



# Erindale Tapestry Studio

Laura Berlage

11113N Fullington Road Hayward, WI 54843 (715) 462-3453  
[laura@erindaletapestrystudio.com](mailto:laura@erindaletapestrystudio.com) [www.erindaletapestrystudio.com](http://www.erindaletapestrystudio.com)

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## Ruteev Shoulder Bag Tapestry Kit (Skill Level 2)



*This project was inspired by traditional Norwegian ruteev coverlet designs.*

Welcome to this colorful and unique tapestry weaving kit! These instructions are designed to help guide you through the process, so you can make your own beautiful creation. Finished dimensions of the tapestry are approximately 9.5 inches wide by 12 inches tall, not including selvedge.

If it's helpful, please reference the relevant tutorial videos from Introduction to Tapestry Weaving (Level 2) as a refresher for techniques and methods. The most useful videos for this project include:

- Warping with Selvedge
- Making a Butterfly
- Interlock
- Stepped Mesa
- Star Motif (especially parts 2, 3, and 4)
- Finishing with Selvedge

The kit includes colorful wool weft from our sheep, a graph chart of the design, and the canvas shoulder bag that the tapestry is stitched to after completion. The yarns included are Aran weight, which is slightly thicker than the DK weight we used in class. Enjoy weaving with this yarn and notice how it packs differently from the DK style. You will also notice that it creates a sturdier finished textile, so you can enjoy your bag for years and years.

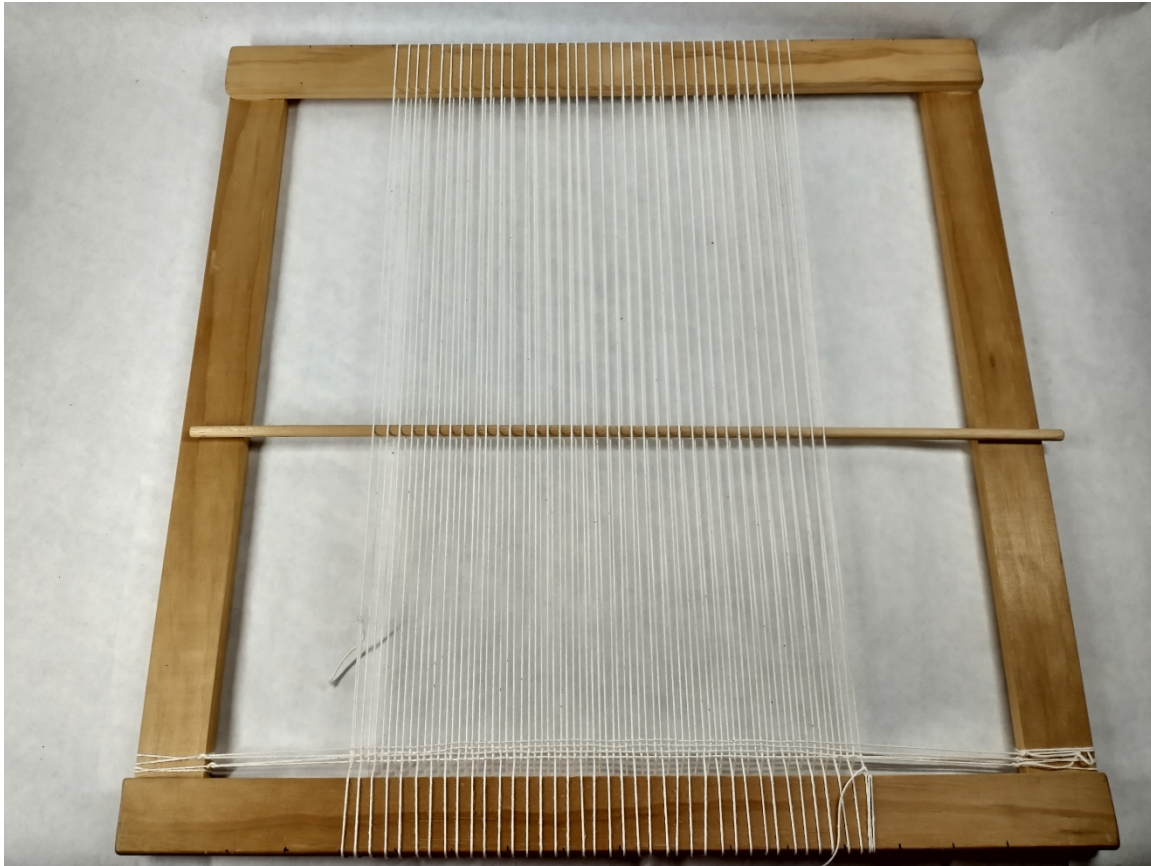
Warp thread is not included in this kit. Recommended warp thread for Level 2 graduates is Maysville cotton carpet warp (8/4). If you prefer the #10 cotton crochet thread, this will work as well but is not as sturdy.

