

Long stitch binding

By Emma Jane Hogbin

In this binding the sections of pages are attached directly to the spine, instead of to each other. The endless sewing variations allow the binder to develop a series of unique spine decorations limited only by their imagination. The long stitch binding rose to popularity during the 14th century in northern Europe as a simple notebook. It was found both in the classroom and in the accounting houses.



This album/scrapbook is very easy to make. It can be jammed full of your notes, swatches, photographs and yarn samples. It will open perfectly flat without stressing the spine, and won't bulge open at the front. In this variation we will include a small woven component on the spine. This weaving has been found on historical models and is both elegant and functional. By wrapping a second, decorative, thread around the structural sewing, the structural spine sewing is encased and protected from wear.

Any kind of stiff material can be used as a spine liner. This kit includes a wooden spine that has been pre-drilled. Be sure to give the wood a light sanding and a sealing coat of furniture polish before assembling the book.

Tools

- needle
- awl (a sharp, pointed tool used for punching holes. a really thick sewing needle, or a sharp finishing nail will work as well)
- scissors
- glue (for the spine liner if you are making one)

Materials

- pages (suggested: five groups of eight sheets each)
- cover paper (3-4 times the width of the page should be enough)
- spine liner. Helps to prevent the spine from ripping.
- thread (linen or upholstery weight polyester is fine. you may also want to spin your own thread for the warp)
- hand spun yarn for weaving on the spine
- hand spun yarn for cord closure

Instructions

Preparing the paper cover and inside pages

1. The first step is to decide what size your pages will be. All other decisions are made based on the size of the folded page. The easiest to use is sheets of 8.5x11" paper cut in half and then folded in half.
2. Fold your sheets together into "signatures." I group eight sheets for each signature when I'm using regular photocopy paper, and as few as one sheet if I'm using heavy watercolor paper.
3. Based on the size of your pages, cut a cover sheet. This paper should be a heavy card stock (at least 200gsm or 110lb). I also use my hand made felt for the covers. Your cover should be about 1/2" taller than your sheets of paper (1/4" top and bottom) and about three to four times as long. It will fold around the book and will have a flap on the front and back covers.
4. The spine liner can be added either to the inside of the cover, or as decorative element to the outside of the cover.
 1. Mark the center of your cover material to determine where the spine will be.
 2. Use a glue stick to tack your spine liner into place. You need enough glue to hold it in place while you pierce the holes. Make sure the liner is even along the edges of the cover.
 3. Put the cover under a heavy phone book, or dictionary, to dry.

Marking the sewing stations, and punching the holes

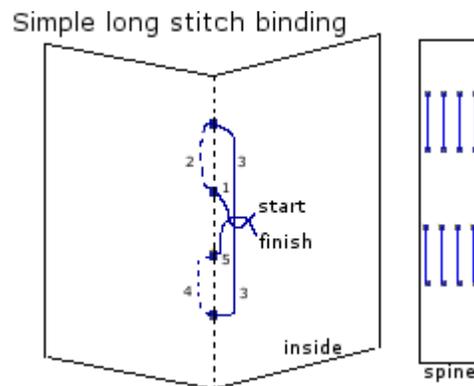
5. Once the spine is dried you will need to punch holes in it where the pages will be stitched to the spine. If you are using the wooden spine kit, this step has already been done for you.
 1. Create a paper template which is the same size as your spine liner. Use a thin sheet of paper which will be easy to punch holes in.
 2. Using a ruler and a pencil draw four or five sets of lines which run the length of the template. These long lines mark where each of the groups of pages will lie. If you are using a wider spine, you may be able to fit more signatures into your book.
 3. Mark the holes for your sewing stations along the length of the spine. If you would like alternating strips of weaving and exposed spine, use an even number of bars. If you would like a solid spine, use an odd number. The first and last holes should each be about 1/2" from the top and bottom of the pages. With the rest being evenly spaced.



6. Once you've drawn these guide lines, you can continue by punching holes into each of the signatures—use your needle or a sharp finishing nail to punch the holes. The goal is to have a hole that is about the same diameter as your thread.
7. Stack all of your signatures into a single pile. Draw a guide across the back of all signatures to match the lines in your template. Punch corresponding holes. Make sure that your needle and thread will pass through each of the holes.

Sewing and weaving

8. Sew each signature with the linen thread into the spine using a “pamphlet stitch.” (see diagram “simple long stitch binding”)
9. Once the book is sewn you have created the warp into which you will weave your hand spun yarn. Thread your hand spun yarn onto a darning needle to prepare your weft.
10. Weave the yarn through the linen thread. You may want to use a Tabby weave (under one, over one), or a basket weave (under two, over two—use a double strand of yarn for this pattern). The amount of yarn you need will depend on the thickness. I usually need about 5 yards to do a book this size.
11. When you come to the bottom of each section of “warp” simply tuck the yarn under the woven fabric and trim the end with scissors.
12. You may also want to add a matching hand spun cord to the book to tie it shut.



Emma Jane Hogbin is a Canadian technical author and instructor. She divides her time between teaching web technologies and bookbinding workshops. For more information please visit www.strangelittlegirl.com.

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