

**LEVEL: HIGH SCHOOL**

**Source:** Contreras, Gloria, Latin American Cultural Studies: *Information and Materials For Teaching Latin America*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Revised Edition, Institute of Latin American Studies, The University of Texas at Austin.

**WEAVING**

One of the most important and oldest handicrafts of Mexico is weaving. It was probably begun thousands of years ago, together with ariculture.

At that time, all woven fabrics were made of the fibers from the cotton plant, cactus, and inaguey, for wool was unknown before the conquest. *Malacate* was the name given the clay whorl that the spinning was done on. The weaving was done on a horizontal loom with one end tied to a post and the other on a belt encircling the waist of the weaver.

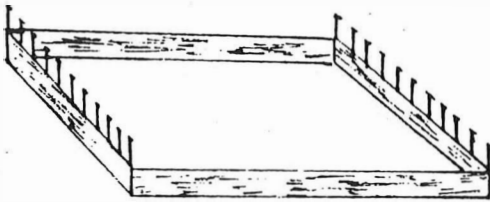
Even on this very simple loom, the weavers were able to make intricate designs. They learned how to make dyes by using insects, plants, and shells, and along with the designs they incorporated the use of feathers to create dazzling patterns.

It wasn't until after the nineteenth century, when the first textile mills were established, that the natives began using machine-made cotton. However, they still weave almost everything they use in wool so that today weaving is one of the most widespread handicrafts.

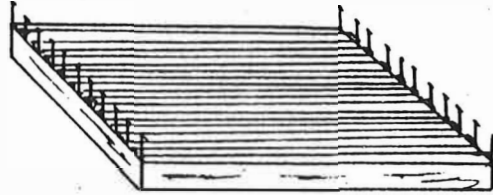
To make a simple loom you need:

- Cigar box
- Yarn
- Small nails
- Needle

1. Place nails on two ends of cigar box (evenly spaced).



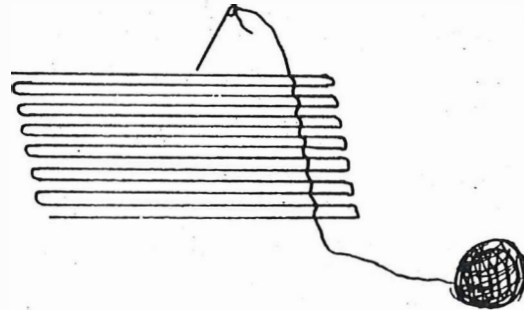
2. Take yarn and wind across the box and from nail to nail.



3. Make a needle out of wire and thread it.



4. Push needle over and under the yarn going one way and over and under opposite threads coming back to the other way.



5. Push woven area together occasionally to keep the yarn close together.