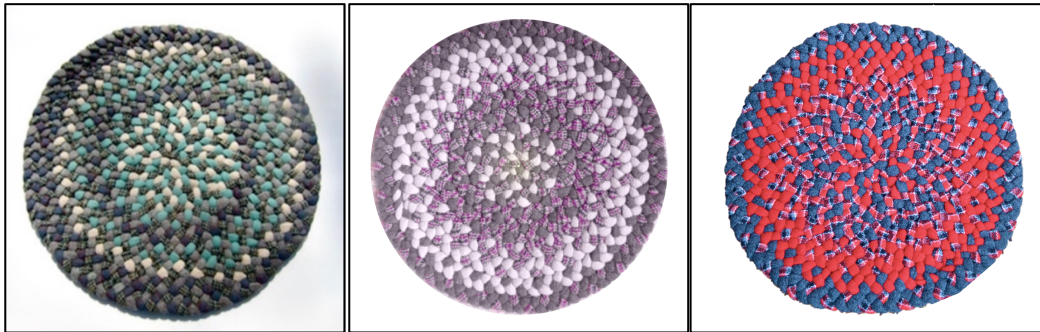


More Info and Class Prep for Beginner Rug Braiding: Chair Pad



Above are photos of chair pads. All are continuously braided and tapered; the left chair pad has a tapered edge. The middle and right chair pads have a butted outer row.

A. Supplies

1. Fabric. Wool fabric is the best fabric for rugs: it has natural stain resistance due to lanolin oils that remain even after washing, and it is fade resistant and durable.

1.5 yards will make a chair pad. Try to have a mix of colors.

Please work with wool that is either Dorr-weight wool (11 – 12 oz/yd) that has been washed in warm or hot water, or with wool that is from The Wool Studio (14.5 oz/yd), washed in cold or warm water. Another option is to find three or four pieces of used wool clothing – skirts and pants are best, but the wool has to be sturdy, and not thin suiting material. Aim for wool content of 80% or greater so that the wool will felt up nicely with washing in warm to hot.

Dorr Wool (<https://dormillstore.com>)

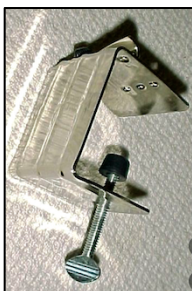
The Wool Studio (<https://www.thewoolstudio.com>)

2. Tools. Many are available used on eBay, but beware: some aren't worth buying.

a. Clamp of some sort. There are two types: ones that clamp onto a table, and ones that are floor stands. They come in all shapes and sizes. See next page for photos.

The table clamp that I would recommend is a Verna Cox clamp – IF you have a wooden table to clamp it onto. The plastic banquet tables are too deep at their edges and won't accommodate the Cox clamp. Available from Dorr Mill and Country Braid House.

If you need a table clamp for the deep-edged plastic tables, then your best option is the Big Mouth Clamp, which is available from Peggyann Watts: BelfastBraids@gmail.com



Left: a Braid Klamp. These are only for very thin braids.

Above right: Floor Stand from Country Braid House.

Lower right: Big Mouth table clamp, on left, and Verna Cox clamp, on right.

Another option is a floor stand. I like these, because you don't have to sit at a table, you can sit on a comfy couch (if it's not too low, and if the cushions aren't too deep). You place your feet on either side of the foot panel to stabilize it while you braid. They're available from Country Braid House and Dorr Mill, for about \$30.

b. Lacing needle.

The best tool for lacing under braids is the **braidkin**: it's mostly flat but has a curved tip that fits perfectly under braid loops.

You should also have a **#16 or #18 tapestry needle** for when you have to pierce braid fabric, such as when you are burying a knot, or lacing to an unusual area and effectively have to "sew" rather than "lace." It is also used for splicing lacing thread.



c. Lacing thread (aka Lacing Cord)

There are very strong opinions about which cording to use for lacing braids together: some like waxed linen, some like unwaxed linen, and some like cotton splicing cord. I'm in the last group, and would like you to use "Loxrite Cotton Splicing Cord #9." It's available in ½ lb spools that are 287 yards in white, dark brown, and black. Available from Dorr Mill Store, Country Braid House, or Maine Threads.



d. Working End Clamp

This is just something to temporarily fasten the end of your braid so that it doesn't un-braid. A simple clothespin works fine. The spring kind, not the rigid kind.

e. Braid Aids or Folders

When first starting to braid, it is incredibly frustrating to turn the raw edges in to the center while you braid. Although learning to "finger-fold" your strips as you go has some advantages that we will review in class, there are many excellent braiders who use braid-aids and never finger-fold.

