Canine Couture
a Bedford cord coat for your best friend

RUTH MORRISON

A Bedford cord coat with green fleece lining is modeled by Italian greyhound Peanut (at right), who is wearing his collar turned up. Editor Madelyn van der Hoogt's Maltese dog, Huck, the inspiration for the coat design, is wearing his coat, lined in yellow fleece, with the color turned down (below). Project directions for a doubleweave coat in the same style appear in the September/October 2006 issue of Handwoven *on pages 64–67. This article gives directions for the Bedford cord coats shown here on Peanut and Huck.*

Bedford cord fabrics have flexible, ribbed surfaces with insulating air pockets that give warmth without adding weight. In pearl cotton, the fabric is very washable, wears well, and can be woven in a wide range of colors.

Bedford cord

Bedford cord is characterized by ribs—or cords—that run parallel to the warp. Alternate ribs can be two different pure colors, and cutting lines between the ribs can add yet a third color. Bedford cord is woven with two shuttles, but the tie-up for the coat fabric is designed so that each shuttle is used for two picks in succession for relatively quick weaving (see Bedford Cord Basics, page 3, and Resources, below).

Constructing the coats

After it is washed, a Bedford cord fabric is surprisingly light, pliable, and easy to sew. It does have long weft floats on the wrong side of the fabric, however, so that a lining is essential when Bedford cord is

Huck models his Bedford cord coat with yellow fleece lining.

used for a garment. For the coats shown here, a polyester fleece is used for lining. Fleece is especially easy to sew, because it is very flexible and does not ravel; it turns corners and eases around curves like a dream. Huck's coat is lined with yellow fleece and Peanut's with green.

The Velcro fasteners are fused to the fabric with a hot iron. They—and the coat design—make the coats especially easy to put on and take off your dog. Instead of struggling to work his head and legs through small openings, you simply place the coat on his back and join the Velcro tabs securely under his tummy and across his chest.

Fitting the coat to your dog

The pattern on page 4 is for a small dog with a neck-to-tail length of about 10" and a chest circumference of 18" (size 10 in commercial coats for small dogs). For a larger dog, adjust these two measurements, lengthen the neck flaps and chest plate, and transfer the pattern onto a muslin that you can pin-fit and trim on your dog. An alternative is to purchase a coat that fits your dog in a style you like and make a pattern from it.

When you plan the fabric for your pattern, remember that corded fabrics usually have considerable draw-in, take-up, and shrinkage. Add about 15 percent to your desired finished width and length when you calculate warp and weft amounts to avoid ending up with too little fabric for your pattern layout.

Resources

Kaestner, Tracy. "Bedford Cord for Kids." *The Best of Weaver's: Fabrics That Go Bump.* Sioux Falls, South Dakota: XRX Inc., 2002, pp. 18–20.

Keasbey, Doramay. "More Bedford Cord." *The Best of Weaver's: Fabrics That Go Bump.* Sioux Fall, South Dakota: XRX Inc., 2002, pp. 21–24.

Alderman, Sharon. "Bedford Cord and Piqués," *Mastering Weave Structures.* Loveland, Colorado: Interweave Press, 2004. pp. 179–184.

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STEPS FOR WEAVING THE BEDFORD CORD COAT FABRIC

Step 1 Wind a warp of 670 ends 2¼ yd long following Figure 2. Warp the loom using your preferred warping method (for specific warping steps, see Weaving Resources at www.handwoven magazine.com). Weave a heading in plain weave to spread the warp and then weave the fabric for 44" following the treadling in Figure 1.
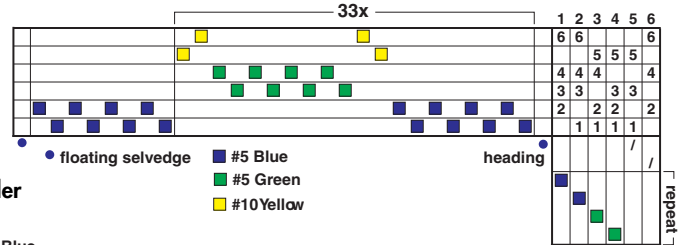
Step 2 Remove the fabric from the loom and serge or machine zigzag raw edges. Machine wash, warm, with mild detergent; machine dry, regular.

Step 3 Enlarge the pattern 400 percent and mark seam lines, notches, and fastener locations; ½" seam allowances are included in the pattern.
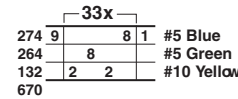
Step 4 Lay out the patterns for the coat body and collar on the straight grain of the Bedford cord fabric so that the neck-to-tail length and the ribs run in the same direction. Cut one of each and transfer markings. Machine zigzag or serge the edges to prevent raveling. Cut one collar and one body from polyester fleece lining fabric. (Fleece doesn't ravel, so you don't need to machine sew edges.)

