



STASH-BUSTING EXCHANGE TOWELS

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WHEN I READ ABOUT the towel exchange that was part of the Handweavers Guild of America's (HGA) Convergence 2018, I knew I wanted to participate. With my current schedule of working in Fort Collins, Colorado, and traveling between there and my home and family in Southern California, I have found it hard to attend guild meetings, let alone participate in their challenges and exchanges, so Convergence seemed the perfect opportunity to be part of an exchange. I also decided to make it a stash-buster project to use up the little dribs and drabs of 8/2 cotton cluttering my shelves, thereby making way for some new colors.

About 10 years ago, my friend Eva McCracken gave me a handwoven towel based on Karen Tenney's Tropical Twill Stripes towels in *Winning Towels* (see Resources). It's a beautiful thirsty and sturdy towel that I have loved having in my handwoven towel collection. The design, though simple, is clever—plain-weave stripes sett at 20 epi with twill stripes sett at 30 epi. That tight sett makes the twill stripes warp faced and slightly raised on the front of the towel.

Using Karen's draft, sett, and instructions as a guide, I redesigned her towels to fit the minimum dimension requirements of the exchange using the colors I had available. When designing on the computer, I didn't fuss about where I wanted specific colors to go in the twill stripes; instead, I warped 2-inch sections at a time,

STRUCTURE

Plain weave and twill.

EQUIPMENT

8-shaft loom, 22" weaving width; 10-dent reed; 1 shuttle; 2 bobbins.

YARNS

Warp: 8/2 unmercerized cotton (3,360 yd/lb; Yarn Barn of Kansas, B Colors), #756 Blue, 876 yd; #8267 Grass Green, 45 yd; #4269 Kiwi, 81 yd. 8/2 unmercerized cotton (3,360 yd/lb; Yarn Barn of Kansas, A Colors), #57 Turk, 192 yd; #68 Duck, 114 yd; #4 Plum Green, 51 yd; #3 Mint Green, 66 yd; #10 Ocean Green, 45 yd. 8/2 organic unmercerized cotton (3,360 yd/lb; Venne), #5043 Apple Green, 54 yd.

Weft: 8/2 unmercerized cotton (Yarn Barn of Kansas), #756 Blue, 792 yd. Sewing thread in matching color, 30 yd.

GENERIC YARDAGES

Warp: 8/2 unmercerized cotton (3,360 yd/lb), single-color plain-weave stripes, 876 yd; multicolor twill stripes, 648 yd.

Weft: 8/2 unmercerized cotton, 792 yd. Sewing thread in matching color, 30 yd.

OTHER SUPPLIES

Fray Check.

WARP LENGTH

508 ends 3 yd long (allows 7" for take-up, 33" for loom waste). Add 1¼ yd for each additional towel you wish to weave.

SETTS

Warp: 20 epi for plain-weave stripes (2/dent in a 10-dent reed), 30 epi for multicolor stripes (3/dent in a 10-dent reed).

Weft: 18 ppi.

DIMENSIONS

Width in the reed: 21⁹/₁₀". **Woven length:** (measured under tension on the loom) 68". **Finished size:** (after washing and hemming) 2 towels, 19½" x 26½" each.



designing the twill stripes as I went and skipping across the warp width so that I could balance the colors.

The warp color order in Figure 1 shows the exact colors used in both the plain-weave and twill stripes. I encourage you to scrap that and design your own stash-busting towels using the more generic warp color order in Figure 2 and the generic yardages listed in the project specifications. You can use my warping approach if you warp from the back, or modify it a bit for warping from the front by organizing warp chains before going through the reed. I wove five towels for the exchange, changing my weft when my cone of light blue cotton ran out and even switching to 22/2 cottolin when my second-choice cotton ran low. This pattern is written for two towels using one weft color.

Enjoy designing and weaving your own towels . . . and the added space in your stash.

RESOURCES

- ♦ Tenney, Karen. "Tropical Twill Stripes." *Winning Towels*, edited by Madelyn van der Hoogt, 27–28. Fort Collins, Colorado: Interweave.

1 Wind 508 warp ends 3 yd long following the warp color order in Figure 1, or design towels with colors of your own choosing using the generic warp color order in Figure 2. Use your preferred method to warp the loom, and thread following the draft in Figure 3. Sley a 10-dent reed with the plain-weave Blue threads 2 per dent, and sley the twill multicolor stripes 3 per dent, centering for a weaving width of 21 $\frac{8}{10}$ ". Note that the plain-weave Blue threads are threaded on shafts 1–4 and the multicolor stripes are threaded on shafts 5–8.

2 Wind a bobbin of Blue for the towel body and another bobbin with sewing thread for the hems. Depending on the shuttle you use, you may be able to pop the sewing thread spool directly into your shuttle. Spread the warp with scrap yarn.

3 Weave $\frac{1}{2}$ " with the sewing thread, then switch to the Blue weft. Weave for 33" following the treadling repeat in Figure 2. Note: For ease of treadling, the towels are woven upside down. Fasten off your weft and weave $\frac{1}{2}$ " with sewing thread. Weave 2 picks of scrap yarn and start the second towel. When you have finished both towels, weave a few picks of scrap yarn to hold the weft in place and remove the fabric from the loom.

4 Run a line of Fray Check along each side of the scrap yarn to secure the raw edges for sewing. When the Fray Check is dry, cut the towels apart.



