

FINGER WEAVING: INDIAN BRAIDING



BY ALTA R. TURNER

Diagonal Stripe Pattern for Belt

Preparation

Select three contrasting colors of four-ply knitting yarn. Cut 10 $2\frac{1}{2}$ -yard lengths of each selected color: A, B and C. Arrange each color in a solid stripe on a $\frac{1}{4}$ " dowel 6" long in the following order: 10A 10B 10C, looping the middle of each length of yarn round the dowel (see Illus. 10). Dividing the length of yarn in the middle makes it possible for you to work with a shorter length when weaving and eliminates the thread entanglement which would occur if you started the weaving at one end instead of in the middle.

Tie a piece of yarn round the 30 threads at a point just above the dowel and, with a safety-pin placed at this tie, secure the warp to a small pillow (see Illus. 10). The lengths above the dowel will be the second half of the belt.

Start Weaving

Step 1: In front of the dowel, start with the left outside thread placing it under the second thread and then over and under succeeding threads to the right. Place this first weft up under the dowel on the right as you must weave it with the second weft to start the right selvage (selvedge).

NOTE: It is very important to keep the order of the threads in parallel lines. Do not allow the warp threads to cross out of position.

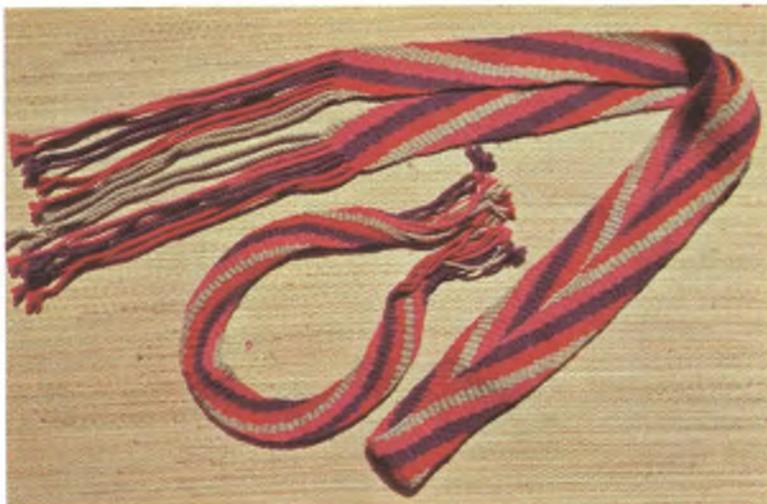
Alternate strands always go up for each shed or division; the strands which are up in the first shed are down in the second shed. Make a shed by picking up the odd warp threads on your left forefinger, and draw the weft through this shed to the right. Then pull the separated threads in opposite directions to pack the preceding wefts into place.

Step 2: When the second thread is woven to the right, pull the first thread, which you previously put under the dowel, down around the second thread and into the warp to form the selvage. The first weft thread now becomes the right thread of the warp. As the weft threads return to the warp on the right, pull them free from the remaining warp threads to avoid large entanglements. Continue to weave from left to right.

As the work progresses, advance the safety-pin in the weaving to maintain good tension. Examine the belt critically and adjust any looseness in the work. To make a firm belt, you must place the wefts rather close to each other. They should be *well covered* by the warp threads.

Keep the left selvage a bit loose and weave each weft securely into the right selvage, pulling it into a straight line. Otherwise, the weaving will curve.

When the weft thread no longer reaches to the right of the dowel, you may hook it round the end of the safety-pin.



