

# Shaker Shops West

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## SHAKER STYLE SEAT WEAVING

The Shaker originated method of seat weaving is the simplest and quickest of the basic methods of chair seat preparation. It is also stronger, longer lasting and in the opinion of most experts and designers, more attractive (certainly more colorful) than rush, cane or wooden seats. The WARP is one length of tape wrapped around the seat rails from front to back, and the WEFT is one length of tape woven from side to side, over and under the WARP in a checkerboard pattern. The space between the upper and lower layers is stuffed with a firm, soft material, not for comfort (empty space would provide the same comfort) but to maintain contact between the two layers so that the lower layer helps support the weight that would otherwise be carried only by the upper layer of tape. This prevents sagging and adds to its durability.

### INSTRUCTIONS

The following instructions apply to Shaker Chairs, Shaker Foot Stools and to Shaker Taped Back Chairs, as well as to reupholstering any rung-supported chair in authentic Shaker manner.

**WARP** At left or right side of the rear seat rail (either side, it does not matter) on the underside of the rail, tack one end of the tape you have chosen for the Warp. See Fig. 1. Bring the tape up over the top and forward around the front seat rail and continue to wrap the tape continuously until the back rail is covered. See Fig. 1A. The tension should be firm, but there is no need to pull the tape tremendously tight. Do not twist tape.

Note: Shaker Shops West tapes are provided in convenient lengths. Both the Shakers and present day seat weavers have found it practical to apply the tape in shorter, more manageable lengths. For splicing lengths of tape together, ends can be easily joined without loss of strength by sewing with a few stitches of thread, by stapling and/or using the glue supplied with our kits. For neatness, always join (splice) on the underside of the woven seat. (If you use staples, remove exposed ones after completing the seat.)

Bring the last row of the Warp forward over the front seat rail and back again underneath, tacking it to the back seat rail. See Fig. 1A. Leave an extra few inches so you can fold back over the tacks later on to hide them from view.

Chairs are wider in front than in back, so there will be small triangular areas remaining without Warp on left and right. These remaining Warp areas will be added after the foam pad has been inserted. (There will be no additional warp required if you are taping a foot stool.)

At this time, slide the foam pad (supplied with your kit) into the space between the upper and lower layers of the tape.

You are now ready to fill in the triangular open spaces at each side of your chair. Measure short lengths of tape to fill out these areas. Two strips of tape on each side will generally be sufficient to fill the triangle. Facing the chair, work outward from the existing warped area. Lay the end of the longest strip on the side seat rail. Fasten it with a single tack slightly to the inside of the rail at a point near the back post. See Fig. 1B. Pull the tape around the front seat rail and back under the seat, and tack it to the back or side rail underneath. Do the same with the shorter length of tape, tacking it further towards the front of the side rail and again bringing it under the seat to fasten it to the side rail underneath.

**WEFT** At the back end of one of the side seat rails, tack the end of the tape you have chosen for the Weft. Bring the tape up and over the rail and with the end of the tape proceed to weave, i.e., go under the first row of Warp, over the second row, and continue to alternate until the other side rail is reached. Go round the side rail and weave the underside in the same way. Do not be tempted to skip weaving the underside as the finished seat will lose a great deal of strength if you do.

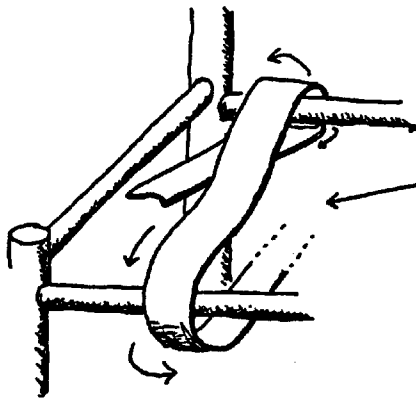
Come up around the side rail to the top side. Weave the second row in opposite manner to the first row, i.e., over the first row of Warp, under the second, over the third, and so on. This creates the famous "checkerboard" effect when two different colors are used.

Introduce the extra Warp lengths as they fall naturally into place in the patterns. Continue this pattern of weaving until the Weft is completed at the front of the seat. As the last rows may be difficult to weave, use a rounded non-sharp end of a dinner knife or any convenient wide flat piece of metal or wood to "poke" the end of the tape through the narrowing spaces. If the last row has less than enough space for a width of tape, the previous rows can be pushed back and compressed enough to provide the necessary space. Upon completion, tack the end of the Weft out of sight on the underside of the front of the side seat rail. See Fig. 2. Your Shaker woven chair seat is now complete.

We suggest that you "Scotchguard" the seat to protect it from soiling.

Final Note: The combined tension of the continuous Warp and Weft adds tremendous strength to Shaker chairs, stools and rockers. This, together with the sag resistance of the weaving, makes the Shaker woven seat an integral part of the lightness, the strength and the efficiency that are characteristic of Shaker design.

FIGURE 1 WARP



Start by tacking end of tape to underside of rear seat rail. Diagram is made for clarity and does not show tape as close as possible (actually touching the back post.)

