Learn to dye
microwave dyeing yarn
Exploring colour with wool dyes

Dyeing your own fibre is fun and easy to do. Ashford wool dyes allow you to create every colour of the rainbow time after time using simple techniques.

**Exhaust Dyeing**
Exhaust dyeing means the dye reacts with the fibre, water and additives until it is fully absorbed by the fibre.

To test whether your dye liquor has exhausted use a teaspoon to press into the fibre: when the liquid on the teaspoon appears clear then the dye has exhausted.

Ashford wool dyes are acid exhaust dyes and require heat to set the dye into the fibre. Ashford dyes are for use only on protein fibre such as wool and silk.

**Terms used in exhaust dyeing:**
Mordant (White Vinegar) – Assists the dye to fix to the fibre.
Wetting Agent (Liquid detergent) – This coats the fibre causing the dye molecules to move evenly around the fibre, to prevent patchy or uneven dyeing.

**To make a 1% solution:**
10gms of dye makes 1 litre
5gms of dye makes 500ml
2gms of dye makes 200ml

**The easiest dye solution is:**
In one 250ml jar (an old jam jar is good) use ¼ cup of white vinegar to 1 teaspoon of dye powder. Then fill with water.
This solution is most commonly used in our instructions for rainbow dyeing and for teaching purposes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weight of Fibre</th>
<th>White Vinegar</th>
<th>Dye Powder</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 kilo</td>
<td>10 tablespoons</td>
<td>10gms/5 level teaspoons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200gms</td>
<td>2 tablespoons</td>
<td>2gms/1 level teaspoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100gms</td>
<td>1 tablespoon</td>
<td>1gm/½ level teaspoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10gms</td>
<td>½ teaspoon</td>
<td>2 - 4 dessertspoons of 1% solution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1gm</td>
<td>¼ teaspoon</td>
<td>2 - 4 teaspoons of 1% solution</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Remember that the stronger the dye powder, the more vinegar to be used
Safety Guidelines

It is important to follow these guidelines as dyeing can be hazardous.

Safety first. Always...

- Wear rubber or plastic gloves, when mixing and dyeing.
- Wear a face-mask when handling any powders or if you are in an enclosed area with the dye fumes.
- Cover all surfaces.
- Use dye equipment for dyeing only.
- Label and date all dyes and solutions. Lock away if possible.
- Neutralize all dye baths at the completion of dyeing and before disposal. Use baking soda to neutralize the acid in the water.

Dyeing with Ashford dyes

Materials and equipment required

- Dyepot – needs to be large enough to hold fibre and sufficient water for dyeing. A lid is required to reduce condensation and exclude light. Stainless steel is ideal, because it does not react with the dye. Copper, brass and iron react with metal salts and “saddens” the dye.
- Stainless steel or plastic spoons to be used when stirring dye or mordant (wooden spoons or dowel stain and can transfer dye when wet).
- Rubber gloves protect hands from dyes.
- Face-masks are required for handling dry dye powder and avoiding breathing fumes.
- Cream cleanser neutralizes the dye and is excellent for removing stains from surfaces.
- Baking soda should always be used when discarding dye liquor down household systems as this neutralizes the solutions.
- Levellers or wetting agents are added to the dye bath to prevent patchy or uneven dyeing. Use a neutral liquid detergent as a leveller.
  To each litre of water add 1 ml of liquid detergent.

Handy Hints

- Avoid temperature shocks between soaking, dyeing or rinsing stages as this can damage or shrink the fibre. Handle fibres gently to prevent felting.
- Never put animal fibres into the tumble dryer, as this causes felting.
- The amount of dye used is always in ratio to the dry weight of fibre to be dyed. If the weight of fibre increases, the weight of dye increases proportionally to achieve the same dye shade. Always weigh the fibre first. If you have too much dye to the weight of the fibre, it will not exhaust.
- Always mix dye with hot water, as this dissolves the fine granules/powder.
You will need:

- 100gms of spun yarn (skein)
- 10gms Ashford wool dye -blue, scarlet, yellow
- Dishwashing liquid
- White vinegar
- Plastic cling film (Glad wrap)
- Measuring spoons
- Paint brush
- Rubber gloves
- Bucket
- Stirrers
- Microwave (used only for dyeing)
- Face-mask
- Jar - 250ml

Prepare a bucket of warm water with 1/2 teaspoon of dishwashing detergent. Add skein of yarn and soak for 30 minutes.
Using your brush, paint the dye liquor onto the skein. Ensure that the skein is well covered with the dye solution. You may need to turn the skein over.

Squeeze out excess water and place plastic cling film onto a flat surface. Ensure you have enough wrap to cover the skein. Lay skein onto the wrap.

Wrap skein into a parcel by folding in sides and then ends, so that the sides of the skein are not touching.
Allow the yarn to cool a little and then remove from the wrap. Rinse in warm water, then in cooler water. Spread the skein out on a towel or sheet and leave to dry in the shade.

Microwave on high for 1 – 2 mins. Do not burn the yarn, so check after 1 min.
Hint: Place a cup full of water in centre.
Rowena Hart

The Ashford Book of Rigid Heddle Weaving

Revised Edition

International weaving teacher and author, Rowena Hart, shows how to create exciting and beautiful garments and home ware – all on a simple two shaft loom.

In this book she guides you, step-by-step, showing just how easy it is to make your own unique woven creations.

In this revised edition explore more exciting techniques such as brooks bouquet, soumak, bronson and superfine weaving using the second heddle kit.

Be inspired by Rowena who has worked with weavers from many cultures in her role as Education and Marketing Manager of Ashford Handicrafts Ltd, the world-famous spinning wheel and weaving loom manufacturer.

Ashford two shaft looms – the Rigid Heddle and Knitters looms – are simple to use, light and compact, and will open a world of colour and texture for you.