

Making Waves

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Want to create eye-catching ripples in your weaving? Try Liz's tips on how to use our wavy shuttle.

Changing the Shed

When using the wavy shuttle the heddle/reed is only used to change sheds and all the beating is done with the wavy edge of the shuttle. There are two ways that you can do this.

Basic Technique

For the first pick, pass the shuttle through the shed leaving a steeper than usual weft angle. Change the shed and insert the shuttle into the new shed, beat the previous pick into place with the edge of the wavy shuttle and continue through the shed to complete the pick. Continue weaving by repeating this sequence.

Alternate Technique

This technique uses a regular shuttle for the weft yarn and only uses the wavy shuttle as a beater. Place your first pick with your regular shuttle, not forgetting the steeper weft angle, change sheds, insert the wavy shuttle and beat, remove the wavy shuttle, insert regular shuttle to make the next pick, change sheds, beat with wavy shuttle. Continue weaving this sequence.

Yarns

Wools and other 'sticky' yarns work best as they are less inclined to move and flatten out during wet finishing. Avoid lots of slippery yarns so you don't lose those lovely waves. To make your waves stand out more use lots of contrast in colour and texture in both warp and weft yarns.

Wavy Techniques

Stacked Waves

By beating with the wavy shuttle positioned in the same place each time you will create a stack of waves one top of another. This is good for horizontal weft stripes using lots of contrast in your colours and textures, so the waves show up well.

Offset Waves

Start by making a stack as before for several picks then make an offset stack by moving the wavy shuttle to one side before beating so that where you had a hill you are now making a valley directly on top of it and vice versa. There will be an area of unwoven warp between the previous valley and the new hill. During finishing the weft threads in this area will close up a little giving you a repeating pattern of dense and loose weave. So, use lots of contrast between the warp and weft threads to show it off to best effect.

Diagonal Waves

Make diagonal lines across your cloth by moving the wavy shuttle slightly in the same direction each time you beat. A small shift on each beat will give you a steeper diagonal and long shift will give you a shallower diagonal. This will give you a series of densely woven diagonal lines moving up your cloth with a more open, lacy weave in between.

Zig-Zag Waves

Start weaving a diagonal and simply change the direction of your shift to create a zig-zag. The fewer rows you weave between changes the shorter the zig-zags will be and more rows between will create longer zig-zags. As with the diagonals you will have densely woven zig-zags with a more open weave in between.

Random Waves

Make it up as you go along! Use a variety of coloured and textured yarns with the above techniques and perhaps invent some new ones of your own.

Finishing

Wavy shuttle weaving can be wet finished in the usual way but it's best not to be too vigorous in case the yarns move about too

much and you lose some of your lovely waves. Some gentle swirling and pressing should be enough. When you take the weaving out of the water squeeze it, don't wring, roll in a towel to remove the last of the excess water and then spread out flat to dry.

For more control over the waves you can lay the dry weaving out flat on a sheet of bubble wrap, wet it down with warm soapy water. Now roll up the bubble wrap with your weaving inside and roll backwards and forwards about fifty times. Unroll and check the weaving, if any yarns have moved out of place you can push the yarns back into place. Re-roll from the other end and roll another fifty times. Unroll and check again. Keep repeating until your weaving is filled enough. Rinse and lay out flat to dry.

Editor's note

American weaver Robyn Spady also suggests including a fusible sewing thread with the weft thread when making waves. Iron before washing the finished weaving and the weft threads will stay in place.



Liz Evans

Photo: Miyoko Ito of lamerr.com

For more detailed instruction from Liz go to www.ashford.co.nz/wheel31

