

Bag of the Month

April: little swivel clutches

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Swivel is a treadling method that produces exquisite designs made up of delicate dots of color—a lot like needle-worked petit point. Floats appear on the wrong side of the fabric, but the structure on the right side is plain weave. Many threadings can be used for swivel, but overshot, with its built-in pattern blocks, is an ideal choice. Varying weft colors and treadling orders allows a wide range of designs and is a great way to use up small bits of yarn.

Although one side of a swivel cloth is plain weave, more than one weft thread (and therefore more than one weft color) is used for one (or both) alternating plain-weave picks.

In most swivel fabrics, one weft color (usually the same color as the warp) is considered the background color. This color weaves over some of the warp threads in one of the sheds required for plain weave, and then a second color weaves over the remaining required warp threads in that shed. The opposite plain-weave pick can be made using the same two weft colors, or a third color can be used with the background color (as for Bag 1, the upper bag on page 2), or *only* the background color can be used (as for Bag 2, the lower bag).

A swivel treadling can be used with most threadings that can produce plain weave. Overshot is especially successful because it pairs shafts in blocks, making possible the same block designs with swivel treadlings as with overshot treadlings.

Eight-shaft overshot threadings, such as the one used for these bags, provides four independent pattern blocks. In Bag 1, Navy and Grey wefts show over selected

warp threads in the plain-weave shed on shafts 2, 4, 6, 8; and Navy and Burnt Orange wefts show over selected warp threads in the plain-weave shed on shafts 1, 3, 5, 7. Changing which shafts are covered by which colors creates the pattern. Each weft color floats across the back where it is not covering warp threads.

For example, in the four picks marked by an asterisk in Design A in Figure 1 on page 4, Grey weaves over threads on shaft 8 and under all the others, and then Navy weaves over 2, 4, and 6 and under the others. These two picks complete one pick of plain weave. For the alternate plain-weave pick, Burnt Orange weaves over 1 and 7 and under all the others, and then Navy weaves over 3 and 5 and under all the others. One surface shows plain weave, the other long floats.

Weaving a swivel fabric

Because the dots of color are created by the weft covering the threads on only one, two, or three shafts, it is easier to weave the fabric upside down (thereby *raising* only one, two, or three shafts). If a skeleton tie-up that allows each shaft to be selected independently is used, the greatest design variation is possible; see the tie-up for Bag 1 in Figure 1. Since you'll see only the floats as you weave, you'll need to check underneath the cloth periodically to make sure all is well.

Because of the long floats on the wrong side, swivel fabrics are best used for lined items, such as bags or garments, or for fabrics that show only one side, such as book covers, pillows, or upholstery.

Color considerations

A light pattern-weft yarn sparkles when it is used with a dark warp and background weft. It's a good idea to put on extra warp length to experiment with treadling orders and weft colors. If you are using two pattern-weft colors (one plus background color for the odd plain-weave pick, another plus background color for the even plain-weave pick), remember that each even shaft must be down in one of the two picks that make up the even plain-weave shed; each odd shaft down in one of the two picks that make up the odd plain-weave shed.

For further exploration

Swivel invites experimentation. For example: Try *two* pattern colors plus the background color in one or both of the plain-weave sheds; try any twill threading for swivel that also allows plain weave; use the back of a swivel fabric as the face and cut the floats to make an eyelash fabric! These are only a few ideas to explore!

Special thanks to Marguerite Gingras who introduced me to swivel and contributed to this text.



Diane Carpentier
has been weaving for twenty years in Lachine, Quebec, and will need another twenty years to weave all she has in mind.



STEPS FOR WEAVING AND SEWING THE SWIVEL BAGS

Step 1 Wind a warp of 402 ends 8/2 black unmercerized cotton 2 yd long. Use your preferred method to warp the loom following Figure 1, page 4.


Step 2 Tie up the treadles using the tie-up for Bag 1. Spread the warp with scrap yarn in plain weave (alternate treadles 1 vs 10). Weave 2" plain weave with Navy weft and then weave Design A (Navy, Burnt Orange, and Grey). Note that when there is more than one mark in a horizontal treadling row, you'll use both feet to depress all the treadles indicated. The fabric is woven with the right side down (floats will appear on the face); check the bottom of the cloth frequently to make sure the patterned plain weave is being woven correctly. Weave 4" plain weave with Navy, weave Design B, and end with another 2" plain weave in Navy.

