

Problem Solving 101

SUSAN E. HORTON

STRUCTURE

Plain weave with basketweave.

EQUIPMENT

6-shaft loom, 21" weaving width; 10-dent reed; 2 shuttles; 3 bobbins.

YARNS

Warp: 8/2 cotton (3,360 yd/lb; see Note), indigo blue, 1,302 yd. 8/2 cotton (3,360 yd/lb; UKI), Natural, 112 yd.
Weft: 8/2 cotton (UKI), #53 Navy, 776 yd; Natural, #7 Kelly Green, #28 Dark Red, and #34 Old Gold, 13 yd each. 20/2 cotton or sewing thread for hems, navy, 60 yd.
Note: The 8/2 cotton warp used as the main color was a dark indigo that is not readily available. UKI's #54 Dark Navy is very similar. The accent weft colors that Susan used are listed above, but any bright colors of 8/2 cotton in your stash would work just as well.

OTHER SUPPLIES

Fray Check.

WARP LENGTH

404 ends 3½ yd long (allows 10" for take-up, 22" for loom waste).

SETTS

Warp: 20 epi (2/dent in a 10-dent reed).

Weft: about 15 ppi.

DIMENSIONS

Width in the reed: 20²/₁₀".

Woven length: (measured under tension on the loom) 94".

Finished size: (after wet-finishing and hemming) four napkins, 17¼" × 16½" each.

While I was waiting for yarn to be delivered for another larger project, I decided to investigate my stash. I found a warp of indigo blue 8/2 cotton labeled "372 ends, 3 yd long." The warp yarn was from one of those one-off cones you come across at conferences. It had the feel and the look of dark indigo and reminded me of a brand-new pair of jeans. I didn't know what prompted past-me to randomly wind a warp, but I took it on as a challenge. Using that warp was only part of my goal; I also made a vow to use only yarns from my stash to complete the project.

We use cloth napkins in our house. We use the same napkins for a few meals and then throw them in the wash. The problem arises when we have houseguests. Most aren't accustomed to our way of dealing with napkins. Our strategy is to tell people to remember where they sat so that they can reuse their napkins at the next meal. However, I don't always get that message out in time, and I can't tell you how many times I've had guests come up to me after a meal holding all the napkins and asking where our laundry is. I inwardly sigh thinking about the wasted water, energy, and time it takes to wash, dry, and press napkins.

For these napkins, I designed a simple grid of 2-end/2-pick basketweave stripes against a solid plain-weave background. For the accent stripes in the warp, I added Natural ends. For the accent weft, I used four colors—one for each napkin. My new plan is to tell my guests to remember their napkin accent color so they can use it for the next meal.

Several features made these napkins simple to warp and weave. First, I wound the warp with doubled ends that matched the sley

Notes on warp and weft color choices

Plain weave often has more depth if you use colors that are closely related but not exactly the same for your warp and weft. Another way of getting an interesting effect is mixing very similar colors in your warp, and sometimes just using different dyelots will do the job for you. Wind two to four colors together and then thread or sley without regard to color order. Susan has found that by threading in slightly lower than usual light she can't see the difference among the colors and thereby chooses them randomly.

pattern in the reed, 2 ends per dent. Secondly, I arranged the treadling so that it alternated from one side to the other and used it to track my treadling. If the shuttle was on the right, I knew that I should be treadling with my right foot. If that wasn't the case, I looked for the cause. In addition, rather than worry about keeping an accurate beat (although I did measure it!), I instead used the pattern to drive my treadling. I suppose my squares aren't quite