There are several types and sizes of braid-aids. I will give you more information about this in class, but for now, if you want to use folders, I recommend Braid-Masters. Sometimes called Master Braiders. They are the simplest kind and have no moving parts to break. They definitely will make it easier to braid. They are available from Country Braid House or from Halcyon Yarn.



f. Hemostat or Needle-nosed Pliers



I recommend a hemostat, but some prefer needle-nosed pliers (not the heavy workman's tool type, but the jewelry-making type). These are used to bury braid loops during a taper, or to reposition loops.

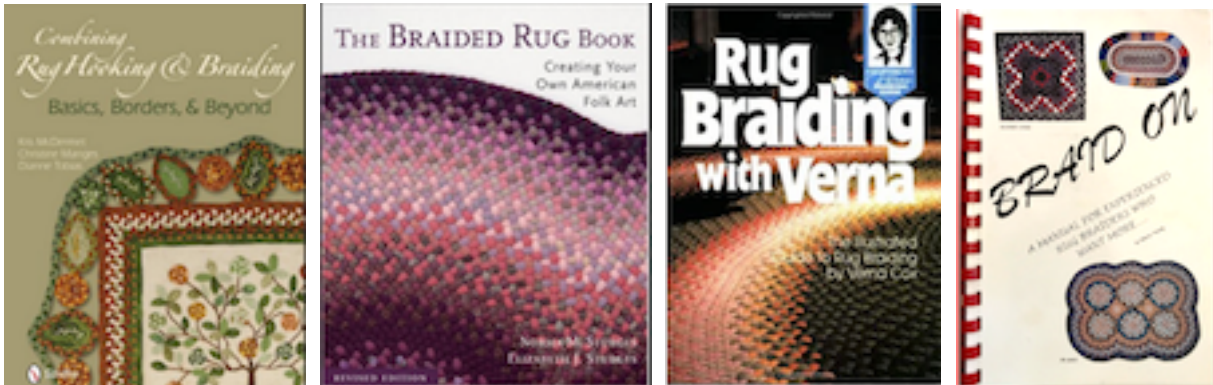
If you buy hemostats, you need the straight-tipped kind, about 5 or 6" long. I like hemostats because they "lock"... but not everyone likes locking devices. You can find them in the quilting section of fabric stores, or at tool stores such as Harbor Freight,

or hardware stores. Needle-nosed pliers are found in craft/hobby stores.

g. Miscellaneous Other Things You Will Need

1. **Safety pins** – multiple shapes and sizes
2. **Ruler** – I pack a 6" ruler into my braid kit. Any size will do, though.
3. **Rubber bands** – for strip management
4. **Sewing needle and thread**
5. **Scissors**
6. **Optional: sewing machine.** Use for adding on length to strips. A machine is fastest for sewing, but many never use a machine and simply hand-sew, so a machine is not necessary.

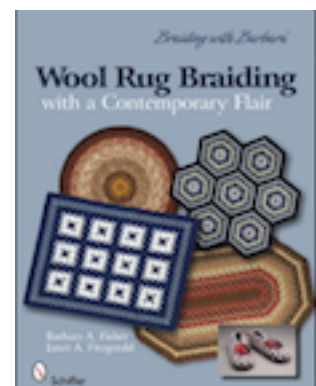
h. **Books:** You don't need a book for this class: the handout will give you all you need to know.



1. **Combining Rug Hooking and Braiding** by McDermet, Manges, & Tobias. Lots of diagrams for making oval, round, heart, square, and rectangle braided rugs, with a section on fancy borders. Good for beginner to advanced rug braiders. Also shows how to combine with rug hooking, and has a big gallery of rugs. \$50 on Amazon.
2. **The Braided Rug Book** by Norma Sturges. Two versions: they differ only slightly. The first one (blue) presents the work of different rug artists in its back pages than is found in the second one (pink/red). The second one includes a tiny bit on multistrand braiding (that you should not pay attention to because there are better methods than what she shows). It's out of print but you can still find it. The rug pictures are beautiful. Check eBay, Etsy, Thrift Books, Abe Books.
3. **The Illustrated Guide to Braiding** by Verna Cox. This book or maybe booklet is illustrated with line drawings, but it is overall excellent. It does *not* have a lot of pretty pictures of rugs, but the instruction is solid. Look on used sites like Thrift Books.
4. Once you have finished this course and not before, if you are interested in more complex shapes and designs, you could purchase **Nancy Young's "Braid On"** booklet. It is a little rough, but it has instructions for fun items like braided turtles and pigs, and much more. \$10 from ndyoungbraid@gmail.com.