Step 3 Weave several picks in a contrasting color between the bags. Tie up the treadles for Bag 2. (This bag needs fewer treadles because a pattern color is used in only one of the plain-weave sheds.) Weave 2" plain weave in Navy, weave the design, and end with 1" plain weave with Navy.

Step 4 Remove the fabric from the loom and cut apart at contrasting picks. Machine zigzag or serge raw edges. Gently handwash, roll in towels to squeeze out water, and lay flat to dry. Press.



Step 5 For each bag: Cut a piece of lining the size of the woven piece. Place the fabric and lining right sides together with a piece of interfacing on the back of the swivel fabric. Sew around all edges with a 1/2" seam allowance, leaving a 4" opening at one end. Slightly trim the corners, then carefully turn the bag right side out (making the corners as sharp as possible).

Step 6 Topstitch 1/8" from all edges including the open section. Fold the cloth in thirds widthwise (the edge of the flap and the inside top edge of the bag are formed by the selvages). Topstitch the bag sides together on top of the previous topstitching. For a closure, you can handsew two Velcro pieces to the flap and to the bag front. 

PROJECT AT-A-GLANCE

Weave structure for purses
Swivel on an overshot threading.

Equipment
8-shaft loom, 21" weaving width; 10-dent reed; 3 shuttles.

Yarns
Warp: 8/2 unmercerized cotton (3,360 yd/lb), black, 804 yd (3 7/8 oz).
Weft: 8/2 100% acrylic (3,360 yd/lb), Navy #559, 290 yd; Cologne #400, 50 yd; Burnt Orange #883 and Dark Grey #444, 20 yd each (or use 8/2 cotton).

Notions and other materials
1/3 yd lining fabric, 1/3 yd interfacing, four Velcro fasteners (optional), matching sewing thread.

Yarn sources
8/2 unmercerized cotton and 8/2 acrylic are available from Maurice Brassard et Fils (in the color numbers given here) and from the Yarn Barn of Kansas; lining, interfacing, and thread from fabric stores.

Warp order and length
402 ends (includes 2 floating selvages)

2 yd long (allows 3" for take-up, 44" for loom waste and sampling).

Warp and weft spacing
Warp: 20 epi (2/dent in a 10-dent reed).
Width in the reed: 20 1/5".
Weft: 20 ppi in plain-weave sections, 30–40 ppi in swivel pattern sections. Woven length: Bag 1: 13"; Bag 2: 12".

Finished dimensions
After washing and sewing, amounts produce two small clutch purses 6" x 8 3/4" (Bag 1) and 5" x 8 1/2" (Bag 2).

1. Draft for swivel bags

Heddle count
 shaft 8 45
 shaft 7 54
 shaft 6 50
 shaft 5 48
 shaft 4 55
 shaft 3 60
 shaft 2 50
 shaft 1 38
 400

Thread a to c 4x, a to b 1x.

										Bag 1										Bag 2							
										a	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	
																					7					8	8
																					7					6	6
																					5	5				4	4
																					3	3				2	2
																					1	1				1	1
																					1	1				1	1

										← cont'd																					
										c	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	b	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
																					8	8				8	8	8	8	8	8
																					7	7				7	7	7	7	7	7
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																					3	3				3	3	3	3	3	3
																					2	2				2	2	2	2	2	2
																					1	1				1	1	1	1	1	1