The side of the shoulder bag is larger than our project and has tapered sides, so we are not under the constraint of having to create a piece of an exact size, as in some other skill builder projects. However, if your piece becomes surprisingly larger than the project described below, it's possible it won't fit on the side of the tote! That is why I've focused on number of turns for each pattern change, rather than actual measured height. In order to have all of the design fit on our frame loom and on the bag, the design must be slightly compressed.

**This means that we'll read the pattern graph as each square having the value of 4 warps wide (2 in each shed) and 8 turns high.**

Adjusting Note: if you find that your work does not pack as tightly, you may wish to reduce the number of turns per pattern change, to achieve the same effect. Consistency will be the most visually pleasing. Because rutev technique does not utilize angles, we are not constrained to numbers of turns divisible by 4. If 7 turns works better for you than 8, that is an acceptable adjustment considering personal pack-down rate. If the piece grows taller than 13 inches, it will be very difficult to weave on our frame loom.

Even though the sides of the bag are not straight, every tapestry project is an invitation to continue to practice weaving straight sides.



First, warp your frame loom at 8 epi (warps per inch), which means 4 loops within each inch mark for 9.5 inches. This means that you should have 38 warp loops at the top of your frame. Having the right number of warps is critical for the design to count correctly.

Start warping in the 3rd inch section as marked on the loom from the left, warping 9 and a half inches in the figure 8 pattern, starting at the lower left. For the last  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch, wrap 2 wraps at the top of the “10<sup>th</sup>” inch, then tie off at the bottom (it will look like 3 wraps in that  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch at the bottom). There should be 38 warp loops at the top of the loom. Adjust the tension and warp spacing as shown in the warping tutorial. Remember not to warp too tight.

Add the 4 rows of spacers at the bottom of the loom, using additional warp. Remember to keep this step tight. Double check that the left most warp is a stick shed warp, and the right most warp is a pull shed warp. Adjust warp spacing for evenness.