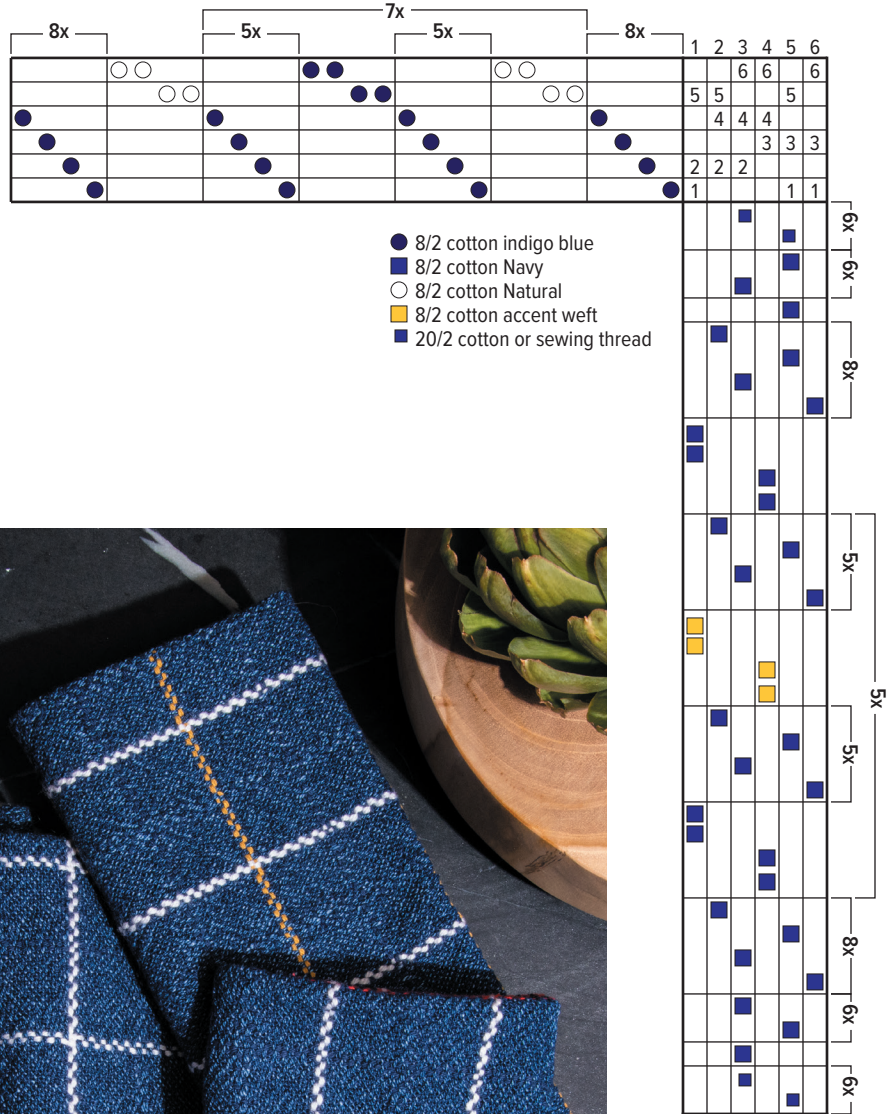
HEDDLE COUNT

Shaft 6	30
Shaft 5	30
Shaft 4	86
Shaft 3	86
Shaft 2	86
Shaft 1	86
Total	404

1. WARP COLOR ORDER

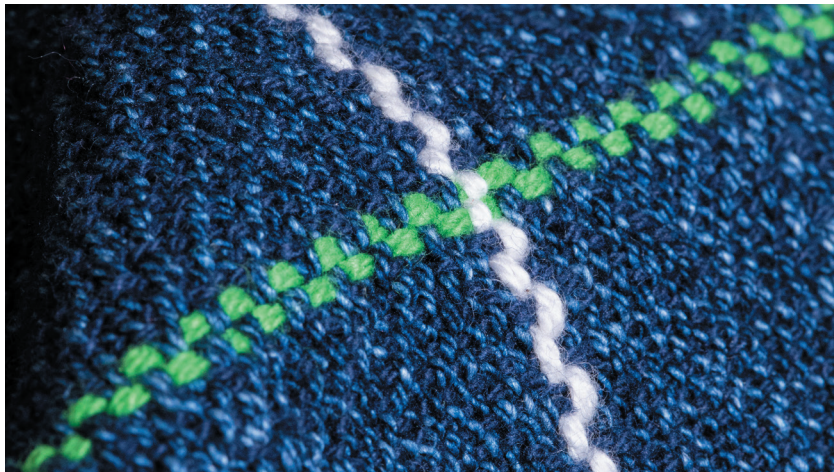
				7x		
32	4	4				□ Natural
372	32	44	32			■ indigo blue
404 ends total						

2. DRAFT



square, but I'm satisfied with the end results. And finally, a happy coincidence of having warpwise basketweave stripes in Natural was being able to check my repeats quickly (using pairs) without counting every pick.

At the end of the project, I was barely able to finish the last napkin. Even with careful tying on to reduce loom waste, I could hardly get a shed. It's for this reason I added ½ yard to the warp length in this pattern.



1 Wind a warp of 404 ends following the warp color order in Figure 1. Before starting, wind off a ball or cone of the main warp yarn and wind your warp holding the 2 strands together with a finger between them to keep them from twisting. Or wind a warp of 372 ends 3½ yd long in your main color. Then wind 32 ends of Natural. Warp the loom using your preferred method following the draft in Figure 2. Centering for a weaving width of 20¾", sley 2 per dent in a 10-dent reed. If you have wound two separate warps, sley the main color first, leaving room for the Natural stripes in the reed. Sley the Natural stripes when you have completed slewing the main color. Susan didn't use floating selvages. In the instances where the outside warp end wasn't being caught, she brought the shuttle around the outermost end to anchor it. If you want to use floating selvages instead, wind 2 additional ends of indigo blue, sley them through the reed on each side of the warp, and weight them over the back beam.


2 Wind a bobbin with Navy and a bobbin with one of the accent colors. Spread the warp with scrap yarn.

3 Start with ½" of pseudo-plain weave using sewing thread or 20/2 cotton. Then switch to your main color and accent color and continue weaving following the draft in Figure 2 for about 23½". Weave 2 picks of contrasting yarn as a divider and start your next napkin using a different color for your accent picks. Rather than having weft tails on one side of the fabric for each accent stripe, Susan used what she calls a "variation of the two-pick trick" and placed the weft tails within the body of the cloth (see Resources).

4 Weave a few picks of scrap yarn to protect the weft, and remove the fabric from the loom.

5 Zigzag the ends to secure. Fill a tub with hot water and a small amount of detergent. Gently lay the fabric on top of the water without pushing it down. Leave it for

24 hours. Remove the fabric and put it in your washing machine on a cotton cycle with warm water. Dry in a dryer at regular heat.

6 Press on a cotton setting. Run a line of Fray Check along the edges of the contrasting yarn picks. Let dry. Cut the napkins apart. Turn under the ½" hem sections woven with thinner weft at the beginning and end of each napkin and press. Turn under an additional ½" of pseudo-plain weave and press. Hem by hand or machine. 

RESOURCES

Davison, Marguerite Porter. *A Handweaver's Pattern Book*. Rev. ed. Swarthmore, PA: M. P. Davison, 1994, 49.

Horton, Susan E. "The Two-Pick Trick and My Two-Plus-Two Variation!" *Handwoven*, January 11, 2023. handwovenmagazine.com/the-two-pick-trick-plus-variation.

SUSAN E. HORTON is the editor of *Handwoven*. Her stash is only eclipsed by her to-do list of weaving projects. *One day all her napkins will be handwoven.*