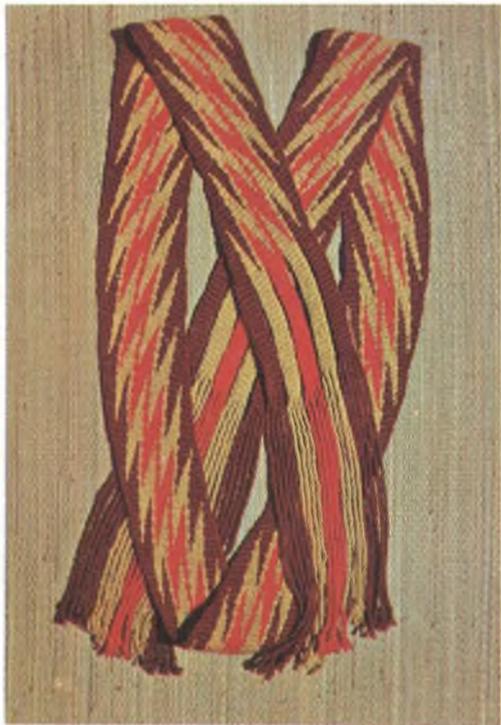
Illus. 4. For an unusual gift, make a diagonal design belt and matching collar. Strikingly colored yarns emphasize the diagonal pattern.



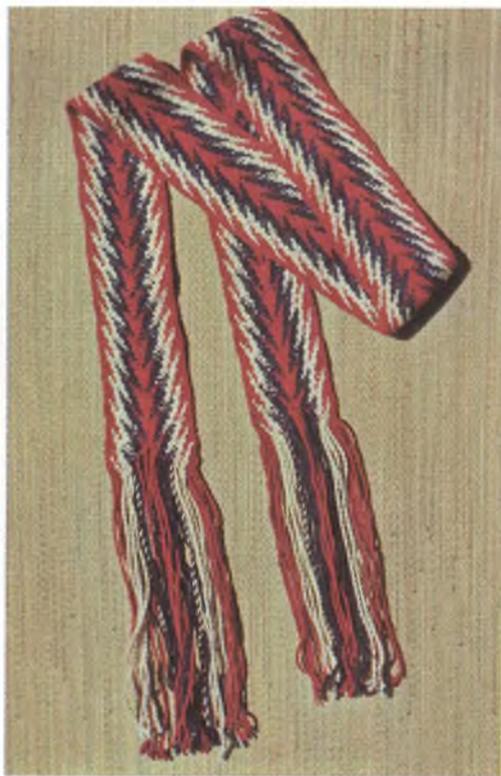
Illus. 5 (right). With some practice, perhaps you will be able to weave a double diamond design as seen in this Osage Indian sash. The border outline is white beads.

Illus. 6. Part of the beauty of finger-woven belts is in the choice of colors. This dramatic belt is woven in the diagonal design and its reverse. Simply reverse the direction of the diagonal at the end of the pattern.





Illus. 20 (left). Vibrant colors and the striking lightning design combine to create this outstanding belt.

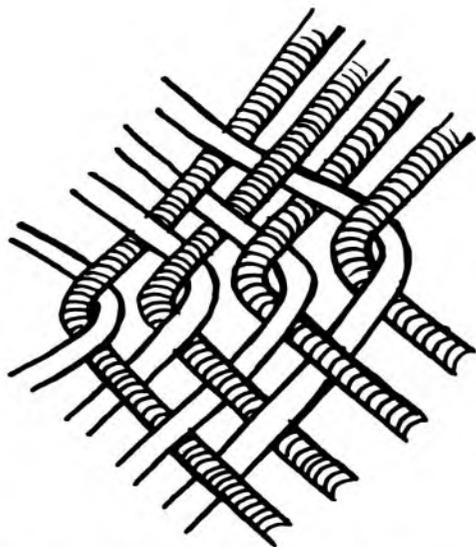


Illus. 21 (right). You can weave a double lightning design quite simply after you learn the lightning. The process is exactly the same, except that you weave in both directions—first to the right and then to the left—for the double lightning. This example, however, also includes several additional interlocking changes.

Lightning Design

This design makes use of an interlocking technique. The work progresses from left to right with three colors—A, B, C—as for the diagonal design on page 7. In each row of weaving from left to right, one A thread interlocks with one B thread and this B thread interlocks with a C thread.