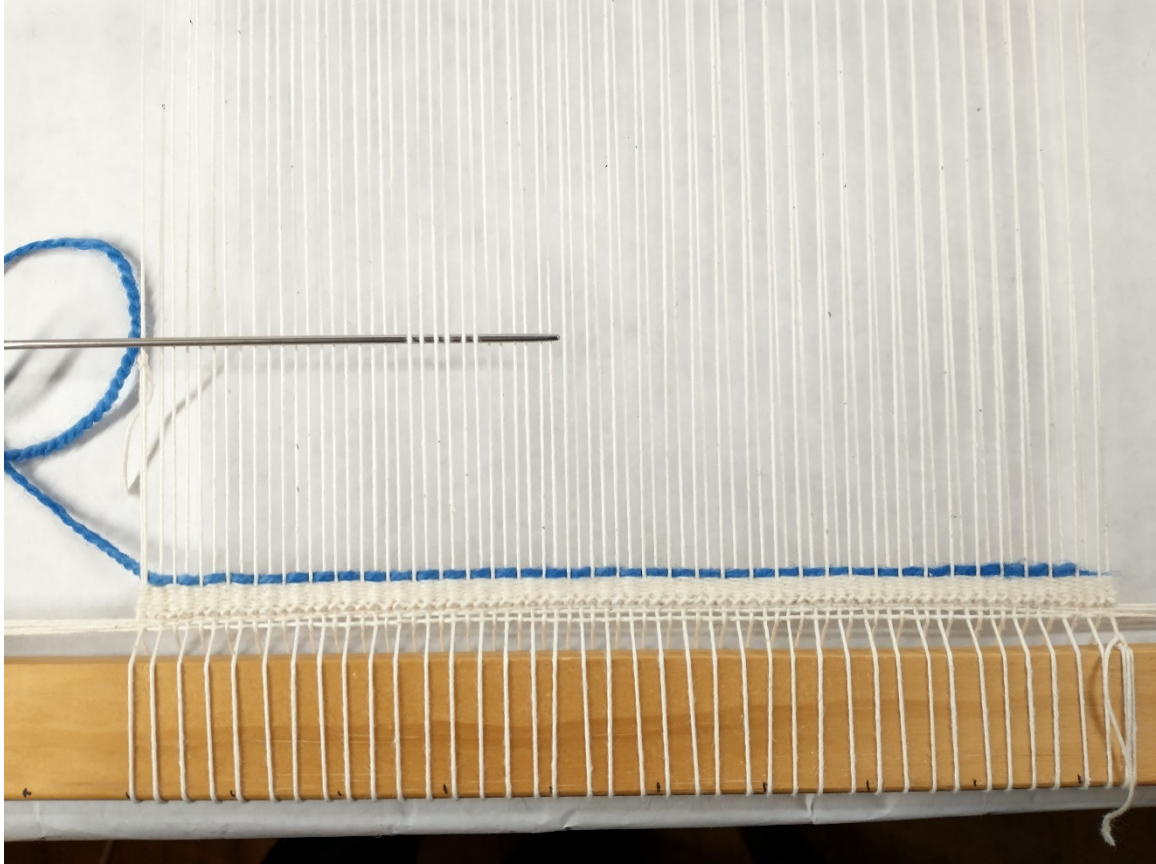
Using additional warp, work the stacked half hitch knots that start the selvedge header. Pay attention to maintaining proper warp spacing. Start at the left side of the piece and work all the way to the right. Lay in the tail at the left above the knots in pull shed to bury it.





Continuing with the warp thread, weave straight rows to form the “warp as weft” part of the selvedge. We will be folding this part of the selvedge back before attaching it to the shoulder bag, so we won’t see it. On mine, I worked 5 turns of warp as weft.

Now you are ready to weave the design!



Working in stick shed from right to left, lay in the first row of blue, drawing in just enough to bring the tail within the warp, so there's no tail to bury later. Come back in pull shed. Pay attention to your weft's "wiggle dance." Continue these straight rows for 8 turns, stopping when you are about to make the 8<sup>th</sup> pull shed.

