



### WHAT EQUIPMENT DO I REALLY NEED?

EXCERPED FROM NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2004, PAGE 14

**T**he projects in this issue recommend all sorts of equipment. It's always hard for new weavers to know how to set priorities for what to buy—especially since weaving equipment is expensive. (I don't mean that it costs more than it should, but if you compare the cost of a loom with the cost of knitting needles. . . .)

So, what do you really need? Everyone knows you need a loom, but there are many other accessories to consider. You'll want to have at least 100 **heddles** on each shaft—the wider the warp and the finer the threads, the more heddles you'll need.

Your loom probably came with a **reed**. Different projects require different reed sizes, but you can often achieve the suggested setts with other reeds. (*The Weaver's Companion*, Interweave Press, 2001, pages 14–15, explains how to do this.) To start, it's good to have a 10-dent and a 12-dent reed (and an 8-dent reed if you plan to use thicker yarns).

You won't be able to weave long without a **warping board** (or reel)—doorknobs are not a satisfactory substitute. Choose a warping board with sturdy, thick pegs that are solidly fixed in the frame.

To warp from back to front, you'll need a **raddle**. That's a board with pegs or nails that separate the warp into groups as it's wound on the beam. A 1/2"-dent raddle is more useful than one with bigger spaces (see [www.interweave.com](http://www.interweave.com), Weaving, Projects and Articles, Warping Basics, Warping from Back to Front, for more about using a raddle). **Lease sticks** are also necessary if you warp from back to front—smooth flat sticks with slightly rounded edges or smooth dowels work well.

You should have at least two **boat shuttles** with a minimum of a dozen **bobbins** and at least two **stick shuttles** (start with a length of about 12"). For faster and more joyful weaving, use a boat shuttle for all

yarns thin enough to wind efficiently on a bobbin.

A **bobbin winder** is a must. Electric ones are very nice but not essential. (Put one on your holiday gift list.)

A **loom bench** that can be adjusted to the right height is better than trying to weave from a chair or stool. It's also handy to have the bench space beside you for placing shuttles and scissors.

You'll need an umbrella swift if you use yarn that comes in skeins (see Product News, page 88, for a photo of one). You can wind a warp on the warping board directly from the swift or you can wind yarn from the swift into a ball. Ball and cone winders are available, but they do not need to be at the top of your priority list.

—Madelyn