



Now for the big topic: FULLING

As with any handwoven fabric before it goes through a finishing process, repair any skips and darn in joins. For small items, we full by hand in the sink. For yardages we full in the washing machine with great care. If you are fulling in the machine, the first thing you must discover is a way to run your machine with the lid up during the wash cycle. You can use a pencil to depress the lid safety mechanism so your machine will operate while the lid is open.

Fulling requires heat, agitation and a fulling agent, which is the soap. These three variables control how quickly the fulling will happen. If your water is a little hotter, it will happen quicker; if your machine agitates harder, it will happen quicker; and if you use more soap, it will happen quicker. Conversely, if your water is cooler, it will happen slower etc. Fill the machine with warm water (baby warm) and place your fabric evenly around the agitator. When it is fully saturated move it to the side and add the soap. We use quite a lot of soap to make the water slippery. Start agitating on the gentle cycle so that the process happens slowly. This process has another set of variables: they are the type of yarn used and the sett of the fabric. A balanced piece of fabric with a more open sett will full faster than an unbalanced piece of fabric with a closer sett. The length of time it will take depends on all of these variables. Everyone's machine is different, so it cannot be stressed enough that you should try a few samples before going the whole nine yards. Pardon the pun. Gently turn the fabric over several times while it is agitating. This prevents one area from fulling more than another. One more note of caution: during the first few minutes of fulling it seems like not much is happening. Around the fourth minute, you start to notice something. In the fifth minute, it's getting very close. In a very short time it could be ruined so BE CAREFUL. When you think your fabric is 'fulled' enough, stop the wash cycle and let the fabric spin out. Let the machine fill up with warm water again for the rinse. We generally hand manipulate the rinsing because the fabric has fullled to where we want it and now we just want to get rid of the suds and not agitate anymore. When your fabric is sufficiently rinsed let it go through the spin cycle once more. Remove your fabric from the machine immediately and lay it flat to dry or if you want to raise a nap, this is the time to do it. Working with a small section of the fabric, brush vertically (warpwise) in both directions, followed with a horizontal brushing, selvedge to selvedge (weftwise). Brush while the fabric is wet.

Never leave the washing machine. You can always full your fabric a second time, but it is very difficult and most often impossible to reverse the process.