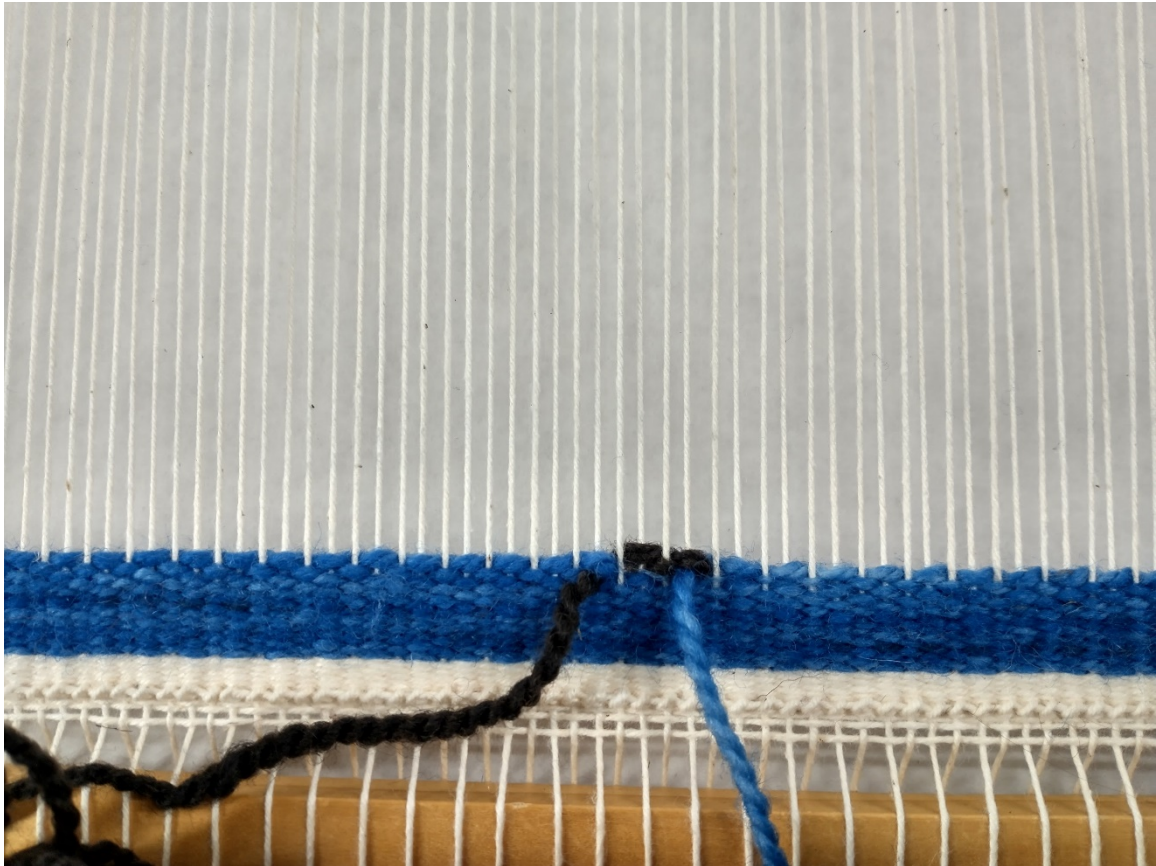
Because these rows are going all the way across, I find it easier to use tatting needles. As I begin bringing in smaller sections of color, I'll work these as butterflies. Use the weft carrying method that is most comfortable for you.



Keeping your blue at the left, prepare another needle (or butterfly) with blue, and a butterfly of black. Cueing off the pattern graph, count your wefts in pull shed to make certain that the black is being laid in at the very center of the piece. (I can say from previous experience that it NEVER hurts to double-check your counting when starting a symmetric design). At this point, your pull shed warps should count: blue 18, black 2, blue 18.

Once you have completed this laying in row, you are ready to come back in stick shed, starting with the right-most blue and interlocking your way across all the way to the left.