Step 1: Arrange on a dowel eight ends, each $2\frac{1}{2}$ yards long, of three colors in the following order: 8A 8B 8C. Place the lightest or brightest color between the two darker colors or place



Illus. 39. Diagram of interlocking which you use in the lightning, double lightning and arrow-head techniques.

the darkest or brightest color between the two lighter colors.

Step 2: You create this pattern by moving the wefts from left to right. Begin with the left thread of color A. Carry it under the second left thread and then over and under succeeding threads as far as the fourth thread of color B, counting from the left. Interlock the A weft with this fourth B thread as shown in Illus. 39, returning the A color to the warp in place of the fourth B.

Step 3: Continue to weave under and over with the B thread as far as the fourth thread of color C, counting from the left. In the same way as before, interlock the B weft with the fourth thread of color C. Return the B thread to the warp to take the place of the fourth C warp thread.

Step 4: Weave with the C thread to the right selvage and you have completed one row of the pattern. After you see what is required to interlock the threads, you should learn to pick up the shed on your forefinger, interlocking the two colors as you draw the weft through the shed.

Step 5: Now, with the left A thread, weave as far as the third B thread (counting from the left), interlock and continue with the third B thread as far as the third C. Interlock these two colors—the third B and the third C—and continue with the third C thread to the right selvage.

As you weave this second row of the pattern, you must be careful to weave the first interlocked A and B warps in the proper position. That first A warp, which was interlocked in the fourth B warp position, tends to fall out of line, as does the

Illus. 40. This close-up shows the interlocking of the left A with the fourth B thread from the left.



interlocked B thread from its place where you interlocked the fourth C. Be sure to pull them into place.

Step 6: With the left A warp thread, weave as far as the second B thread, interlock and continue with the second B thread, weaving in the third and fourth A already there and on as far as the second C. Interlock the second B with the second C and continue with the second C to the right selvage.

Step 7: With the left A warp, weave as far as the first B thread, interlock and continue with the first B to the first C, weaving to the right selvage with the first C. Illus. 39 shows color A interlocked completely with color B.

Step 8: All of the colors are now in solid stripes again as they were at the beginning. Stop here to examine your work and to adjust any looseness in the weave. The warps should cover the wefts. The tension is difficult at first, but becomes

more firm as you proceed. You have to adjust the interlocked threads especially to tighten the tension.

Step 9: Now repeat the interlocking of the left A with the fourth B and the fourth B with the fourth C. Next interlock the left A with the third B and the third B with the third C. As before, proceed by interlocking the left A with the second B and the second B with the second C. Then, to complete the pattern, interlock the left A with the first B and the first B with the first C. Examine and adjust the warp threads to cover the wefts.

Step 10: Weave to the desired length, leaving enough yarn at the end for a fringe.

Step 11: To make the second half, remove the dowel, turn the work around (*not over*). As you weave, the points of the design should all run in one direction.

Completed lightning design belts are shown in color on page 16.

Peruvian Cross Rep Braid

(Multiple Wefts with Single Warps;
Single Wefts with Multiple Warps)

Arrange on a dowel 48 threads $2\frac{1}{2}$ yards long in the following order: 4 light A, 4 light B, 4 light A, 4 dark C, 4 dark D, 8 dark C, 4 dark D, 4 dark C, 4 light A, 4 light B, 4 light A.

Step 1: With the left group of 4 light A threads, weave under and over single warps to the center. In the same way, weave the right group of 4 light A threads towards the left, under and over single warps, including the 4A threads you just wove from the left to the center. This procedure crosses the right and left groups of A threads in the center.

Step 2: Weave with each of the six groups of multiple wefts to the center, first from the left and then from the right. Each matching group of weft threads from the left and right always crosses in the center.

Symmetrical Choice

Just as you did in Step 3 of the preceding chapter, you need to adjust the line of the B color if you wish to make a symmetrical design.

