

## What's New In the Library / Reviews

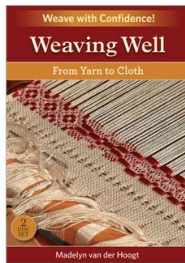
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### Reviewed DVDs

- Weaving Well From Yarn to Cloth
- Combing Fiber: How to Create Splendid Tops for all Your Spinning Needs
- Three Bags Full: How to Select, Prepare, and Spin a Great Fleece

**Weaving Well: From Yarn to Cloth** / DVD with Madelyn van der Hoogt, Interweave Press

Reviewed by Joyce Newman



Early last spring, my youngest sister bought 2 looms, books, and some odds and ends of yarn from a coworker as both women approached retirement and moves to opposite coasts. Following directions in Deborah Chandler's *Learning to Weave*, Peggy dressed a loom, and experimented. We talked about me visiting for a weekend of lessons, but as she prepared for a fall move to their place in Nova Scotia, it didn't happen. I've taken 3 or 4 workshops with Madelyn van der Hoogt over the years, so when I went to NS for a short visit in June, I took this video and its companion *Warping Your Loom* as hostess gifts.

Reviewing this video was my first opportunity to watch it. I watched the first disc in one sitting, but I recommend watching one chapter at a time, much as you would receive the individual lessons spread over the length of a weaving course. Madelyn is a great teacher, always presents her lessons clearly, with reasons why she does it in a particular way. Consider her tips and try some. Perhaps you'll like her methods, perhaps you won't.

Disc 1 topics:

Choosing Yarns and Calculating Sett  
Estimating Yardage  
Choosing and Sleying the Reed  
Determining Yardage of Your Yarn  
Reading a Draft  
Correcting Threading Errors

Disc 2 Topics:

Beginning the Weaving and Hemstitching  
Weaving Mechanics and Pattern Corrections  
Completing the Weaving  
Splicing a Weft  
Weaving Dos & Don'ts

Some great supporting print material (the Handwoven Master Yarn Chart, Reed Chart, Project Work Sheet, and more) can be printed from either disc. Most (or all) of it is also available as free downloads from Interweave's *Weaving Today* website.

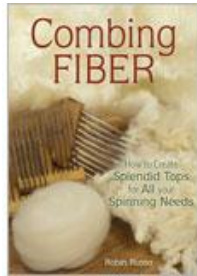
My only complaint with the video is that in some closeups, hands obstruct your view of the process. Reshooting a few things from a different camera angle (from a ladder?) would have helped. This video could be a good addition to a new weaver's library. It covers so many of those little things that

can take years to learn. And an experienced weaver can learn from it too - I learned a new method of hemstitching that I like the looks of! Check it out of the library and enjoy.

**Combing Fiber: How to Create Splendid Tops for all Your Spinning Needs** / DVD with Robin Russo, Interweave Press

Reviewed by Jennifer Earle

1 hour 36 min



The narrator begins by stressing the difference between worsted and woolen preparation of fibre and the cloth that is produced from each. The worsted mills in England send their “waste” to woolen mills and retain the longest fibres for their preferred uses. Combing is used to separate long from short and also in cleaning the trash from the fibre.

Beginning spinners can make use of animal grooming combs/brushes but will want to advance to specialty tools at some time. This DVD shows the variety and appropriate use of hand combs that exist: Viking combs, English production combs and peasant/paddle combs. Each kind of tool brings something different to the process. In industry a fibre length of about 3” is considered the minimum for a true worsted.

Robin wisely discusses safety issues and proper techniques as wool combs are very sharp and lethal. She always keeps disinfectant wipes, band aids at hand and makes sure that her tetanus shot is up to date. You always need to concentrate on what you are doing, in order to prepare high quality top and also to protect yourself and others.

In order to cut down on static in wools, she gives a recipe for spinning milk, a mixture of oil, water, lecithin, and isopropyl alcohol. Non-wool fibres (angora, alpaca) might be misted with a blend of fabric softener and water.

The nature of the fibre dictates the best tools to use. She demonstrates long wools, shorter wools, blends of wool and mohair, alpaca, qiviut, rabbit. Combs may also be used for colour blending (paddle combs) and to separate out guard hairs in a double coated fleece. She used different diz as well and also showed how to spin directly from the comb.

The DVD is divided into chapters for different topics. It has good camera angles, so viewing the action of the tools and the handling of them is easy to follow. In one spot when the pace seems a bit slow, Robin says the same as she takes the time to show how to pull fibre off the combs through a diz to make top. It is important to stop when noils start appearing and the process cannot be rushed. I learned a new way of loading and using my English style combs made by Al Ramer. I will still have to learn to live with the often 50% waste produced by this method of fibre preparation. We are told that some may be carded into a batt for another project, or used for felting purposes. All and all a very informative DVD for spinners of all skill levels.

**Three Bags Full: How to Select, Prepare, and Spin a Great Fleece** / DVD with Judith MacKenzie,  
Interweave Press

Reviewed by Lauren Arkell

2 DVD set: 240 min



If you want to buy a fleece to spin but don't know how to get started, start by watching *Three Bags Full: How to Select, Prepare, and Spin a Great Fleece* with Judith MacKenzie, author of *The Intentional Spinner* (Interweave). The two-disc DVD set covers everything you really need to know—and a lot more besides. With a running time of almost three hours it is just like having a private tutorial in your own home.

Starting at the fleece tent at the Estes Wool Market in Colorado, a market geared specifically to fleece for handspinning, Judith takes us through the different fleece classes: primitive/heritage, luster long wool, fine wool, and medium wool. She explains how fleeces are examined, classed, and sorted, and shows us how to determine lock strength and a fleece's kindliness of handle. Judith takes a novice spinner through the purchase of her first fleece, offering plenty of tips and fascinating fleece facts.

With purchases in hand, we join Judith in her studio where she takes us step-by-step through sorting, washing, and storing the fleece. The prospect of scouring a greasy fleece can be daunting but she demonstrates a number of washing options that are easy to do at home. It's exciting to watch as a promising fleece transforms into spectacular fibre for spinning with appropriate carding or combing preparation.

Throughout the DVD Judith shares stories of her triumphs and mishaps with wool over a lifetime of experience. Her knowledge, modest sincerity, and passion for the handcraft, combine to create an excellent learning resource for any spinner interested in working with fleece straight from the sheep. Recommended reading to supplement the DVD: *In Sheep's Clothing: A Handspinner's Guide to Wool* by Nola Fournier and Jane Fournier.