

Make Your Own Cardboard Loom

One way to appreciate a work of art is to attempt the art form yourself. Known as the “weaver’s weaver,” Kay Sekimachi (American, b. 1926) resurrected fiber as a medium of artistic expression in the 1960s. In this activity, create your own weaving loom with cardboard and then weave your own textile project. As you construct your loom and learn the labor-intensive process of weaving, you might begin to wonder how Sekimachi was able to create her famous three-dimensional structures.

DURATION

1 hour or more

MATERIALS

- Safety scissors
- Sturdy cardboard box
- Pencil
- Yarn
- Tape and/or glue
- Comb (optional)



Ikat Box, 1996, by Kay Sekimachi (American, b. 1926). Linen and acrylic paint. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Museum purchase through the Renwick Acquisitions Fund, 2003.25.

VOCABULARY

Loom: A loom is the structure that you use to give your weave support and tension as you work. Once your weave is complete, you will cut it off the loom and your weave will have its own structure.

Warp thread: This is the thread that is strung over the loom vertically and holds the tension while you weave.

Weft thread: This is the thread that you weave between the warp threads, creating your patterns and structure in the weave.

PROCEDURE

Building the Loom



- 1 Fold one piece of paper in half lengthwise. Unfold.



- 2 On one end of your loom base, draw $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch lines, evenly spaced, with your pencil.



- 3 Repeat Step 2 on the opposite end of your loom base. As you do this, make sure the markings line up with the $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch lines on the other end.



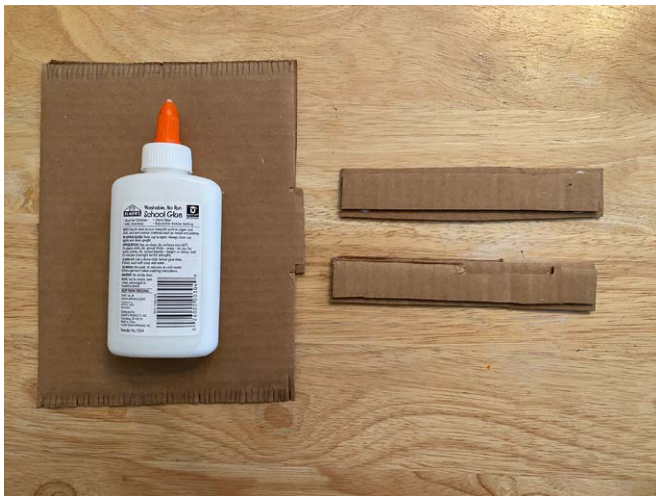
- 4 Cut each $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch line on both ends. These incisions will be where you loop the yarn.



- ⑤ With the remaining cardboard, cut out four 1-inch long loom strips that are the same width as the loom base.



- ⑥ Glue two of the cardboard strips together to create a stack.



- ⑦ Do the same for the other two strips so you have two stacks.



- ⑧ Glue the stacks to the loom base above the 1/2-inch incisions. These stacks will lift your yarn off the base, creating space so that you can change colors and make a design.

Dressing the Loom



- ⑨ Once you are done with your loom base, tape one end of the yarn to the back of the loom base (or the side without the cardboard stacks) and guide it through the first incision on top left corner. This will be Side 1 of the loom base.



- ⑩ Guide the yarn straight across to the opposite side of the loom base, or Side 2, and thread the yarn through the first incision and then the second incision. Make sure the yarn is taut so that it can support your weaving project's shape.



- ⑪ Guiding the yarn back to Side 1, thread the yarn through the second and third incisions. Continue the process until the yarn is threaded through each incision and runs vertically on the loom.



- ⑫ Cut the end of the yarn, and tape it to the back of the loom base. This yarn, vertically positioned on the loom, is called the warp thread.



- ⑬ Once you are happy with your cardboard loom and warp, select your weft thread.

Explore the different resources on weave designs below and begin your textile project.

RESOURCES

[Weaving Beginners: DIY Cardboard Loom](#)

[The Weaving Room: The Modern Lap Loom Weaver's Resource](#)

[Weaving Beginners: How to Weave](#)

[Weaving Patterns: Weaving Techniques for Beginners](#)

[Weaving Color: Weaving Techniques for Beginners](#)

[Weaving Shapes: Weaving Techniques for Beginners](#)