What about Barbara Fisher's book on braiding: Wool Rug Braiding?

This book is not for beginners.





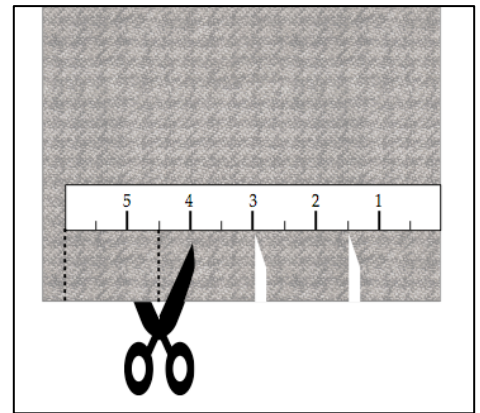
Braiding Kit: Suggested contents

- 8" X 4" X 2" plastic pencil box, to contain kit
- Braidkin
- tapestry needle #16 or #18
- 6" ruler
- 100 feet of cotton lacing cord, wrapped around a 6" X 2" cardboard spool with triangular cut-outs to hold the cord and a slash for trapping the cord end.
- 5" hemostat
- rubber bands (for wrapping wool strips)
- safety pins
- clothespin or other spring clip
- Simple needle-case made of wool strips
- Verna Cox Clamp or Big Mouth Clamp (won't fit in braid kit)
- Braid-Aids, set of 3 (optional)
- Hemostat, 5" straight
- Needles & thread
- Reading glasses
- Scissors

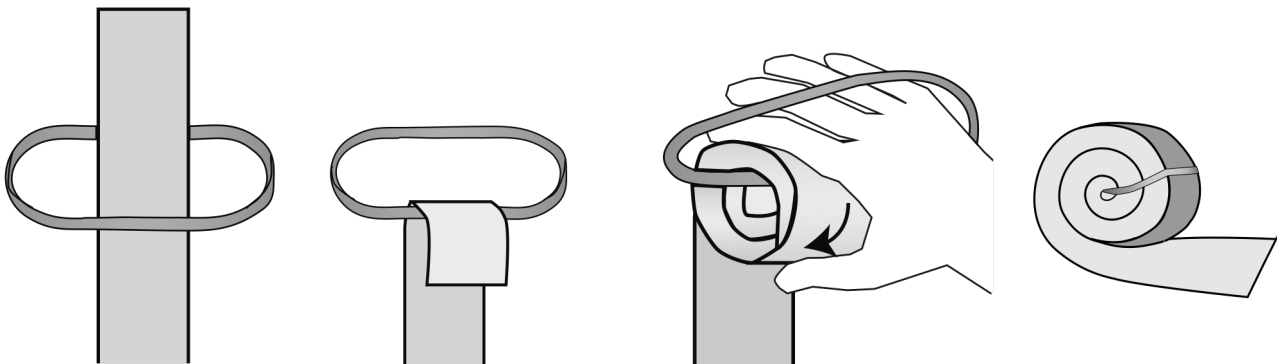
B. Before the First Class:

1. Assemble supplies
2. Tear **one** strip 1.5" wide from three different colors of wool (*do not include a selvage*). Make a 2" deep snip, and then tear. The torn strip can be from selvage to selvage, or parallel to a selvage to get the longest strip possible from each of the three colors.

Despite the diagram right, do not cut a bunch of strips: you only need one strip of each of the 3 colors to get started. If one of your strips is a little thicker than the others, it may have to be cut at 1 3/8 to work with the other strands.



3. Rolling strips up. Strips must be rolled up to keep them from entangling as you braid. Typically, rolls are no more than about 3-4" in diameter – larger rolls interlock while braiding and become unwieldy. Diagrams below show using a rubber band to hold the roll together; you can also secure a roll with a safety pin, or poke a narrow strip through the roll's center and tie the ends around the roll.



Diagrams show coiling strips into manageable rolls:

1. Place a rubber band around the end of a strip.
2. Fold the strip-end over the rubber band.
3. Coil the strip forward over the rubber band, keeping part of the band on the outside of the roll.
4. By convention, the outside of the roll is the "good" side of the fabric.

****If the rubber band is loose, tie an overhand knot in the rubber band to tighten it.**