

His or Hers

a versatile overshot scarf

WENDY SUNDQUIST

Fifteen years ago I visited a wonderful Swedish museum in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and fell in love with an old boundweave rosepath coverlet from the late 1800s. I loved the design, but I wanted to weave a similar-looking fabric that was lightweight so it would drape nicely in a garment. After searching through books of old overshot coverlet patterns, I planned this piece as an overshot version of the boundweave coverlet design.

Rosepath usually refers to an extended point-twill threading: 1-2-3-4-1-4-3-2-1; the thread on shaft 1 in the center of the repeat allows a larger diamond than can be woven with a simple point. When used for boundweave, this threading allows greater design potential than a simple point even though shaft 1 at the center of the threading weaves with shaft 1 on the outer edges. The drawback to boundweave, however (in addition to its not being appropriate for a scarf!) is the many, many picks per inch required to weave it.

The draft for the scarf

The most straightforward way to extend rosepath to overshot is to use a rosepath threading order for the four overshot blocks: ABCDADCBA. My overshot draft, however, uses a simple point arrangement of the blocks, ABCDCBA, since I liked the design it creates better, and it still makes possible the look of the block design in the coverlet.



Wendy Sundquist of Langley, Washington, has been a production weaver for fifteen years. She owns Karlson/Gray Gallery in Langley.



A point threading of four overshot blocks allows a great many different designs.

In overshot, pattern picks always alternate with tabby picks (this is what is meant by “use tabby” in drafts where pattern picks only are shown; see Figure 1, page 3). To set off the color changes in the bands pattern weft in this scarf, two tabby picks are used between the pattern picks at every color change. The extra tabby pick gives added definition to the colored bands, an effect that is not found in traditional overshot patterns.

For further exploration

This small overshot threading is one of my favorites and is amazingly versatile. The treadling order of the four blocks can be varied endlessly for different designs

and effects. Put on an extra two yards in the warp so that you can weave two scarves—one that follows the treadling given and one for “designing on the loom” after you’ve become familiar with the pattern elements.

The ground cloth for this scarf is unmercerized cotton. You can also choose pearl cotton—or consider 30/2 silk.

One caution: because of its plain-weave ground cloth, overshot is more like plain weave than twill in terms of drape. Be very careful not to beat too firmly (with narrow warps, the weft packs in much more easily than with wide warps). You want a piece to wrap around your neck, not a cover for your bed!



STEPS FOR WEAVING THE OVERTSHOT SCARF

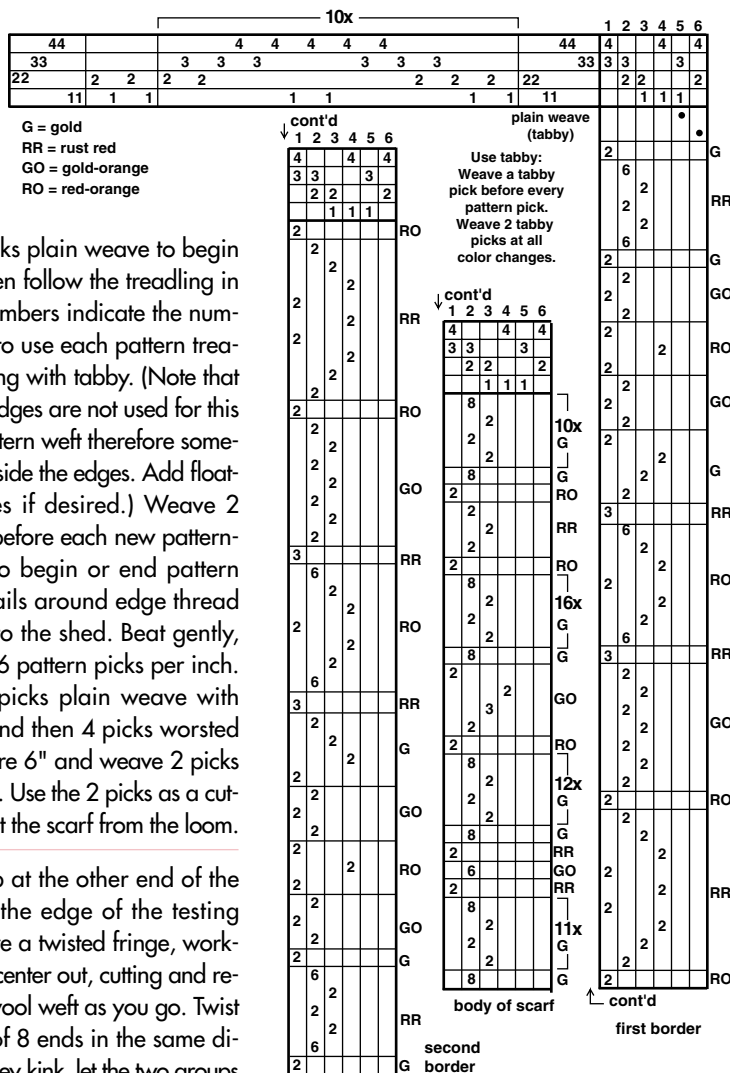
Step 1 Wind a warp of 220 ends, 2¾ yd long with a cross at both ends: a threading cross and a raddle cross (see Resources at www.handwovenmagazine.com for back-to-front warping steps with two crosses). Group the number of ends in the raddle cross that you will place in each dent of your raddle at a sett of 32 ends per inch.