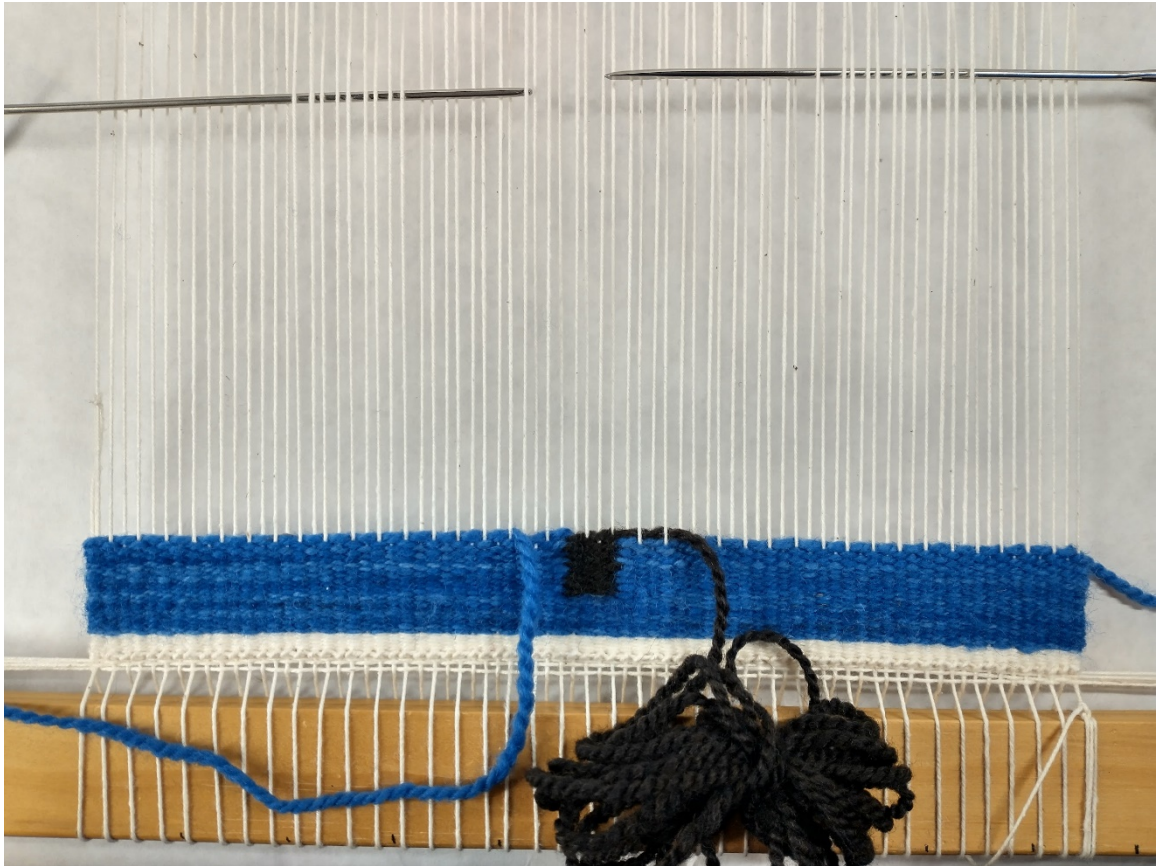


Continue working back and forth, interlocking only in stick shed. This means that each row will start on the right-hand side of the tapestry, just like it did with the stepped mesa motif.

Continue with the same warp counts for each color until you have completed the stick shed row that would create the 8<sup>th</sup> turn (loop) on the left-hand side of the color shape once it heads back in pull shed. That means your weft strand is on the left with 7 stacked turns (loops) below it.

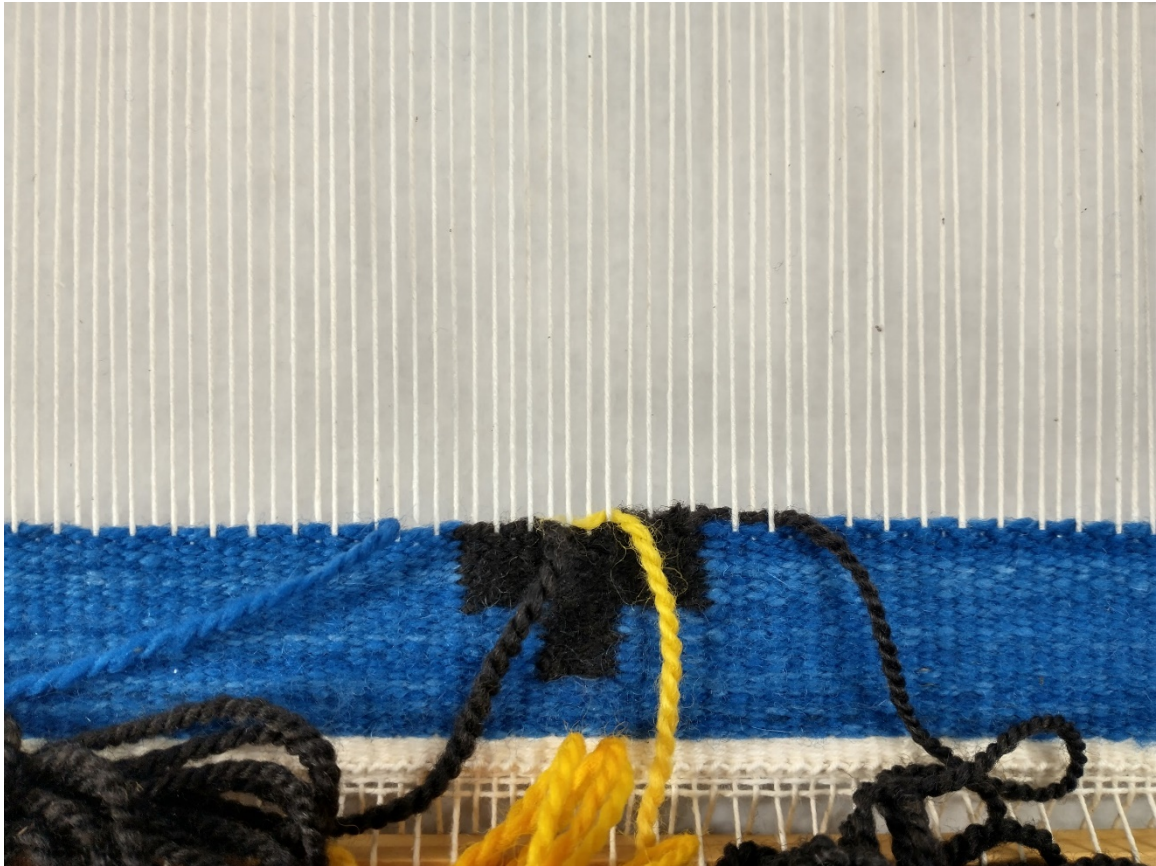
Because this yarn is thicker than the yarn used in our Level 2 project, we will only be making 8 turns instead of 12 per pattern change.