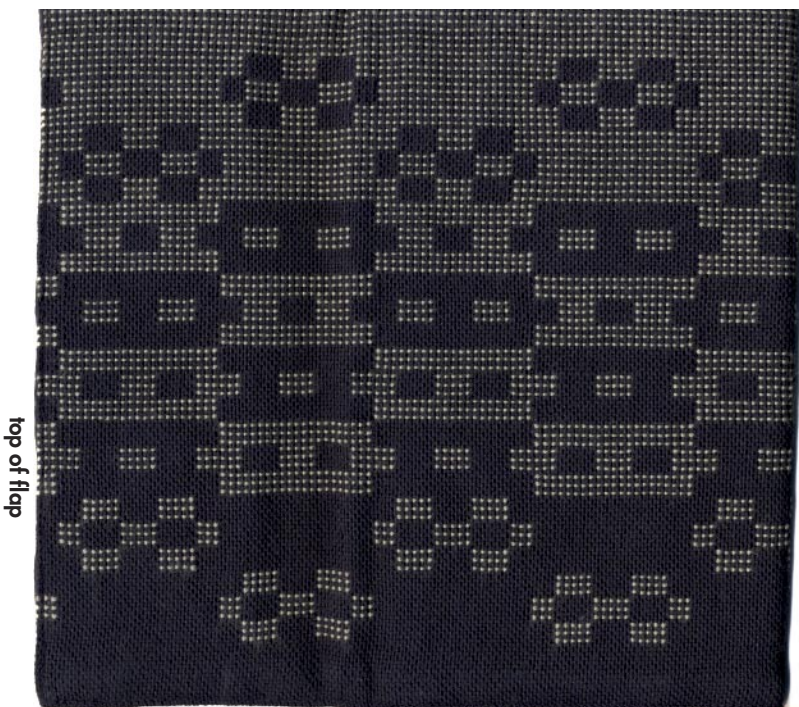
● Navy #559 ● Burnt Orange #883 ● Dark Grey #444 ● Cologne #300 ●



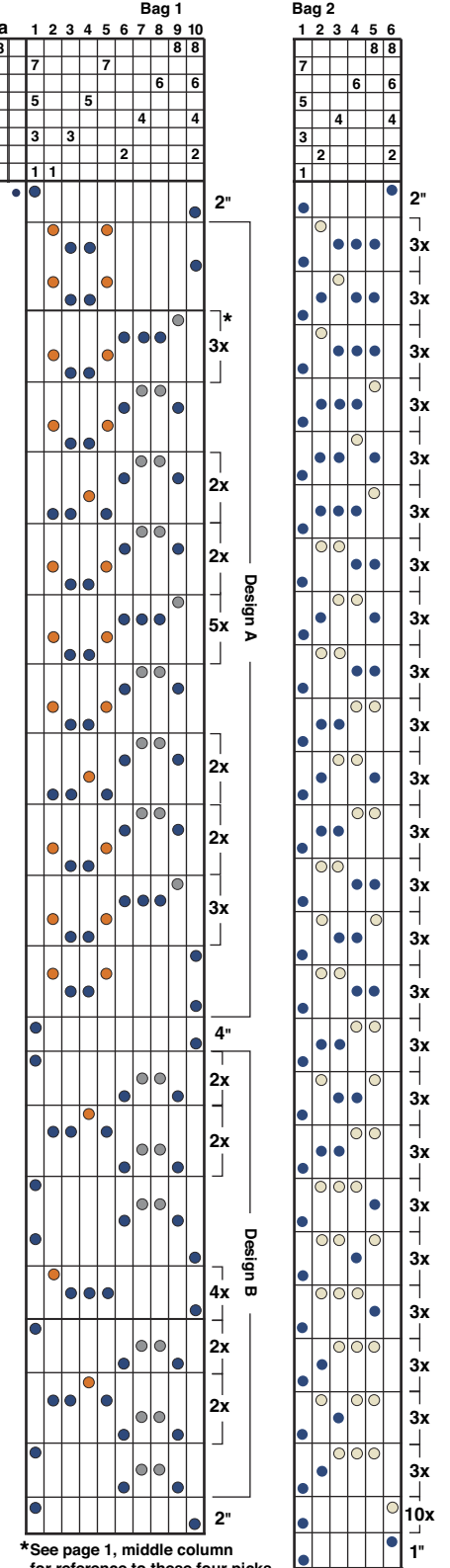
Design B

top of flap

Design A



Bag 2 bottom



*See page 1, middle column for reference to these four picks.

These bags are positioned the way the cloth would look on the underneath side as it is woven. The photos show the bag backs with the flaps open; the bag fronts are folded under (the full width of the fabric on the loom is therefore not shown).