

Oseberg Style Tablet Weaving Loom

by Danr Bjornsson (Don Willadsen) and James Coller

The Oseberg ship found in Sweden contained many textiles, among them a complete set of tablet weaving mounted on a wooden loom. Though the loom was crushed, it has been reconstructed as a long base from which arise two vertical upright pegs. The weaving was tied off between these uprights. It is believed that the weaver sat to one side, with the dominant hand nearest the loom, based on illustrations from later medieval periods showing similar looms.

While the Oseberg loom had a base but no reinforcing strut, later medieval periods placed a strut either in the middle of the uprights or at the top, to allow greater warp tension.

For this project, we decided to include a strut in the middle. The key features of this design are sturdiness under warp tension, minimal parts, and ease of assembly and disassembly.

Materials list:

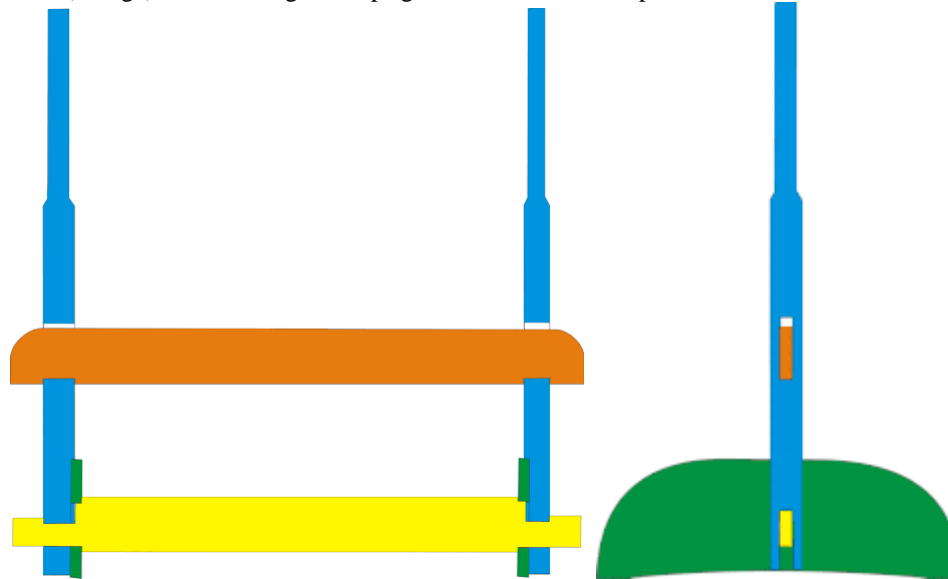
2x2 or similar, 3' long, 2 each (I used a 2x4 and cut it down to actual dimensions of 1 1/2 x 2)

1x4, 3' long, 2 each

1x10, 4' long, 1 each

Tools: Saw, drill, chisels, files, and plane/drawknife/spokeshave

The loom consists of a base (shown below in yellow) which attaches via mortise-and-tenon to two feet (shown in green). The uprights (blue) interlock via a lap joint with the feet and a mortise-and-tenon with the base. Finally, the strut (orange) slides through the uprights' mortises and drop down into notches. Here are a side and end view.



Only critical dimensions are specified in the diagram below. The length of the loom is listed as 3' but can be adjusted to twice the comfortable reach length of the user. The height is also 3' but can be adjusted to the maximum comfortable height for the user while seated. There should be 6-8 inches between the upper strut and the point at which the upright is shaved down to a round or oval cross-section, to give the hands room to weave. Finally, the lumber dimensions can be adjusted for the strength of wood you choose. For example, the loom we built uses pine, so the uprights are cut from 2x4s and measure 2"x1 1/2" actual dimensions for greater strength. Those dimensions