Now it's time to create the next pattern change in pull shed. One of the interesting attributes of this rutevev design is that ALL the pattern elements change their positions with EVERY pattern change! Think of it like stair steps. For this next change, the black is advancing one step in each direction.

The pull shed warps now read (from right to left): blue 16, black 6, blue 16.



In the next pattern change, the first golden cross begins. This means not only are we adding a gold butterfly but also a second black butterfly. Keep the old black butterfly at the left, while the new black butterfly is added to the right. The gold should be at the very center, directly above the original pattern section of black.



Continue with 8 turns per pattern section, cueing in with the pattern graph. Here, the red elements are ready to combine. I've kept the red butterfly to the right, but feathered off and buried the tails of the central black and left red.





Eventually, the blue has its last step, and the green begins. You'll notice that most symmetric tapestry designs become their most complicated as you near the center of the design. Now I have lots of beautiful butterflies to keep from tangling! But they're so pretty, it's more than worth it.





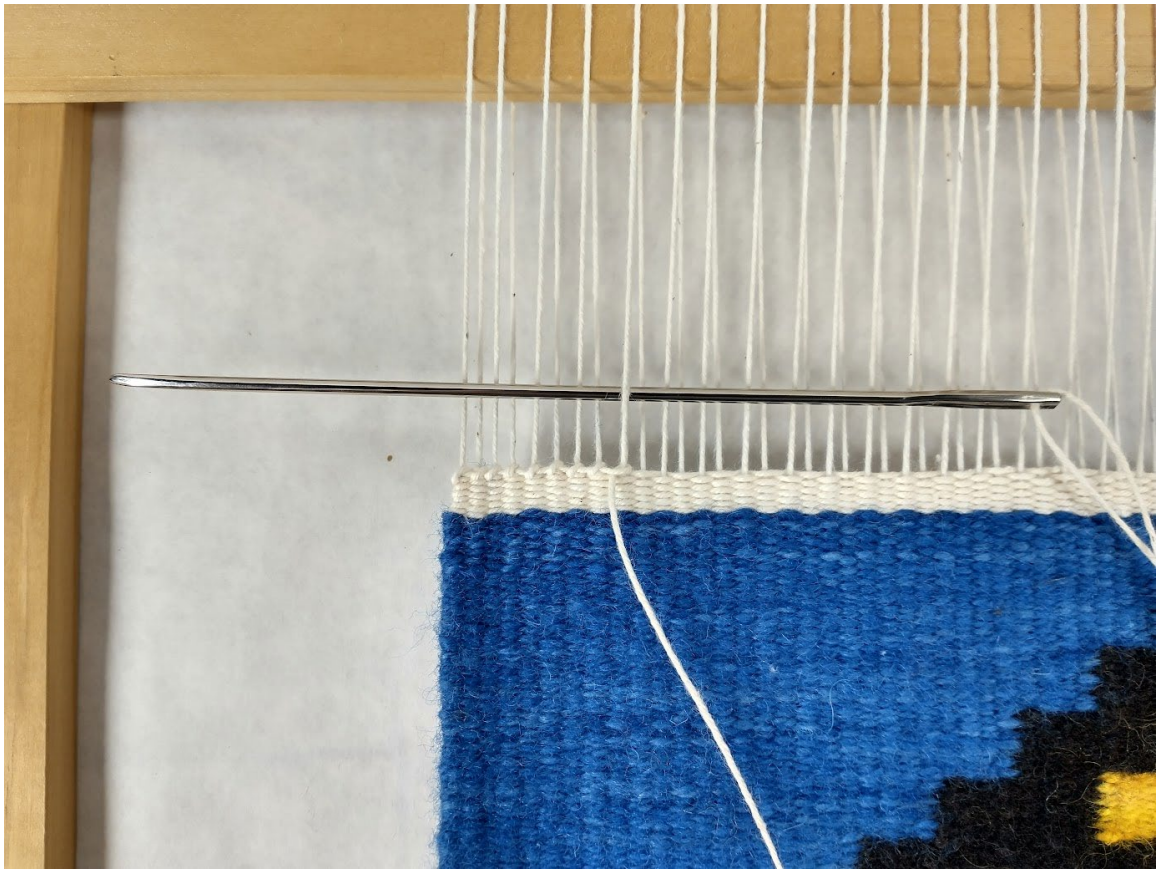
With the completion of the central golden cross, we're more than halfway! Now you can cue in not only with the design graph but also what you've woven so far when creating the mirror image. Sometimes, it can be easy to miss when elements return, such as the beginning of the right and left black pieces, or later the return of the blue.

