

Park and Draft Spinning

Many new spinners find that there are just too many things going on all at once: drafting, managing the pile of raw fleece in one hand, making sure the spindle doesn't slow down and start turning backwards ... aah!

Park and draft spinning is a way to slow things down and separate out the different parts of the process so that you can get comfortable with each piece in turn.

While sitting in a chair, hold your leader (or the length of yarn you've made so far) in one hand, and start the spindle turning with the other. Let it spin until there is a decent amount of twist stored up in the yarn, then brace the spindle between your knees. That stops the spin.

Keeping the top of the yarn pinched in one hand, gradually let in a bit of fibre at a time, inching your fingers up the yarn as the twist moves. When there's no more twist to be had, wind on the yarn you've made, and start again.

Plying

When you have a full spindle, wind the singles onto a toilet paper roll or a stick. When you have two of those, you can make a two ply yarn: twisting the ends of the two singles into your leader, turn your spindle in *the opposite direction from the way you spun the singles* and let the strands twist together. Voila: yarn!

We hope you enjoy spinning with your new drop spindle!

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to email us: info@applejackcreek.com.

Thank you so much for supporting the entrepreneurial spirit of the next generation! You can find out more about our farm and our family on our website: we have naturally raised lamb, Icelandic and other fleeces, and free-range eggs.

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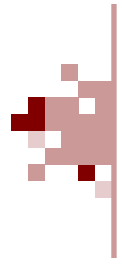
*Yes, you can
make yarn with
a drop spindle!*



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Getting started with a drop spindle

People have made yarn with drop spindles for thousands of years. Spindles are an extremely portable way to make your own yarn!

Getting Started

To start, you need to take a bit of wool and twist it into a leader by hand. Just hold a length of rovings or processed fleece in both hands, gently tugging and twisting it to form it into a strand—or, take a short length of already spun yarn and use that instead. This is your *leader*.

Wind the leader around the stem of your spindle a few times so that it catches and won't come unwound. Keeping a bit of tension on the yarn, catch it on the notch on the side of the wheel, and loop it once around the hook on the top.

Ideally, the end of the leader will be a fluffy bit of rovings—unwind it and fluff it up if you can.



Start by winding a leader around the stem of your spindle, catching it on the notch, and looping through the hook at the top.

Getting the fleece ready

The next step is to ensure your fleece is ready to spin. If you are working with rovings, this is mostly done for you: the wool is nicely combed and shaped into strips. If you are working with raw fleece, you'll most likely need to comb or card it first (although some fleece, like alpaca, can be spun easily enough from the locks).

The important thing is to *predraft* your fibres. You need a strip of fibre, about the width of two or three fingers, and whatever length is comfortable for you to handle (you can join on a new chunk of fibre at any time!). Make sure the fibres are teased apart a little, so that it'll be easier to get just the amount you need when you are drafting.

Twisting the yarn

To get started, you need to join the end of your leader with the fibre fluff in your hand. Gently spread out the end of your rovings and lay the end of your leader into the fuzzy ends. Start the spindle turning, and notice how the twist reaches up the yarn and grabs the loose bits of fibre, twisting them into more yarn.

It doesn't matter which direction you turn your spindle—just make sure you always go the same way, or you'll untwist all the work you just did!

As the spindle keeps turning, you need to feed more loose fibre into the triangle that forms at the top of the yarn (this is called the *drafting triangle*). The triangle where yarn meets fleece will gradually 'eat up' the loose fibre from the bundle your hand. The trick to spinning with a drop spindle is to draft raw fleece into the drafting triangle at about the same speed as it is being eaten up by the yarn-in-progress: too much and you get fat yarn, too little and it breaks.

If you hold the fleece loosely in your hand it is much easier to draft (it's often convenient to wrap rovings up and around your forearm, or there are special wrist distaffs made for the purpose). Don't be afraid to stop every so often and predraft a little more fibre if you find that it's getting bunched up.



Overlap the fibre in your hand with the end of your leader. Start the spindle twisting, and draft from the fibre in your hand as they overlap and twist into a single strand of yarn.

You will use two hands while spinning: one hand is primarily occupied with holding the fleece, and the other is gently tugging fleece out of that hand and into the drafting triangle as the spin works it's way upwards, and keeping the spindle turning.

Once the length of spun singles gets to be too awkward to work with, twist it onto the stem of your spindle, and then start again! If you need to set your spinning down for awhile, just twist the end of your finished yarn around the hook a few times and it'll be to ready start again when you are.



Once you have a length of singles spun, twist it onto the stem of your spindle, maintaining tension on the singles so they don't coil back on themselves.