



Fabric Folders

Try this simple tool to ease the process of crafting your braided rug.

Photo by Rhoda Peacher

Braided-rug fabric is threaded through the varifolder to keep it neat while braiding.

You've decided to make a braided rug, gathered all your fabrics, cut them into strips, sewn them together, and now are faced with folding them as you braid. Especially if this is your first time making a braided rug, you'll see that it can be difficult to keep the rough fabric edges folded neatly inside and still make neat, tight braids.

To the Rug Rescue

Luckily, a company called Braid-Aid has come to your rescue. They've been making devices called varifolders for decades to help braided-rug makers work quickly and neatly.

Varifolders come in sets of three—one for each strip of your braid. They're small metal cones that slide over the fabric and automatically fold the strip edges to the middle and then fold the strip in half. They'll fold most weights of fabric cut in strips from 1 inch to 2¼ inches wide, and they're exactly what's needed to create a smooth, long-wearing rug. It's almost magical how well they work.

Photo by Rhoda Peacher

Move the varifolders down the fabric pieces while braiding.

Using Varifolders

To use a varifolder, start at the wide end of the varifolder cone and thread one end of your fabric through to the narrow end. Adjust the fabric strip so it's centered, and move the guides at the wide end of the varifolder so they just touch the edges of your material.

The metal pieces that close off each end of the cone can be adjusted up and down to accommodate the thickness of your fabric. This is especially handy as you move the folder down the strip and reach a seam. You can adjust the varifolder for the seam and then reset it after the seam has passed through the folder.

Keep the varifolders just below your braid and slide them down as you braid. This will keep the fabric from unfolding before it gets incorporated into your braid.

Buying Varifolders

Varifolders are available from many online vendors. Type "varifolders" into a search engine, and you'll find many vendor choices. Varifolders cost about \$18 and could make creating a braided rug a smoother, more pleasant experience.

Learn more about making braided rag rugs in the September/October 2010 issue of Hobby Farm Home.

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