Pro Tip: if it ever feels like your eyes are going buggy reading which row you are on the design, use a piece of scratch paper laid on top so that you are just looking at the row you are reading. This can help prevent accidentally reading from more than one row when making a pattern change.



The green has finished, the blue has returned, and the design is really coming to life!

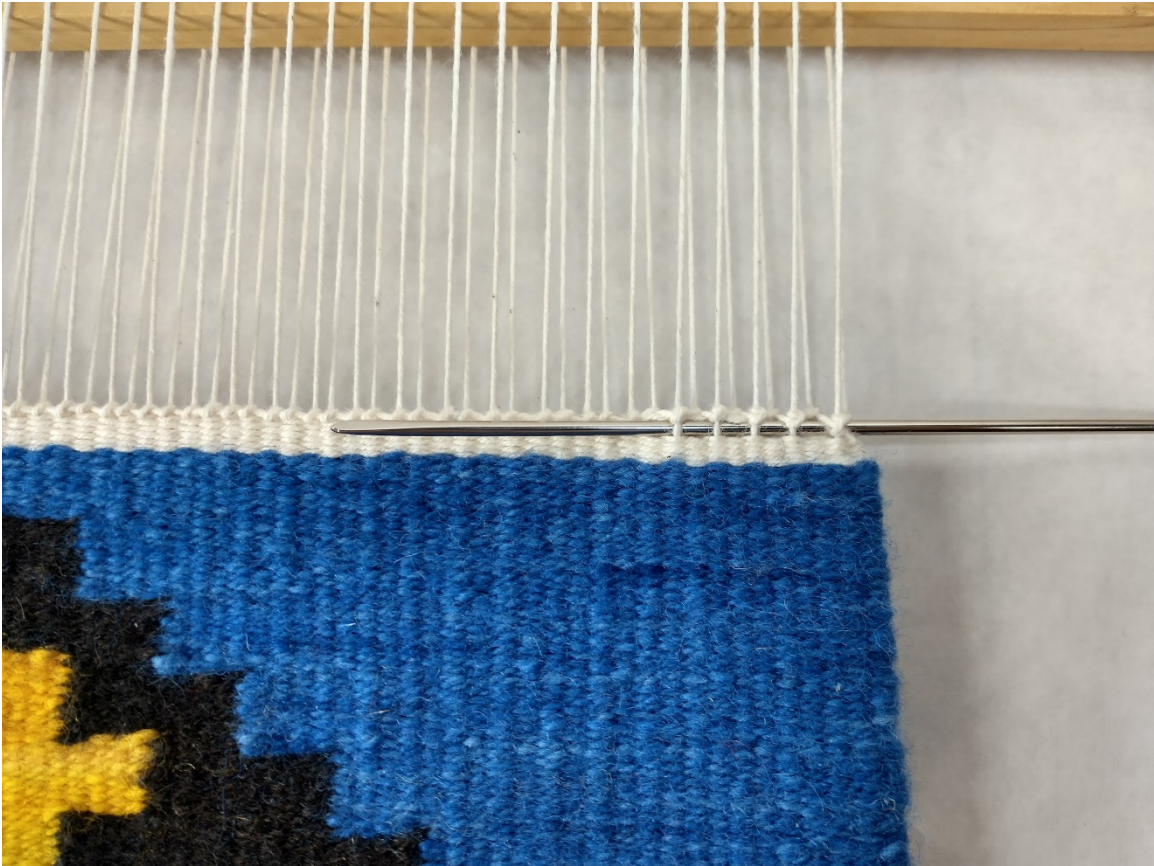
While there aren't any vertical lines of great length in this design, it's always good practice to pay attention to how your interlocks are stacking to help keep them tidy and straight. Avoid pulling too tightly on them in pull shed, which can distort warp spacing.