Step 3: To reverse the light design or turn it in an opposite direction, you must now weave with

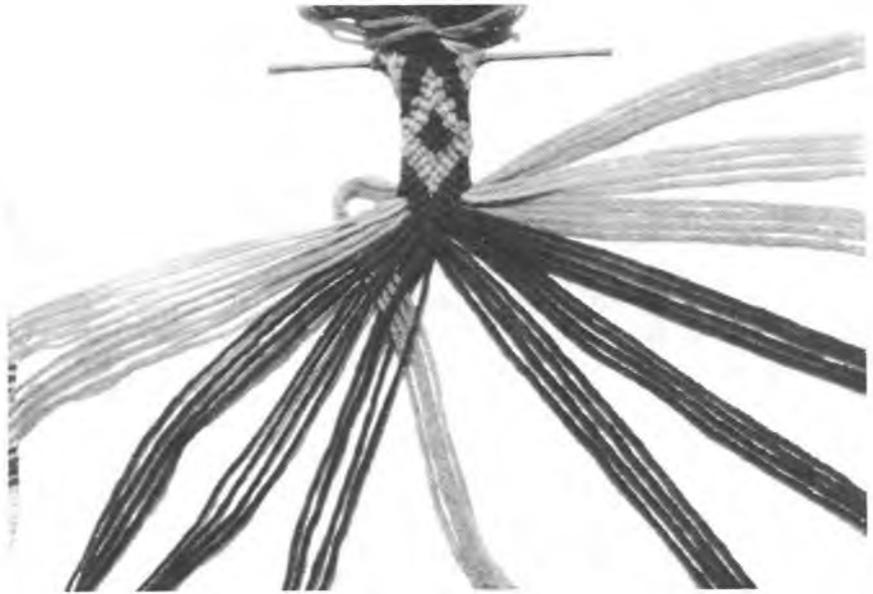
single wefts through sheds made up of groups of warps of 4 threads each. Use each thread of the light colors singly through the multiple warp groups *from each side* crossing the left group with the *single* right warps at the center. Then use the same process with each of the 12 single dark threads on the left and on the right, weaving each thread through a shed made up of warp groups of 4 threads each. Cross the matching groups in the center.

Now the threads are in the same position as in the beginning (see Illus. 48).

Step 4: Repeat the process of first weaving with multiple wefts (4 in each group) through a shed of single warps from the left to the center and from the right to the center. Always cross matching groups in the center. Then weave single wefts through sheds made up of multiple warps (4 in each group) from left to right and from right to left. Always cross in the center.

Step 5: Weave each half of belt to the desired length. If you practice this useful technique further, you will learn to weave, with your own choice of colors, many varied geometric designs.

Illus. 48. This is a Peruvian cross rep braid woven with multiple wefts and single warps and then with multiple warps and single wefts. One pattern has been completed and the second is just beginning.





FINGER WEAVING: INDIAN BRAIDING

Finger weaving, also called Indian braiding, dates back hundreds of years, but the designs you can create are as exciting and contemporary as you wish. And, all you need to weave these intricate designs is a short dowel, some vividly colored yarn and your fingers!

Mrs. Turner, an experienced teacher of finger weaving, first introduces you to the basic techniques and patterns of the North American Plains and Woodlands Indians—the diagonal, chevron, double chevron, diamond, double diamond, lightning, double lightning and arrow-head designs. Following these, she teaches you several striking Peruvian designs—the Peruvian rep braids and Peruvian cross rep braids.

In no longer than it takes you to follow the clear, completely diagrammed and illustrated directions (including 26 color photographs of completed projects), you will be able to create fabulous woven sashes, belts, collars, neck-ties, headbands, and bands for trimming or lengthening your clothes. With a little practice and not much more ingenuity, you can weave wider bands, combine or vary and adapt these basic patterns for original, expert-looking woven creations.



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