

How to Weave a Chair Seat

Materials needed

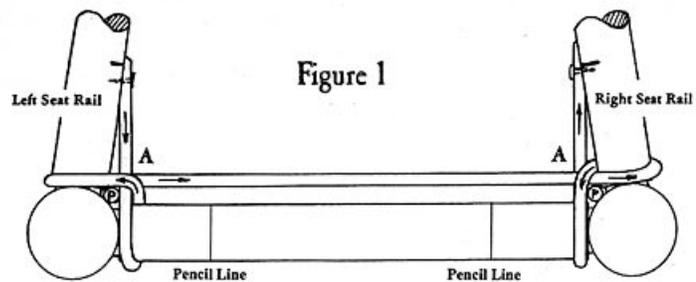
- ◆ Rush, fiber, rope, or cord for weaving
- ◆ Sharp knife and scissors
- ◆ Hammer
- ◆ Block of wood for wedging strands together
- ◆ Blunt stick or screwdriver for manipulating strands
- ◆ Chair in good repair, with joining tightened and repairing and repairing and refinishing completed

Weaving materials come in various weights or sizes. Choose the type according to the effect you wish to achieve, considering the type of chair and its intended use. Approximately 2 pounds of material is needed to weave a small chair seat and about 3 pounds for a large one.

The secret of good weaving is to keep the strands tight and even. Gloves will protect your hands while you work.

To begin:

Cut about a 25-foot length of fiber, and roll it into a coil for easier handling. The fiber is pulled through the rails for weaving, so shorter lengths are easier to use. When needed, attach the next length of cord to the first with a square knot.



Mark the corners of the chair. Measure and mark the center of each rail to help keep the material covering evenly.

Tie fiber to the rail above corner.

Begin weaving. Hold the cord firmly, so it won't unwind as you carry it over and around the rungs in the pattern illustrated, right. Continue the pattern, weaving from the corners in toward the center. When the length with a square knot, concealed on the underside of the seat.

After weaving a few rounds, use a hammer and wedge to push the strands tightly together.

Triangular pieces of corrugated cardboard, crushed paper, or lengths of Hong Kong grass may be used to fill the space between the upper and lower strands. A blunt stick helps push the padding into corners.

Weaving proceeds from the corners to the center, forming diagonal lines across the finished seat. When you reach the exact center, drop the cord through the center hole and tie it to a strand on the underside.

Measure both rails. Measure on-half of the difference, and mark it on the front rail. Example: if the back is 10 inches, and the front is 12 inches, the difference of 2 inches is divided so 1 inch will be marked off from each corner post.

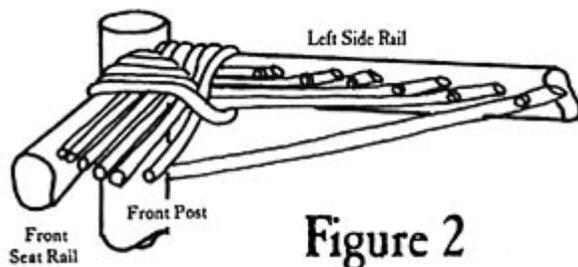


Figure 2

Two methods of filling the needed space are used.

1. Tie two loops of fiber over the back rail with square knots. Begin weaving as for a square or rectangular seat, but go over only the front and side rails, through the loop, and repeat at other side, until the extra space on the front rail is covered.
2. Or, tack your beginning strand of fiber to one side, go over the front and side rails as illustrated, tack cord to other side and trim end. Repeat until the extra space on the front rail has been filled, then proceed as for a regular chair.

If side rails are filled before the front and back rails, weave the needed cords up through the center, then over and under the front and back rails. Continue weaving only from front rail to back in figure 8 fashion, going between crossed cords in the center. Weave figure 8's until front and back are covered. Use a hammer and block of wood to compact cords snugly, mashing cords flat where they cross so material will fill in correctly.

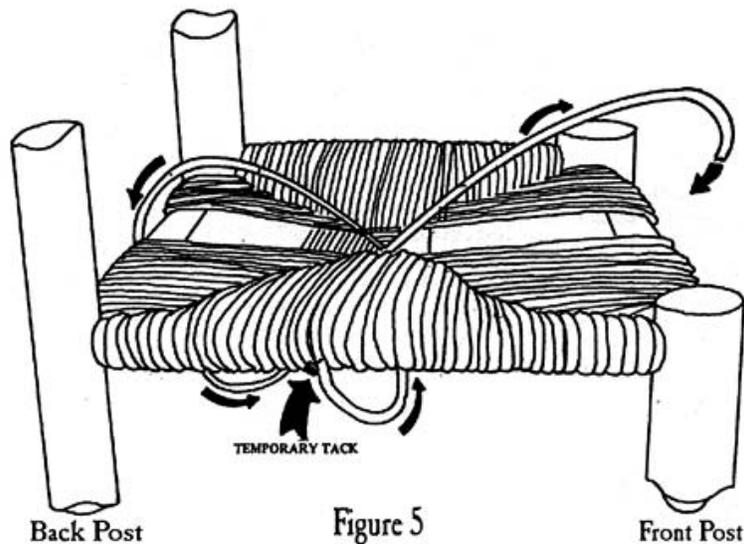


Figure 5

When weaving is complete, tie the end of cord beneath the underside, hiding the knot as well as possible. If the seat is left before being completed, tie the weaving cord to a side rail or use a clothespin to hold the cord in place until weaving is continued.

Remember to keep strands pushed together tightly, and to keep a straight line in the diagonal corners. Do not overlap strands of cord. Correct mistakes during the weaving process, not after.

When weaving is complete, two or three coats of a thin shellac or varnish will finish and preserve the woven seat. Reseal every year or so.

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