

L-M Braiding Research & Information Center / Masako Kinoshita

5 Winthrop Place, Ithaca, NY 14850 U. S. A.

Phone & Fax: 607-257-0886 e-mail: mkinoshi@twcny.rr.com

L-M BRIC NEWS**ILLUSTRATED INSTRUCTION SERIES****<>FOR FINGER-HELD LOOP-MANIPULATION BRAIDING****INTRODUCTION I**

The SERIES deal with procedures appearing in the issues of *L-M BRIC NEWS*.

As for a fuller account of the technique, please refer to the books mentioned in the notes or bibliography. (Note 1)

Materials used for braiding:

Silk has been favored as braiding material in the majority of people world over. You may, however, use any material that can withstand abrasion during the process. You learn effects of variety of materials by trying out, and find one that gives you the desired result. The effect on the appearance of a finished work does not only come from attributes of the kinds materials such as silk, cotton, wool, etc., but also from the type of the yarn used. The direction and amount of twists on the yarn, the number of ply, as well as the number of ends in each strand all affect the outcome of a braid. As a braid technician, it is important that your braid has a uniform "weave" pattern. On the other hand, yarns, such as chenille or rag strips, may give an interesting surface effects by entirely obscuring "weave" pattern.

For the purpose of practice, use wool rug yarn, or cotton embroidery yarn, such as #3 pearl or 6-strand floss doubled. Or any smooth yarn, singly or multiplied to the size of the yarn quoted above will do. Do not use yarns that might fray or are heavily textured.

Preparation of the loops:

First, you must find out how many ends of the yarn are needed to produce the braid to the size that you want.

To find it out, wind the yarn around the hand, say, 10 times. Slip the small skein out of the hand. Hold the skein by pinching the two ends, and twist it until the twisted bunch gets to the firmness of the braid you want to make. If it is too thin, add or if it is too fat reduce the number of the ends of the yarn. When you arrive at the size you want, count the number of the turn of the skein. Divide the number by that of the loops. If it is not divisible by the number of loops required, make it closest divisible number.

Prepare the loops in one of the ways shown. Make them about twice the length of the finished braid.

Affix the knotted end to a support. Divide the skein in five equal portions as much as possible for 5-loop procedures, or 7 for those of 7-loop. Mount the loops on the fingers as directed. You may mix yarns of different colors.

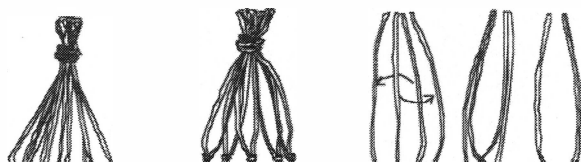
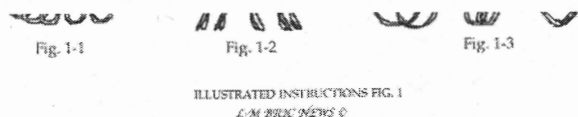


Fig. 1-1 shows a bundle of loops each made up of a continuous strand of yarn doubled up to form a loop.

Fig. 1-2 shows one way of preparing two-color loops, that is, a half of each loop is of one color and the other half of another by pairing up the



strands one in A color and another in B, and tying them into a loop by the free ends.

Fig. 1-3 shows the way Native South Americans make two-color loops by linking two loops into one loop. Made in this way, the loops won't untie while you are braiding. (Note 2)

Fig. 2. Finger-held L-M and Hand-held L-M

The majority of l-m techniques we have learned from reports of those used among people today and those reconstructed from historical records is FINGER-HELD L-M (F-H L-M), in which loops are mounted on the fingers

The HAND-HELD L-M (H-H L-M) is found only those practiced today among nomads in the Sultanate of Oman and those recorded in the nineteenth-century Japanese treatises. (Note 3)

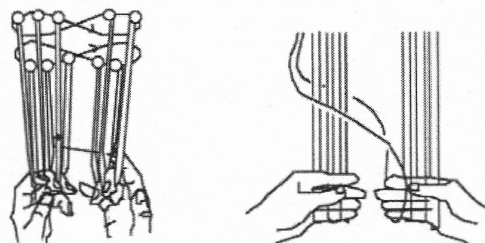


Fig. 2

ILLUSTRATED INSTRUCTIONS FIG. 2
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Figure 3 shows the three distinctive methods in the F-H L-M.

It also points to the operator (OP) and running loop (RN).

