Ribbon weaving TECHNIQUES

Ribbon weaving is a quick and easy way to create textured fabric panels that can be used for all sorts of fabric creations, from a cushion cover to a pretty bag. For your first attempt, choose satin ribbons in a plain weave. Once you’ve learned the basics you can experiment with sheer or silk ribbons and more interesting weave patterns, or you might think about embellishing the finished design with beads, sequins, or embroidery.

Weaving a ribbon panel

1. Cut strips of ribbon the length required, adding 5cm (2in) to each length to allow for seam allowances and slight loss of length caused by the weaving process. Cut enough ribbon strips to cover your panel when laid vertically side by side.

2. Cut a piece of medium-weight iron-on interfacing slightly larger than the finished ribbon panel. Lay the interfacing on an ironing board or foam board, adhesive-side up, then lay the ribbons side by side vertically on top and pin them along the top edge. There should be no gaps between the ribbons.

3. Weave the first ribbon across at least 1.5cm (5⁄8in) down from the top edges, lifting every other vertical ribbon to create a simple over-and-under weave. Pin the ribbon at both ends to hold it straight.

4. Weave a second ribbon across, lifting alternate vertical ribbons to those lifted for the first row. Pin the ends of the second ribbon. Continue weaving across the panel, ensuring the weave pattern is correct.

5. Occasionally pull gently on the vertical ribbons and push the centre of the horizontal ribbons up to keep them straight. Once the panel is complete, check the size and make sure the ribbons are square.

Sheer ribbons, which are not suitable for attaching with fusible interfacing, can be held in place by stitching at each intersection instead. Use embroidery thread. You can also add seed beads and even sequins to hold the ribbons together and embellish the panel.

To create a diagonal weave, start on the first row by lifting the first two ribbons, then weave over and under two ribbons at a time. On the next and subsequent rows, begin the two over, two under, weaving one vertical ribbon to the left each time you start a new row.

Attaching the fusible interfacing

1. With most of the pins still in position, press the ribbons with a steam iron set to the appropriate temperature. For extra protection, cover the ribbons with backing parchment. Iron carefully, especially around the edges, so that the ribbons begin to stick to the interfacing.

2. Remove all the pins. Turn the panel over so that the ribbons are face-down. Press again over the back of the interfacing, making sure you hold the iron still for a second or two to allow the adhesive to melt a little. Finish by machine stitching around the edges of the ribbons to secure them in place.

You can create a variety of different weaves with ribbons. When using a mix of ribbon widths, a plain weave is best, but by weaving through two vertical ribbons at a time instead of one, for example, you’ll create a basket weave. Weave one or two ribbons across each time.

Creating alternative weaves and finishes

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