

Western Sakiori Scarf

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STRUCTURE

Plain weave.

EQUIPMENT

2-shaft loom, 8" weaving width; 8-dent reed; 1 boat shuttle; 1 stick shuttle; 1 bobbin.

YARNS

Warp: 8/2 Tencel (3,360 yd/lb; WEBS), Grey Mauve, 378 yd.

Weft: 8/2 Tencel (3,360 yd/lb; WEBS), Grey Mauve, 212 yd; ½" lightweight silk rag strips, 106 yd (approximately 2 women's blouses).

WARP LENGTH

126 ends 3 yd long (includes 2 floating selvages; allows 7" for take-up, 29" for loom waste; loom waste includes fringe).

SETTS

Warp: 16 epi (2/dent in an 8-dent reed).

Weft: 18 ppi (6 ppi rags, 12 ppi Tencel).

DIMENSIONS

Width in the reed: 8".

Woven length (measured under tension on the loom): 72".

Finished size after washing: 6⅔" × 67" excluding fringe.

HANDWOVEN

SURPRISINGLY SUPPLE SILK SCARF WOVEN WITH RAGS

Renew, Reuse, Reweave

Japanese peasants from the mid-18th to the early 20th centuries used *sakiori* (rag weaving) to recycle old fabric into new cloth for warm, durable work clothing. The best available material for this was used cotton items cast off by wealthier people. What interests me about *sakiori* is the concept of using the best available waste material to make something that preserves its desirable qualities. We live in a time when there is an overabundance of clothing, and the thrift shops are overflowing with cast-off textiles. The gold standard for cloth has always been silk, and I have found it to be readily available in thrift stores.

The qualities of silk that I seek to preserve are its softness and drape. Through experimentation, I came up with a rag-woven fabric that is so soft and supple it can be used as a scarf. The rich colors and patterns in the manufactured cloth add wonderfully to the rewoven project.

For this project, I started with a wrap skirt (size 10–12) in shades of wine, mauve, burgundy, and red. I used Gray

Mauve Tencel as my warp and fine weft because its almost metallic sheen acts to pull together the other colors and to enhance the blending effect. This project really shows one of my favorite aspects of rag weaving: the way that a patterned fabric looks when it is broken down and rewoven. The lighter areas of the pattern show up like stars across the scarf, and the contrast between the bright red and the more muted colors gives it a lovely dimensionality. Although the original fabric in this case was reasonably attractive, you will find that even the most discordant and hideous patterns can make beautiful *sakiori*!

Stop by your local thrift shop or look in the back recesses of your closet for outdated or damaged silk clothes just waiting to be reinvented by you!

PREPARING SILK GARMENTS FOR RAG WEAVING

Thin, lightweight silk works best for projects such as scarves that require drape. A plain-weave silk blouse, dress, or skirt is ideal.

- 1 Hand or machine wash the garments in cold water without agitation. Rinse well and hang to dry.

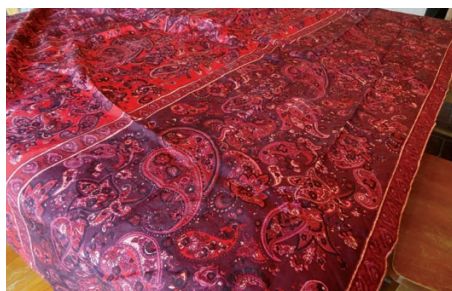
- 2 If there are any wide seams or darts, open them with a seam ripper. It is best to trim away any small rolled hems or serged seams. Remove buttons and trims.

- 3 You will have several large pieces of material such as 2 shirt fronts, 2 sleeves, and a shirt back.

- 4 Look carefully at the patterning and decide how you want your strips to look. The skirt I used for this project had horizontal bands of color, and I chose to cut my strips along the length of the skirt so that each strip would have small sections of color. I could have cut the strips horizontally and preserved the color order of the skirt in the scarf.

- 5 Cut or tear the fabric into ½" strips. Silk is a strong fiber that can resist tearing, sometimes resisting warp-wise and sometimes weftwise. If your fabric tears easily in the orientation you want, simply make small cuts ½" apart and tear. If you would rather cut your fabric, you can choose to use scissors, a rotary cutter, or a Fraser rag cutter. All methods result in similar-looking fabric in my experience.

- 6 Taper the rag strip ends with scissors so that they can overlap in the shed without adding bulk.



A silk skirt, opened up flat



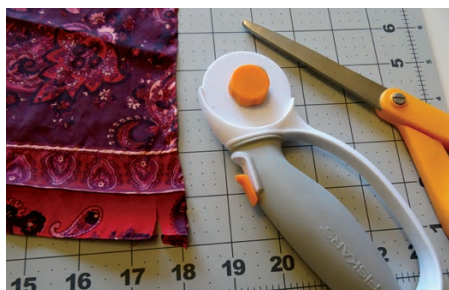
Open seams.



Cut away rolled or serged seams.



Open darts.



Make ½" cuts with scissors or a rag cutter.