Congratulations, your beautiful tapestry is woven! Now it's time to create the top selvedge header.

First, weave the warp as weft, creating a selvedge with the same number of rows as you did at the bottom. Then, starting on the left-hand side, work the stacked half hitch knots to complete the selvedge.





After completing your knots, weave in the tail just below the knots, as shown, and trim. Pack down the selvedge firmly with your comb. You are now ready to trim your tapestry free from the loom.

If the tapestry does not want to lay flat when removed from the loom, this is a good time to steam treat the piece as necessary. Because everything has been interlocked, there are no slits to stitch on this piece.





Just as a safety measure because this piece will see so much use and love, I tied the warp ends off in pairs with overhand knots, then trimmed the warp. The last thing I want to do is snag mine on something silly and pull a warp out of place. This step, however, is optional.

Working on the back side of the piece, fold the selvedge and just a little bit of the blue over. Fabric clips or clothes pins can be helpful. Use a needle and thread to hem stitch the edge over to help hold it in place. I'm using doubled black sewing thread. Take care to pull stitches gently but not so tightly that they distort the front surface of the textile.



Next, lay out your tapestry on the side of your shoulder bag. This should be the side that does NOT have the extra little pocket on the inside (sewing around the pocket will complicate the process and be annoying).

Once you are satisfied with the placement of your piece on the bag, cut 4 pieces of warp. Using a tapestry needle, thread on one of the lengths of warp, and stitch through both the tapestry and the one layer of the bag at each corner of the piece to secure it.





The canvas tote and tapestry are too thick to use sewing pins effectively, and safety pins can distort the textile shape and not allow it to lay flat. Stitching through and knotting the corners is a helpful way to tack the piece in place before stitching, and we'll remove these tacks once stitching is complete.

**Pro Tip:** tie on the front side of the piece, so you can keep track of the tie ends as you stitch around the edges. If the tie ends are on the inside, you can accidentally entangle them into your stitches, and it can be hard to dissect this dilemma when removing the tacking.



When stitching the tapestry to the tote, black thread will be the most invisible. I'm using upholstery thread, as it's much stronger than regular sewing thread. I'm also burying the knot into the tapestry (rather than inside the bag), so that as I haul all the goodies I've stored inside in and out, I'm not rubbing up against the knot.

Come up from below through the tapestry, very near the edge, then go straight down into the canvas flush with the edge of the tapestry (as shown). This will make tiny, nearly invisible stitches on the outside, but on the inside it will look like straight sewing stitches. Making your stitches small and even will yield the most pleasing and sturdy results. I kept one hand inside the bag and one on the outside, passing the needle back and forth.

This process is tedious, so just take your time. When you have made it all the way around, carefully trim off your corner tacks.





Congratulations, you've finished your rutev shoulder bag! Hmm...what might you place inside this magical tapestry bag? So many options! I think that mine will be perfect for storing yarn, books, and works in progress.

I hope you have enjoyed making this project, and I hope that you will also enjoy using it or gifting it to a loved one. Tapestry is a very durable textile, and this shoulder bag should give you years and years of service.  
Happy weaving!