Step 5 Pin the coat body and lining right sides together. Beginning at one of the notches that mark the collar opening and moving away from the notch, stitch a ½" seam around the body, ending at the other notch. (There should be an opening in the neckline between the notches.) Clip the curves in the Bedford cord fabric and trim the corners of both fabrics to minimize bulk. Carefully turn the coat right side out through the neck opening.
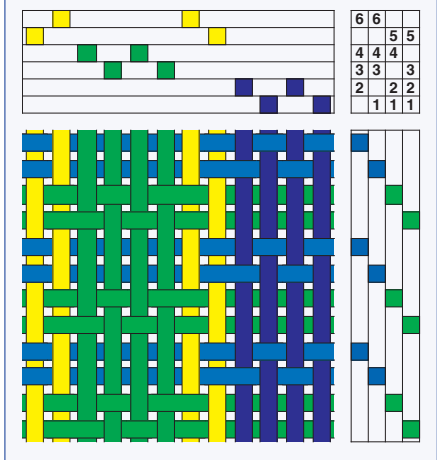
Step 6 Right sides together, stitch the collar and its lining piece together around the curved edge, leaving the straight edge open. Clip the curves in the Bedford cord fabric as needed and turn right side out. Right sides of the Bedford cord fabrics together, pin the collar to the coat body between the notches, easing the straight edge of the collar as necessary. Stitch the Bedford cord fabric of the collar to the neck opening through its two layers. Turn under the raw edge of the collar lining and hand sew to the lining of the coat body. Finger press all edge seams (if you need to iron, use a press cloth between the iron and the fleece) and top stitch ½" from all edges.

Step 7 To install the fasteners: cut four strips of self-adhesive Velcro about 1" long, rounding the corners slightly. Place the fasteners where indicated on the pattern (or to fit your dog), and fuse them permanently following the directions on the package. Always use a press cloth when ironing on fleece. ◄═►

1. Draft for Bedford cord coat fabric

- ■ #5 Blue
- ■ #5 Green
- □ #10 Yellow
- floating selvedge
- heading
- repeat

2. Warp color order

Bedford Cord Basics

In Bedford cord, two sets of weft threads weave with two sets of warp threads. In the 6-shaft draft below, a blue weft weaves plain weave with blue warp threads on shafts 1 and 2. A green weft weaves plain weave with green warp threads on shafts 3 and 4. The yellow warp threads between the ribs of blue and green are called the cutting ends. They weave with both wefts to create furrows between the ribs. The back of the cloth is covered with weft floats: green under blue ribs, blue under green. To weave Bedford cord on four shafts, omit the cutting ends. If more than six shafts are available, the ribs can be stuffed.

PROJECT AT-A-GLANCE

Weave structure for coat fabric
Bedford cord.

Equipment
6-shaft loom, 24" weaving width; 12-dent reed; 2 shuttles; sewing machine.

Yarns
Warp: 10/2 pearl cotton (4,200 yd/lb), #5 Blue, 617 yd (2⅖ oz), #5 Green, 594 yd (2⅓ oz); #10 Yellow, 297 yd (1⅕ oz).
Weft: 10/2 pearl cotton (4,200 yd/lb), #5 Blue and #5 Green, 452 yd (1¾ oz) each.

Notions and other materials
Polyester fleece fabric (lining), yellow, green, or desired color, ⅝ yd for 2 coats; sewing thread; 1 pkg Velcro Fabric Fusion Heat-Activated Adhesive Tape ¾" × 5 ft, beige.

Yarn and materials sources
10/2 pearl cotton is available from the Lunatic Fringe; fleece and notions are available from fabric stores.

Warp order and length
670 ends 2 yd long (includes 2 floating selvedges, 8" for take-up, and 29" for loom waste).

Warp and weft spacing
Warp: 28 epi (2-2-3/dent in a 12-dent reed). Width in the reed: 24".
Weft: 28 ppi. Woven length (measured under tension on the loom): 44".

Finished dimensions
After washing, amounts produce one length of yardage 21" × 40" to make two size 10 coats for a small dog.

3. Pattern for dog coat

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|1|2|3|4|5|6|7|8|9|10|11|12|13|14|15|16|17|18|19|20|

collar

notch   notch

chest plate

A   B   B   A

20"

coat body

tummy

C   C

cetner back line

D   D

tummy

⬭ Velcro affixed to right side of fabric

⬭ (dashed) Velcro affixed to lining

☐ = 1"

½" seam allowances are included in the pattern.