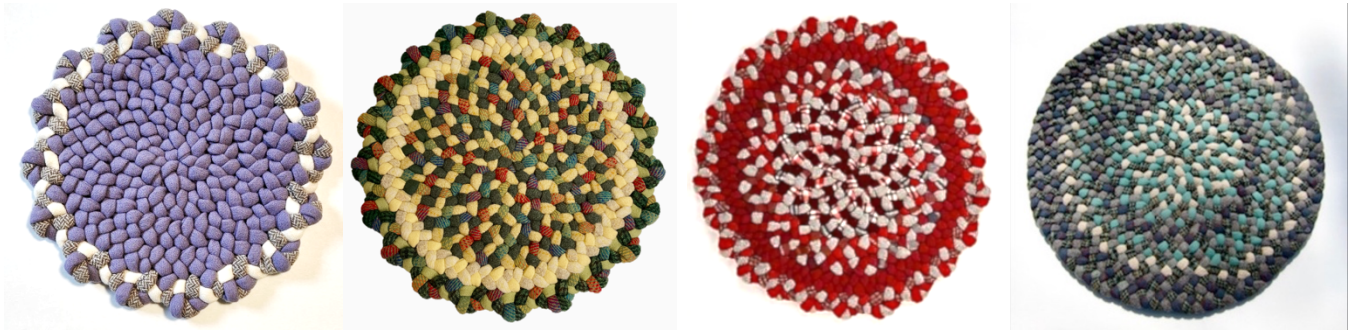


## More Info for Beginner Rug Braiding: Chair Pad with Picot Edge



Above are photos of chair pads made by the instructor. The first 3 have butted picot edges. All are continuously braided and tapered; the left 3 have one or two rows of butted borders.

**Instructor:** Christine Manges

**Dates:** May 5, 12, 19, 26, 2026

**Time:** 4 Tuesdays at 4 pm EST

**Level:** Beginner

**Folds:** LO

### I. Course Overview

#### A. Times, Links

The class will meet four times. All classes are over Zoom and are recorded for later viewing.

The same Zoom link is used for all 4 classes. You are sent the Zoom link via email each Tuesday morning.

#### B. Course Content

**May 5**      **Class 1:** Fabric choices, strip preparation and management while braiding, adding fabric length, using braid-aids, keeping folded edges left, braiding a T-Start, making 5 double corners, straight braiding.

**Homework:** Braid 5 feet.

**May 12**      **Class 2:** Burying a knot between folds, lacing the first few rows, theory of skips (also known as increases) to keep a round rug flat.

**Homework:** Lace the first 4 rows, braid another 5 feet.

**May 19**      **Class 3:** Changing Colors, Tapering. Troubleshooting problems. Preview of picot edge.

**Homework:** Braid a straight braid for butting, and picot edge for butting, just enough to wrap around the outside edge of the chair pad.

**May 26**      **Class 4:** Butting the straight braid via the Norma Sturges Method #1; Butting the picot edge via the Norma Sturges Method #2. Finishing tips to make your completed chair pad look even better.

### C. Instructor

Christine Manges has been braiding rugs since 2006 and teaching rug braiding since 2010. She is co-author of the book, *Combining Rug Hooking and Braiding*. She has been teaching online since the pandemic. She is the current president of the Valley Forge Rug Braiding Guild and is passionate about rug braiding and teaching.



## D. 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 of 54-60" wide wool fabric 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 from The Wool Studio that is unwashed. Another option is to find three or four pieces of used wool clothing – skirts and pants are best, but the wool must be sturdy, and not thin suiting material. Aim for wool content of 80% or greater so that the wool will felt up nicely after washing in warm to hot water.

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

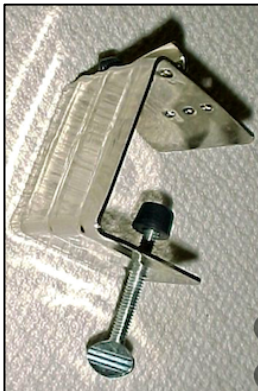
The Wool Studio (<https://www.thewoolstudio.com>)

**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.

What NOT to get: Braid Klamp. You'll recognize it because it's the only kind that is  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a square in shape. Its teeth are meant for a very small braid made of unwashed Dorr fabric. Don't get that kind: you're going to work with thicker wool.

The table clamp that I would recommend is a Verna Cox clamp – IF you have a wooden table to clamp it onto. The



Left: a Braid Klamp table clamp. 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.



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](mailto:BelfastBraids@gmail.com)

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.



Personally, I use a #13 tapestry needle for lacing my braids, for reasons that I will explain in class, but you don't have to.

#### 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. Some people get fancy with this (beaded hair clips, enameled clamps) but a simple clothespin works fine. The spring kind, not the rigid kind.

#### e. Braid Aids or Folders

When you first start braiding, 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. I strongly recommend purchasing a set of 3 braid-aids.

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.