Step 2 Spread the warp in the raddle, secure the warp to the apron rod of the back beam, and beam the warp without lease sticks, checking for tangles as you go. Place sticks or heavy craft paper between the layers. Pull on the warp frequently to straighten the threads.

Step 3 Place lease sticks in the threading cross, secure them behind the castle, and thread following Figure 1. The first and last 4 working ends are doubled in the threading (they can be threaded in the same heddle). Sley 4 ends/dent in an 8-dent reed and tie the warp onto the front beam apron rod under even tension.

Step 4 Weave 5–6 picks of plain weave with a worsted-weight wool yarn. Weave 3–4 picks of plain weave with black 20/2 cotton, then weave 4 pattern picks in each pattern block, alternating 20/2 cotton tabby with one of the silk pattern wefts; check and correct any threading errors. Allowing 6" for fringe after your testing picks, begin the scarf by weaving 4 picks of worsted-weight wool as a header.


1. Draft for scarf



Step 5 Weave 4 picks plain weave to begin the scarf. Then follow the treadling in Figure 1. Numbers indicate the number of times to use each pattern treadle, alternating with tabby. (Note that floating selvages are not used for this scarf; the pattern weft therefore sometimes turns inside the edges. Add floating selvages if desired.) Weave 2 tabby picks before each new pattern-weft color. To begin or end pattern wefts, take tails around edge thread and back into the shed. Beat gently, aiming for 16 pattern picks per inch. End with 4 picks plain weave with tabby weft and then 4 picks worsted wool. Measure 6" and weave 2 picks worsted wool. Use the 2 picks as a cutting line to cut the scarf from the loom.

Step 6 Cut the warp at the other end of the scarf along the edge of the testing picks. Prepare a twisted fringe, working from the center out, cutting and removing the wool weft as you go. Twist two groups of 8 ends in the same direction until they kink, let the two groups twist together in the opposite direction, and secure with an overhand knot.

Step 7 Wash by hand in lukewarm water with a handful of Orvus Paste or a squirt of mild dish soap. Agitate gently for about 45 seconds. Let soak for 10 minutes. Rinse in water of the same

temperature. (Add a bit of fabric softener to the rinse water if you think you overbeat.) Gently squeeze out excess water and hang to dry. Using a wool setting, iron directly on the fabric surface to polish the silk. Trim weft tails and fringe ends. 

PROJECT AT-A-GLANCE

Weave structure for scarf
Overshot.

Equipment
4-shaft loom, 7" weaving width; 8-dent reed; raddle; 5 shuttles, 5 bobbins (or 2 shuttles, 5 bobbins).

Yarns
Warp: 20/2 unmercerized cotton (8,400 yd/lb), black, 605 yd (1½ oz).
Tabby weft: 20/2 unmercerized cotton (8,400 yd/lb), black, 220 yd (½ oz).
Pattern weft: 30/2 silk (7,850 yd/lb),

silk/seacell, gold #540, 157 yd (½ oz); spun silk, rust red #73, 21 yd; tussah silk, gold-orange #436, 16 yd and red-orange #15, 166 yd. 30/2 spun silk (#73) in similar colors can be used for the tussah and silk/seacell yarns.

Yarn sources
20/2 unmercerized cotton is available from Blomqvist/Nordiska and 30/2 tussah, spun silk, and silk seacell from The Silk Tree.

Warp order and length
220 ends 2¾ yd long (allows 4" take-up,

34" loom waste; loom waste includes fringe and testing picks). Add 2 yd to warp length for each additional scarf.

Warp and weft spacing
Warp: 32 epi (4 ends/dent in an 8-dent reed). Width in the reed: 6⅞".
Weft: about 32 picks per inch (16 tabby, 16 pattern). Woven length of scarf (measured under tension on the loom): 60".

Finished dimensions
After washing, amounts produce one scarf 5⅝" × 55" plus 5" fringe at each end.