

# Weaving with Paper

## off-loom color-and-weave coasters

ALISON IRWIN

*These woven paper coasters can teach weavers and non-weavers alike a lot about weaving. Use this project as an afternoon Make It and Take It workshop with your guild—or with any group of friends. The coasters are finished with a surprise: on their backs I like to place quotes or sayings that are related in some way to my life as a weaver.*

**M**any weavers, from the time they are introduced to the craft, are in a rush to keep moving on to more complicated weave structures. Why stick with four shafts when there are so many intricate designs waiting to be woven in fine threads on eight or sixteen or twenty-four—or even more? For me, the reverse is true. I find it more challenging to work within the parameters of simple weaves.

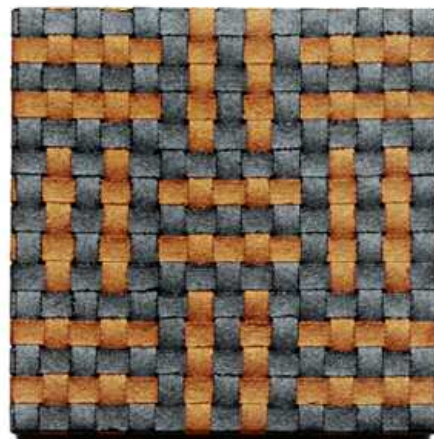
### The origin of these coasters

I love to get other weavers excited about plain weave. Two sheds, up/down, warp

and weft threads over/under, and that's it. Color-and-weave patterns can give simple plain weave great design potential.

My husband says he doesn't have the patience for weaving. He did, however, have the tenacity one fall to create wooden trays with handwoven bases for Christmas gifts. His warp and weft threads? Light and dark strips of wood veneer.

Even easier to construct than his trays is this project, a variation of the weaver's mug rug or coaster. We don't all have access to a well-equipped workshop with power tools, but who doesn't use paper? Paper is the perfect medium for this pro-



ject. Both plain weave and paper are simple basics that together become extraordinary plus provide a simply great way to share your passion for weaving with a non-weaving friend!

**You'll need paper, glue, double-sided tape, a brayer (roller), an art knife, scissors, a paper shredder or cutter, and mat board.**

### ALISON IRWIN

"I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand." That Chinese proverb is printed on the first page of the notes for my beginner's course, *Right from the Start*. I believe we learn best by being physically involved in the whole process.

And my students are! From Day One when they first pick up a pencil to analyze the threading draft to Day Four when they're cutting their scarves from the loom, they are busy *doing*. They are building into their hands the memories of the actions necessary to plan, warp, weave, and finish a woven project.







  
**We exchange ideas  
when we  
exchange fabrics.**  
ROBERT G. INGERSOLL



## STEPS FOR MAKING THE COASTERS

**Step 1** Choose mat board for the coaster base and two contrasting colors of smooth good-quality paper for warp and weft. Feed each sheet of paper through a paper shredder to create narrow strips  $\frac{1}{8}$  the width of your planned coaster. (These strips are 4 mm for a coaster a little more than 6 cm wide.) Using inches, you can cut strips  $\frac{3}{8}$ " for a coaster  $2\frac{7}{8}$ " square or  $\frac{1}{4}$ " for a coaster a little more than  $3\frac{3}{4}$ " square. Make a beat gauge by marking on a strip of sturdy paper lines that are spaced apart the width of the paper strips and divided into three groups of five (see 1 and 2, page 4). Cut strips into lengths  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " longer than the width/length of your coaster. Choose one color-and-weave sequence (see chart on this page). Mark the back of the coaster into thirds in both directions to outline three warp repeats and three weft repeats. Draw an arrow in the center of the coaster to indicate which way is up. Write the letter of the selected warp repeat first, weft repeat second (D and F in 1 and 2, page 4).

**Step 2** Apply double-sided tape to the lower edge of the coaster. Peel off its protective paper. Stick the dark and light warp strips to the tape in your warp color order, making sure they point away from the top of the coaster. Do one repeat at a time, aligning them with the beat gauge (leave a space the width of a pencil line between strips to allow room for the weft).

**Step 3** When all fifteen strips are stuck to the tape, carefully fold them over to the front of the coaster, creasing them along the edge of the mat board. Apply double-sided tape to the left and right sides of the back of the coaster. Place a straight edge along one of the horizontal lines you drew, and with an art knife score the protective paper on both tapes; repeat for the second horizontal line.