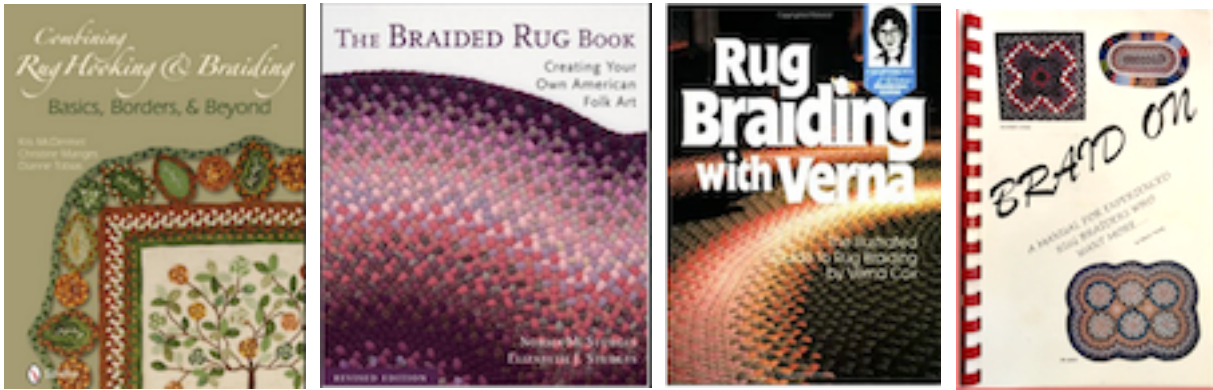
If you buy hemostats, choose the straight-tipped kind, about 5 or 6" long. I like hemostats because they "lock"... but not everyone likes locking devices. You can find them in the quilting section of fabric stores, or at tool stores such as Harbor Freight, or hardware stores. Needle-nosed pliers are 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. But many people want to know which braiding books are good ones, and I have read through just about every one of them. There are a lot out there that are not worth your time, frankly.





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, shown above). 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 just beautiful. Check out sites like eBay, Abe Books, or Thrift 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. If you buy this book, there is one diagrammatic error to fix: contact me if you buy it. 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](mailto:ndyoungbraid@gmail.com).



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

I think this book is a bit above beginner level and, in my opinion, doesn't have the clearest of instructions.

### Braiding Kit: Suggested contents



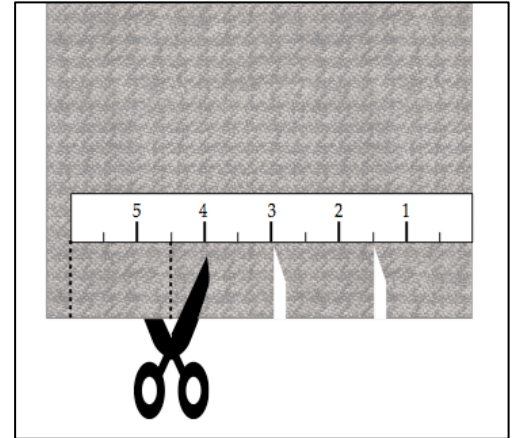
- 8" X 4" X 2" plastic pencil box, to contain kit
- Braidkin
- tapestry needle #16 or #18
- 6" ruler
- 100 feet of cotton lacing cord, wrapped around a 6" X 2" cardboard spool with triangular cut-outs to hold the cord and a slash for trapping the cord end.
- 5" hemostat
- rubber bands (for wrapping wool 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

## E. Before the First Class:

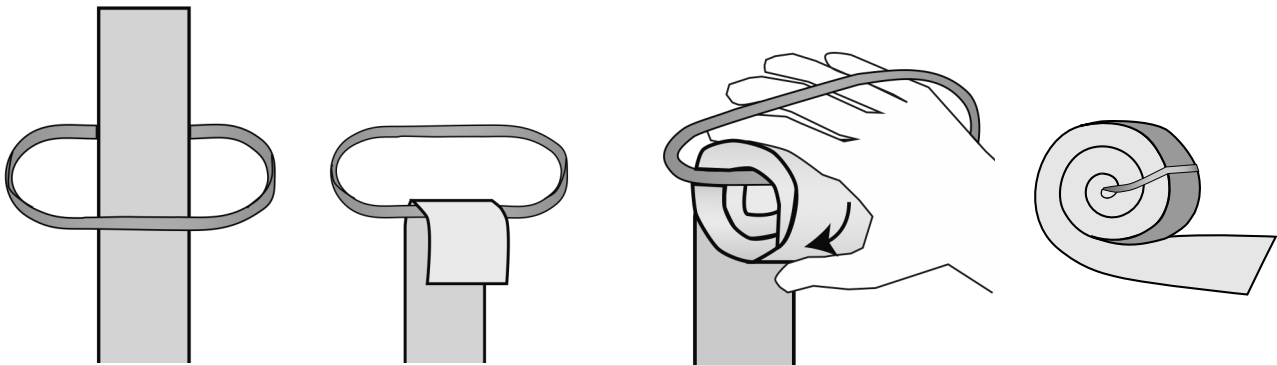
### 1. Assemble supplies

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 inch 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.