Method #1: Palms facing each other (or up) and operating with the index finger (outer finger)." Or "A-fell method. (Note 4)

Method #2: Palms-up (or facing each other) and operating with the inner finger (the ring or small finger)." (Note 5) Or "V-fell method.

Method #3: Palms-down and operating with the index finger. Or P-D Method.

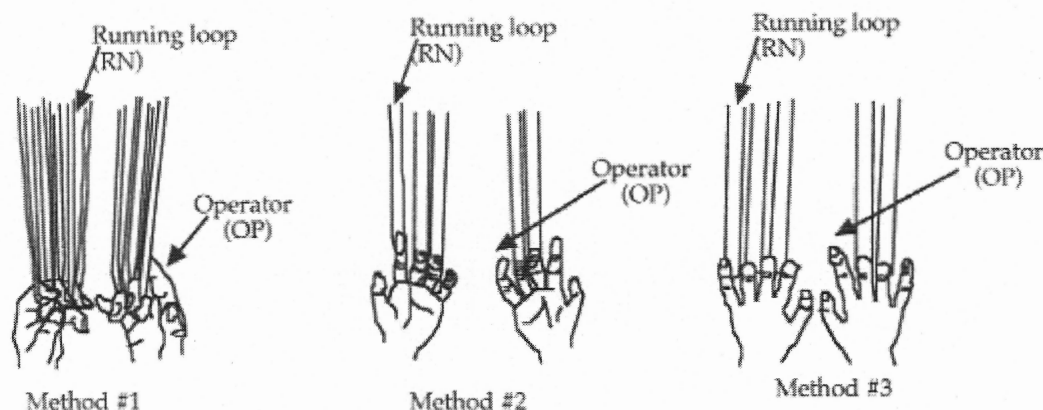


Fig. 3

ILLUSTRATED INSTRUCTIONS FIG. 3
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While the palm positions are specified they are not kept rigid during the course of braiding. In all three methods the arms and hands move freely and the palms face each other, up, or down while the work progresses.

Methods #2 and #3 are reverse operations of Method #1.

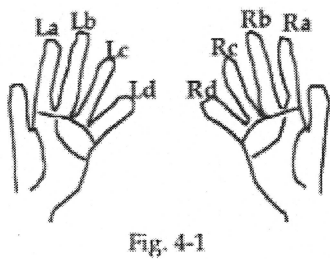
Method #1 among the reported procedures is used in North Africa, Central and South America, and Europe. Method #1 is also the kind used between the twelfth and seventeenth centuries in many countries in Europe. (Note 6)

Method #2 has so far been found in East, South and Southeast Asia with one exception of eastern Slavic region of Russia. (Note 7)

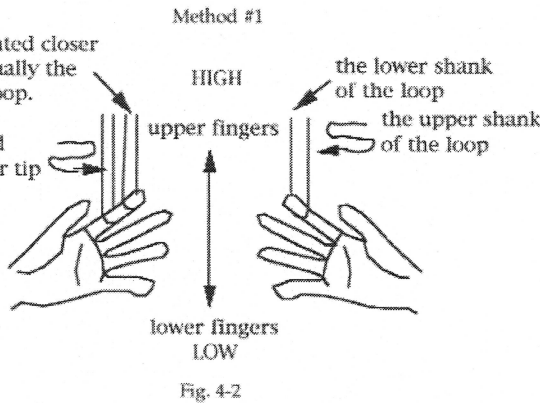
Method #3 seems to be used in the Faroe Islands in north Atlantic and Lapland.

The Illustrated Instruction Series deal only with procedures directly related with topics in each issue. Since Method #3 rarely appear in our topics, those who are interested in the Method #3 procedures may find them in Ann Dye's "Purse Strngs Unravelled."

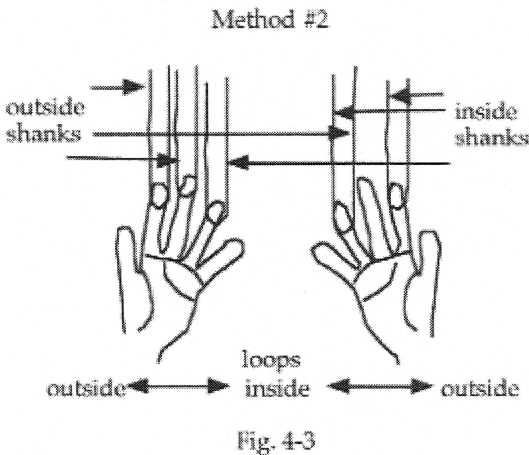
Terms used in illustrated instructions



L1-2: the loop mounted closer to the finger tip; usually the newly transferred loop.
L1-1: loops mounted away from the finger tip



ILLUSTRATED INSTRUCTIONS FIG. 4-2
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ILLUSTRATED INSTRUCTIONS FIG. 4-3
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Figure 4-1 shows that each finger has a designated number. We call the loops by the finger number it is mounted on.