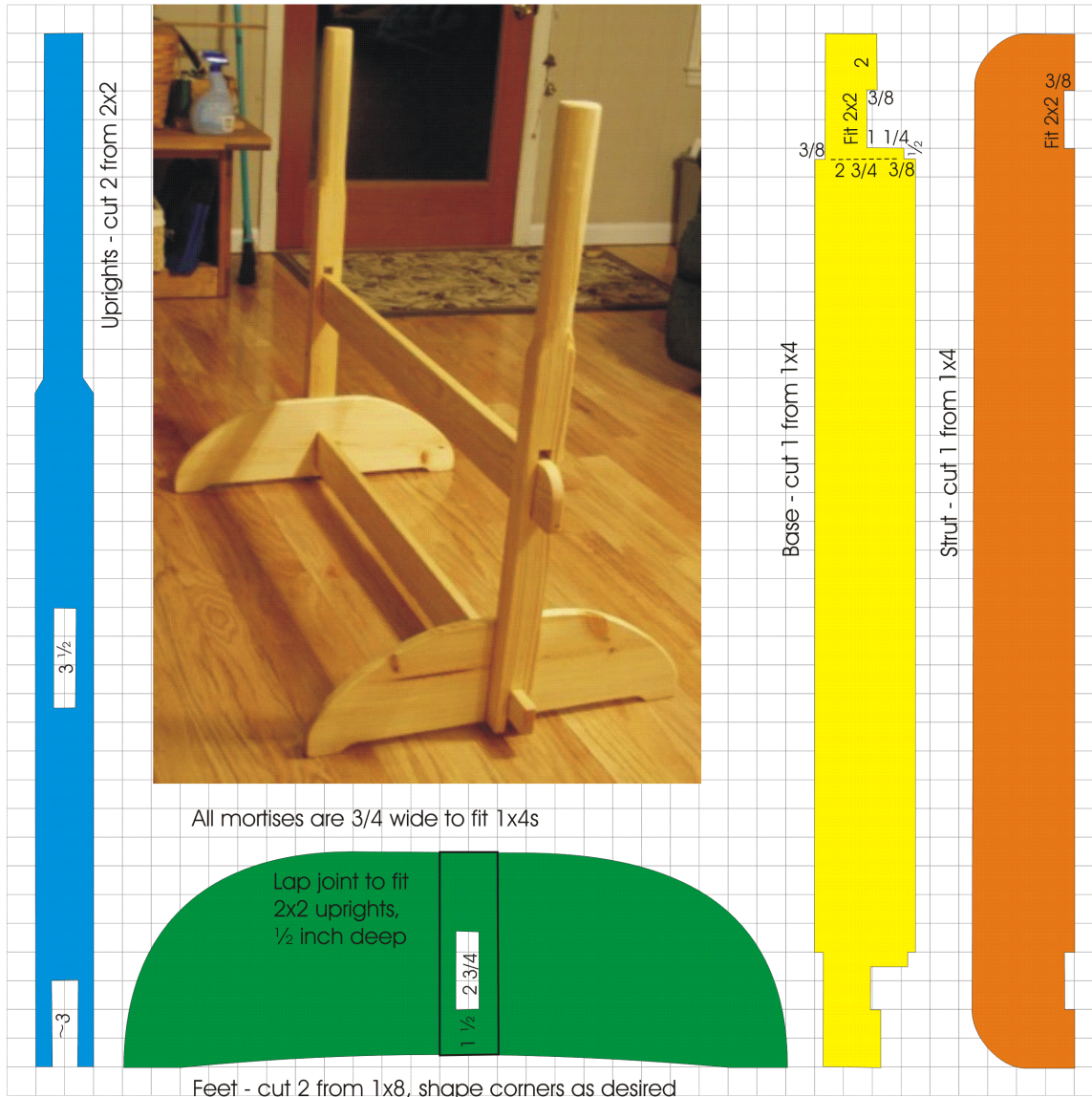
listed below as “fit 2x2” should be changed to the dimensions you choose for your uprights. Finally, the mortise at the bottom of the uprights (more of a slot than a mortise) is shown as ~3 inches deep; it should be approximately flush with the bottom of the foot when the loom is assembled. Since we chose to curve the bottom of the foot to make it stand better on uneven surfaces, it was 3 inches deep for our loom but your exact measurement may vary.

each square = 1 inch

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All mortises are 3/4 wide to fit 1x4s

Lap joint to fit
2x2 uprights,
1/2 inch deep

Feet - cut 2 from 1x8, shape corners as desired

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File a small bevel into all the edges, including the mortise holes, so they will not splinter. Those edges which are not structural (located where one part meets another), can be rounded or beveled to a greater extent with the router, drawknife, spokeshave, or chisel. Sand lightly and finish with oil, paint, decorative carving, or a combination.

[Happy woodworking](#) and [happy weaving!](#)

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