Do you need to add a line or broken line between them because of the wiggle factor?
- What would you do differently warp-wise?
- How would you combine them differently?
- Did the colors work OK?
- Etc.

When you complete a new pattern draft, you can warp that onto your sample loom to make sure it turns out like you thought it would

Or you can go straight into:

## **Combining Elements**

The elements are building blocks for your pattern.

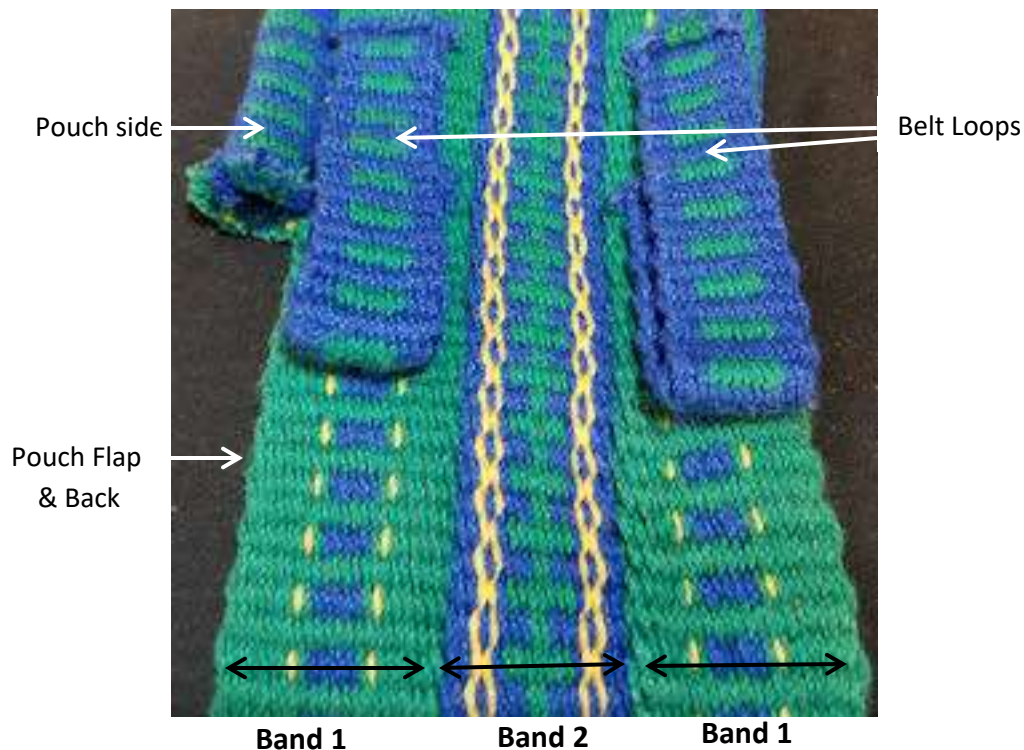
You can use them for inspiration as you draw your colored picture of what you want to weave, like the Lego pattern on page 1, and draft the pattern of your picture.

Or you can use them to reverse engineer a woven piece of a photo or a woven piece.

On the next page is an inkle woven pouch that a friend of mine made. Let us reverse engineer it!

And when I say "let us" I mean I'll go over the elements that make up each band in the pouch, and you'll make the pattern draft.

If you're unsure of how the draft would work, or have questions, contact me at [UnicornFiberArts@gmail.com](mailto:UnicornFiberArts@gmail.com).



**The main part of the pouch is made of 3 woven bands sewn together.**

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The outside 2 woven bands (Band 1 cut into 2 pieces) are green with blue bars.

Made up of these elements:

- Green stripe
  - Yellow broken line
  - Green line
  - Blue bars
  - Green line
  - Yellow broken line
  - Green stripe
  - Notice that the bars and broken lines are all on the same row, and that the other row is all green.
  - If you look back at the draft on page 2, you'll see that using green for either the heddled or non-heddled threads will get you that same effect. Let's say they are heddled.
  - So all of the heddled threads will be green.
  - The blue bars and yellow broken lines are all non-heddled threads, with green non-heddled threads to complete the 2 green stripes and 2 green lines
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The middle woven band (Band 2) is blue with yellow chains and green bars.

Made up of these elements:

- Blue stripe
- Yellow chain with blue background
- Green bars with blue background
- Double green line (or narrow stripe)
- Green bars with blue background
- Yellow chain with blue background
- Blue stripe
- In this case the patterning uses both the heddled and non-heddled threads.
- But note that the narrow part of the chain happens in the same shed as the green bars.
- And the wide part of the chain happens in the shed with the double green lines.

The sides of the pouch and belt loops are made of another woven band that has been cut into 4 pieces (2 sides, 2 belt loops)

Made up of these elements:

- Blue stripe
- Green bars
- Blue stripe
- As you can see, this is basically the same as the first band I talked about.
- So one shed is all blue
- The other is a blue stripe, green bars, and a blue stripe.

When you've completed a pattern draft ... make sure you save it somewhere (a notebook, thumb drive, Word or Google Document, etc.) and include a photo of the woven pattern.

That way you save having to reverse engineer your own pattern!

**That's it for me ... now go out and have FUN making your own patterns!**

### Online resources

**Inkle graph paper** — The paper that's on the next page can be found online at:

[flufdrax.deviantart.com/art/Inkle-offset-graph-74494166](http://flufdrax.deviantart.com/art/Inkle-offset-graph-74494166)

**Inkle Loom Plain-Weave Pattern Generator** — Do you want to see how your draft will look without making a sample? "This tool will help you generate a pattern for an inkle loom. This tool is limited to a plain-weave, meaning that threads on the inkle loom alternate passing through the heddles." That last bit translates to: You can pattern pickup or brocading on this tool.

[www.carolingianrealm.info/PatternGenerator.php](http://www.carolingianrealm.info/PatternGenerator.php)

**A. Spinner Weaver's Pattern Drafts** — Info on weaving patterns, and a bunch of bands to get pattern ideas from:

[aspinnerweaver.blogspot.com/p/pattern-drafts.html](http://aspinnerweaver.blogspot.com/p/pattern-drafts.html)

**Weavershand: Inkle Weaving** — Links to all things inkle weaving: [www.weavershand.com/index.html#IN](http://www.weavershand.com/index.html#IN)

**Pinterest.com** and **Google Images Search** have lots of picture of inkle woven bands; it is a great place to go to get pattern ideas. HOWEVER, not everything is plain weave inkle. **REMEMBER** if the pattern isn't completely a 1,2 repeat, it includes pickup work or brocading.

[www.pinterest.com/explore/inkle-weaving-patterns](http://www.pinterest.com/explore/inkle-weaving-patterns)

**Inkle Weaving Facebook Group** — "This group is for discussions relating to the weaving of narrow warp faced cloth, but not specifically tailored to the loom. The term "Inkle" simply means "ribbon" or "tape", there are many ways to inkle weave, and there are many knowledgeable people here who can help you learn this fun skill! Feel free to look around, ask questions, and view our files. Most of all, we want you to have fun and enjoy yourself while learning a new skill!"

[www.facebook.com/groups/inkleweaving](http://www.facebook.com/groups/inkleweaving)

**And feel free to email me: Debbie Coyle at [UnicornFiberArts@gmail.com](mailto:UnicornFiberArts@gmail.com)**