Figures 4-2 and 4-3 show how we call relative positions of the loops mounted on the fingers when the hands are held in position. You also see what the "shank" of a loop is.

Figure 4-4 shows Initial loop allotment of loops

INITIAL ALLOCATION OF THE LOOPS

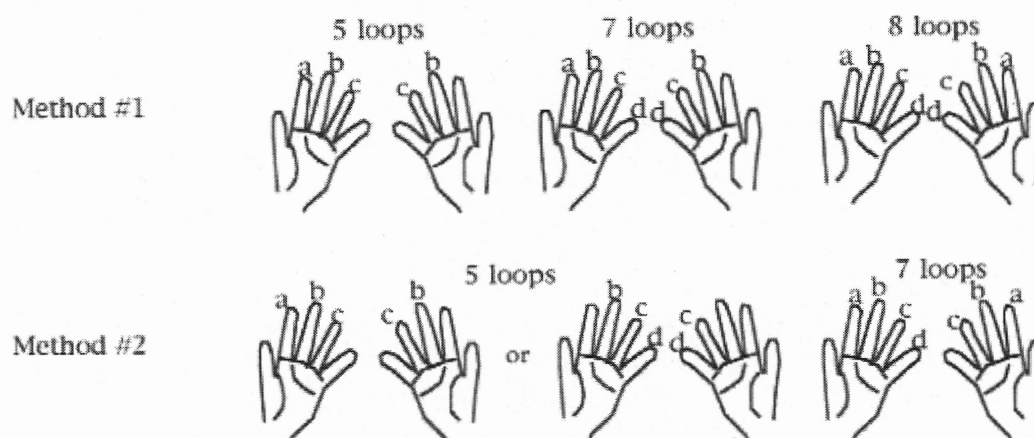


Fig. 6

Loops are mounted on the fingers as shown for 5-, 7- and 8-loop works.

For the majority of known F-H L-M techniques, the number of loops used is five.

There are cases for which 7 or 8, and in rare cases nine loops are used.

For the majority of the instructions in this series, we use 5 loops.

You start working using the right OP and transfer the left RN.

OP makes a shed with each of all loops mounted on the fingers between OP and RN

In this series, the OP for method #2 is the small finger (4).

Figure 5-1 shows how the OP makes a shed by picking up each loop between itself and RN by one of the two shanks of a loop or skipping over a loop. Arrows point to the direction of the movement of OP.

Picking shanks to open a shed

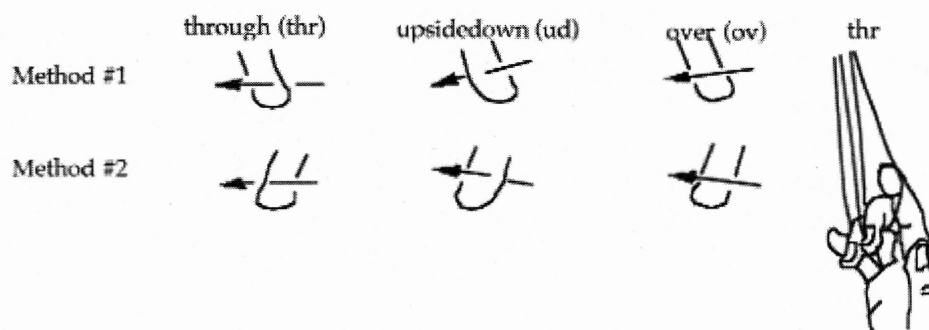
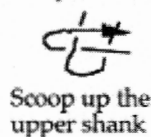


Fig. 5-2 OP scoops RN up (open transfer = op), or hooks it up (cross transfer = cr), and pulls it out the RN following the arrow pointing to the right through the shed. (Note 8)

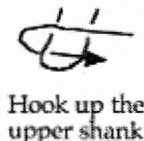
Picking up RN for a transfer

METHOD #1 AND #2

open (op) transfer



cross (cr) transfer



You transfer loops one at a time, from the left hand to the right, and then in the opposite direction.

