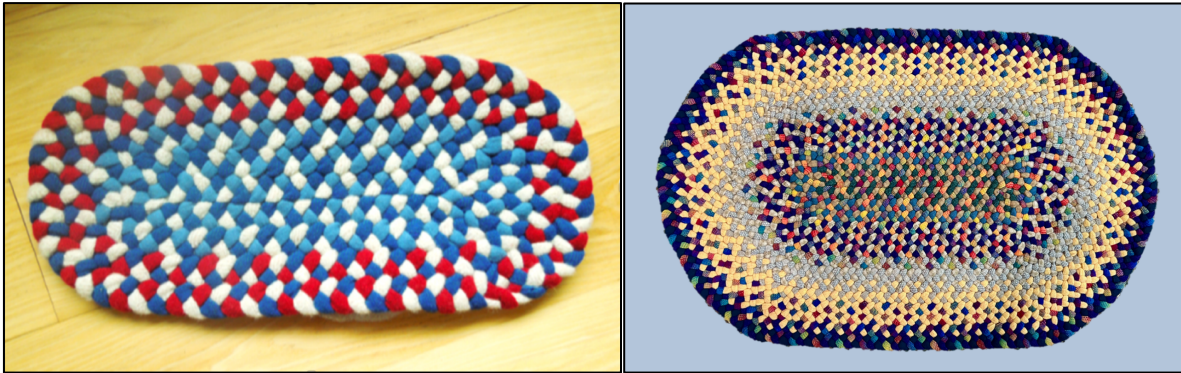


More Info
for Beginner Rug Braiding: Continuous Oval 9" X 15" Mat,
or 2' X 3' Rug

Instructor: Mary Hibbard



This class is meant for beginners who have never braided a rug before, OR for former braiders who need a refresher course.

Skills Taught:

- Strip management: when and how to wash wool, making rolls of strips, adding strip length with diagonal seams, changing widths for different fabric thicknesses.
- T-Start, braiding with left opening folds, optional Braid-Aids, making two double corners at the hairpin turn
- Shoe-lacing the center, lacing straight, how to lace around curves by skipping loops to keep the rug flat
- Changing Colors
- Spacing skipped loops around curves
- Tapering to finish the rug

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.

2 yards of mixed colors will make a nice 9" X 15" mat. This size is recommended for beginners.

4.5 yards of mixed colors will make a 2' X 3' rug.

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, which doesn't have to be washed. Another option is to find about 5 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 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.

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

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. See image below.



Don't get this kind – Braid Klamp. It's meant for very small and thin braids.



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



Floor stand – photo from Country Braid House. Dorr also has these stands.

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 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, and 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 braiding. 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. More information is provided 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 make it easier to braid strips. They are available from Country Braid House or from Halcyon Yarn.



f. Hemostat or Needle-nosed Pliers



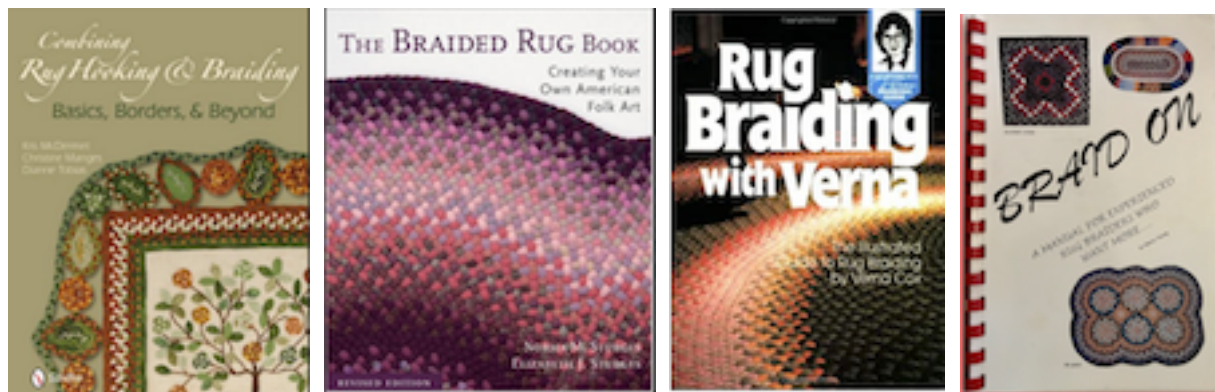
I recommend a hemostat, but some prefer needle-nosed pliers (not the heavy workman’s tool type, but the jewelry-making type). These are used to bury braid loops during a taper, or to reposition loops.

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. 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.

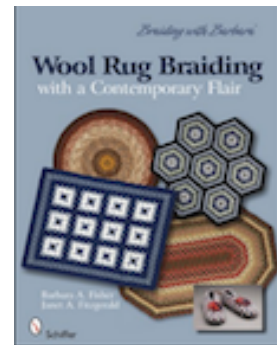
Books: You don’t need a book for this class: the handout will give you all you need to know. But many people want to know which braiding books are good ones, and I can recommend the following:



See next page for book descriptions.

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). It's out of print but you can still find it. The rug pictures are just beautiful. Available from used book sites.
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.

What about Barbara Fisher's book on braiding: **Wool Rug Braiding?** It's a lovely book with gorgeous photos of all-butted rug. The book is not recommended 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
 5" hemostat
 Rubber bands
 Safety pins

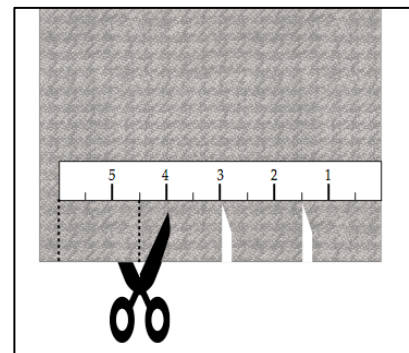
Clothespin
 Simple needle-case made of wool strips
 Verna Cox Clamp or Big Mouth Clamp
 Braid-Aids, set of 3 (optional)
 Hemostat, 5" straight
 Needles & thread

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, 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. Print off the class handout.



See you in class!
 Mary Hibbard