Winding a Warp - Things to keep in mind
By Chris Hammel

1. The distance from one side of the warping board to the other is usually 1 yard. Depending upon the method one uses to dress the loom, there is generally 27-36" of loom waste. This amount needs to be figured into the total warp length.

2. Attach the yarn to the beginning peg with a loop secured with a knot. Make the loop large enough to slip two fingers through comfortably.

3. Gently guide the yarn around the pegs – do not put too much tension on the yarns. If you wind tight warps, the pegs on the warping board will slant in or become loose over time.

4. As you wind the warp, run the entire length of the yarn through your fingers feeling for knots and imperfections. If you come across a knot or imperfection cut the yarn at that spot and unwind the warp to the nearest turning point (i.e., either the beginning or end peg). Tie the yarns together so that the new knot is near the turning point. Continue winding.

   You do not want knots in your woven fabric. It's okay to have knots at the beginning and end of the warp because these areas are not woven. If you miss a knot or weak spot while winding the warp, you could experience a broken warp end later on. The knot might not run smoothly through the dent in the reed and as a result the warp end could snap. A weak spot may fray and break from rubbing against the dents in the reed.

5. You should try to avoid putting twists in your yarn(s), especially if you are working with linen. This can be accomplished by winding your yarn clockwise around the beginning peg and counterclockwise around the end peg (or vice versa).

6. It is most important that the yarns in the cross area alternate directions to preserve the winding order. If you are winding a warp using one yarn, you can repeat the following sequence as you approach the cross pegs (regardless of the direction you are going in): over the first peg and under the second. If you are using more than one yarn, depending upon your method of changing from one yarn to another, this over-under sequence may not work. Just be sure that the yarns in the cross area alternate direction.

7. Here are three ways to start and end different yarns and colors.

   a) Tie the new yarn onto the old yarn near the beginning or end peg, similar to No. 4 above.

   b) Cut the old yarn and attach it to the beginning or end peg with a loop secured with a knot. Make the loop large enough to slip two fingers through comfortably. Attach the new yarn to the same peg and in the same manner. (This method is similar to No. 2 above.)

   c) Let's say you plan to use two yarns alternating in the warp. Wind the desired number of ends of the first yarn. When you are ready for the second yarn, do not detach the first yarn – just make sure it is out of the way. Attach the second yarn and wind the desired number of ends. Now position this yarn out of the way and take up the first yarn and wind, etc. Note that you might not be able to maintain the over-under sequence (as described in No. 6 above) with this method, and this is okay. Remember that the most important thing is for the yarns to alternate directions between the two cross pegs.

8. If another cross begins to appear to the left of the real cross (i.e.,between the beginning peg and the first cross peg), don't be alarmed. Yes, it may look like a mistake (and somewhat disorderly), but it will not cause problems. Do not try to "correct" or "eliminate" these additional crosses.

9. Upon winding the warp, if you are planning to dress the loom from back-to-front insert a counting thread to separate the warp ends into ½" or 1" groups. Secure the warp with choke ties – see diagram.

10. Attach a tag marked "right side of warp/loom" to the first ends that were wound onto the warping board – position the tag near the cross.

11. Before removing the warp from the warping board, slide the warp away from the area where the pegs meet the rectangular frame. Occasionally, warp ends get caught between the pegs and the frame, and this can result in broken ends when you remove the warp. Remove the warp from the warping board.

   Optional: For easy storage, starting at the bottom of the warp, chain the warp as it is removed from the warping board.