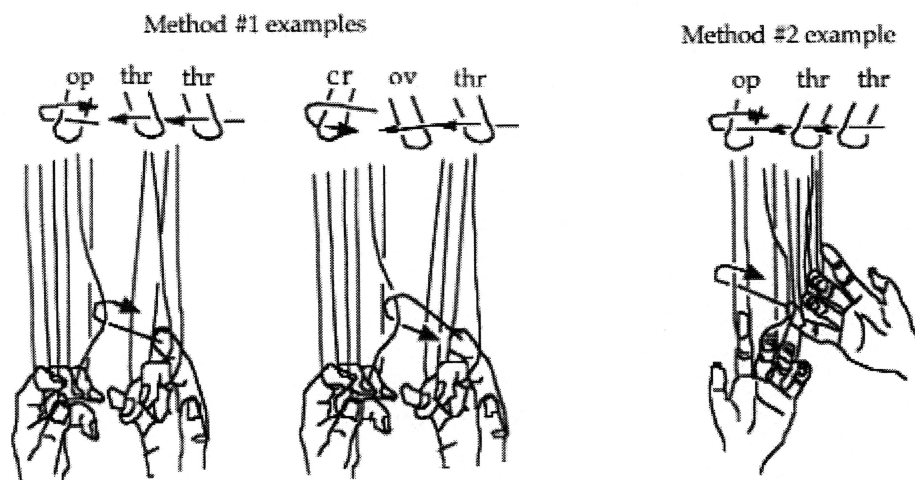


Fig. 5-2

<>For each shed you make, say, thr-thr, you have three possible combinations of transferring RN,

- 1) "open" both ways
- 2) "cross" both ways
- 3) "open" on one way and "cross" on the return

Braids with an Orthodox Pattern

Make a shed by taking the same pick for every loop, then you produce a BRAID WITH AN ORTHODOX PATTERN. The majority of braids you encounter is this type.

Braids with an Unorthodox Pattern

If you make a shed by taking mixed picks (thr, ud or ov), you produce a BRAID WITH AN UNORTHODOX PATTERN.

Braids with an unorthodox pattern have structures unique to the F-H L-M method because taking a mixed shed is easy for the F-H L-M method but not for the H-H L-M or any other braiding techniques. This is why we regard BRAID WITH AN UNORTHODOX PATTERN the earmark of the F-H L-M.

For Method #1, take either one of the three shedding types for each loop. It may be 1, 2 or 3 for all loops or any mixture of the three.

1. through = thr
2. upside down = updn
3. over = ov

For Method #2, take only one type of shed for all loops

1. through = thr
2. over = ov

While it is entirely possible to make a mixed shed with Method #2, there is no report of this kind, except one from Russia.

FIVE STEPS OF F-H L-M procedure

To construct a braid, you repeat a procedure many times.

STEP 1:

Using the right OP, make a shed ("thr", "updn," or "ov,") with the loops mounted on the fingers between OP and RN. (RN is on the left hand).

Scoop up (opn) or hook up (cr) the upper shank of RN and pull it out through the shed. The RN is now transferred to OP.

If RN is transferred "opn", the upper or outer shank of RN remains the same after the transfer.

If RN is transferred "cr," the upper (or outer) shank of RN becomes the lower (or inner) shank after the transfer.

STEP 2:

Shift the loops on the left hand one by one until the finger that is to be the next OP (the left OP) is vacated.

To shift a loop, first, you insert the finger, now empty after RN was transferred, into the loop on the next neighbor. Now two fingers are in the loop. You slip out that neighbor finger and insert it into the loop mounted on its next neighbor. You slip this second neighbor out of the loop, then it is the next OP for 5-loop works.

STEP 3:

Using the left OP, make shed and transfer RN as in STEP 1.

STEP 4:

Shift the loops to vacate the finger for the next OP as in STEP 2.

STEP 5:

Tighten the interlaced elements by drawing the hands apart or pushing the fell by a foot. Or have a second person beat the fell with a beating sword.

For individual instructions, only STEPs 1 is given unless STEP 3 is not the mirror image of STEP 1. Other manipulations, STEPS 2, 4 and 5, are generally omitted.

TRACK-PLAN

The track-plans have been added to procedure diagrams to help visualize the relationship between hand movements and resulting structures. The track-plan is a powerful visual tool introduced by Speiser for representing braid structures. (Note1) They are intended to take place of written explanations on how these loop transfers lead to construction of a braid. For those who are not familiar with them, take them as a schematic representation of how two or several braids are combined and formed into one braid with a more complex structure. The component braids may be 2-, 4- and/or 6-ridge flat braids depicted as two-, four- and/or six-eye tracks. A circle or an oval (one-eye track) indicates a helical structure,