**Step 4** Turn the coaster over so the front faces you with the fold in the warp strips at the bottom. Using the beat gauge or straight edge as a pick-up stick, open the first shed by lifting all the warp strips that represent the 1's in the threading. Place the first weft strip in this space. Remove the beat gauge




and use your fingers to move that strip down to the bottom of the warp. Use the beat gauge to open the second shed; lift all the warp strips that represent the 2's in the threading. Place the second weft strip in this space. Continue, alternating these two sheds and using your weft color order as you work your way up the warp. Once in a while, gently tug on each warp strip to tighten the weaving.

**Step 5** Carefully adjust the spacing of each weft strip using the beat gauge as a guide. Turn the coaster over. Check to make sure that the group of weft rows in each repeat lie within the horizontal lines drawn there. Beginning at the bottom on the left side, remove the protective paper from the double-sided

tape. Fold over the weft ends there and secure them to the tape. Make sure the ends do not extend beyond the tape. (You will need that length on the right side when you are adjusting the tightness of the woven strips.) Do the same thing with the second and third sections on the same side. Repeat on the right side, pulling carefully on each weft strip to tighten it before sticking it to the tape.

**Step 6** Trim any excess from each strip if desired (since the back of the coaster will be covered once it is finished, those ends will not be seen). On the back of the coaster, apply double-sided tape to the top edge. Use the art knife to score the protective paper along the vertical lines.

**Step 7** On the front of the coaster, adjust the spacing of each warp strip, using the beat gauge as a guide. Pull carefully on each strand to tighten and straighten the weaving. On the back of the coaster, remove the protective paper from the center section of the tape. Fold over the warp strips there and secure them. Do the same with the remaining two sections. Turn the coaster over and carefully straighten any warp and weft strips that need it. Pick up the brayer; roll it back and forth over the front of the coaster to flatten the weaving. Set the coaster aside.

**Step 8** Spread glue on the back of the saying or quote, then carefully press it on the good side of the backing paper (black in these coasters). Roll the brayer over the quote. Spread glue on the back of the backing paper, then carefully press it on the back of the coaster. Roll the brayer over the coaster. 

### COLOR-AND-WEAVE PATTERNS

D = dark, L = light

- A. DDDDD DDDDD DDDDD
- B. LDLDL LDLDL LDLDL
- C. DLDDL DLDDL LDDL
- D. LDDDL LDDDL LDDDL
- E. DDLDD DDLDD LDDL
- F. DLLLD DLLLD DLLLD
- G. LDLLD LDLLD DLDL
- H. DLDLD LDLDL DLDLD
- I. LLLLL LLLLL LLLLL
- J. DLDLD DLDLD DLDLD
- K. LDLDL LDLDL LDLDL
- L. DDLDD LDDL DDLDD
- M. LDDL DDLDD LDDL
- N. DDDL LDDL LDDL
- O. LLLDD DLLLD DDL
- P. LLDLL LLDLL LLDLL
- Q. DDLDD DDLDD DDLDD

1 and 2



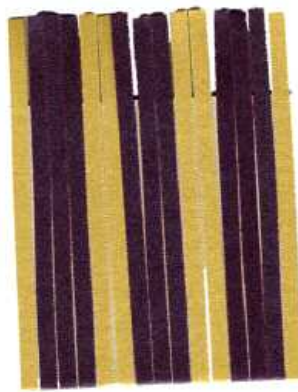
Make a beat gauge, place tape on the bottom edge, and begin "warping."

3



Fold the warp to the front and place tape on both edges of the back.

4a



Turn the coaster to the front with the folded edge down to begin weaving.

4b



Place the weft strips five at a time, filling each of the three horizontal sections.

5a



5b



When the weft is woven, fold the ends over to the back of the coaster.

6

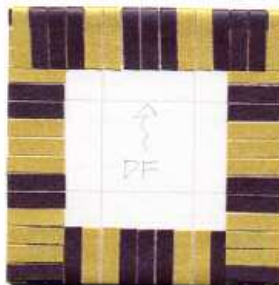


Place a tape on the last edge.

7a



7b



Fold the ends of the warp over to the back.

7c



The front of the coaster is finished!

8

Glue the quote or saying to the backing paper, then glue both to the back of the coaster.

