Tying up the Countermarch loom from the back

Does your back hurt? Do you think you may have dislocated your hips? Is it impossible to crawl around under furniture and see through your bifocals at the same time? Are you weaving the same things over and over because you can’t change your tie-up? Here’s a solution created with materials from the local hardware store and scrap lumber (some hardware stores will let you scrounge for scrap lumber).

My loom is a Glimakra Ideal 6 harness countermarch loom, one meter weaving width. Countermarch looms are wonderful and easy to weave on, but tying them up can be an ordeal. Each shaft is tied to go up or down on each treadle, using two set of lamms in between. For example, using a draft from Handwoven magazine, both the numbered squares and the blanks represent a cord that must be tied. Here is a way to set up your loom so the tie up can be done easily from the back of the loom.

First, 2.5 inch eyebolts have been added to the treadles. The bolts have a washer above and below the wood and a nut underneath holding them on. At first the nuts kept coming loose, locking washers solved that problem. You will need eyebolts and washers/nuts for each hole in each treadle, in my case 6 shafts multiplied by 6 treadles equals 36 eyebolts.

The picture below shows the lower lamms and treadles with the eye bolts and the texsolv cord running thru the bolts to the back. One treadle is unused and shows the bolts clearly. The long loopy cords have not caused any tangling problems. You will probably need at least one more roll of texsolv cord.

The pony tail holders help my feet identify treadles by feel.
You will also need a piece of pegboard. I glued two sheets of pegboard together and added a 1x1 to prevent bending. It needs to be as wide as your loom and have enough holes vertically for all the treadles and harnesses, for this loom its 6 times 6 equals 36 (plus space for the 1x1 re-enforcement across the pegboard).

You will also need a steel bar and a way to attach it at the back. The texsolv cords will run from the eyebolts in the treadles, under the steel bar, and up through the appropriate hole in the pegboard. This is the back of my loom from an inside angle. Rather than drill holes in the loom, C clamps are holding 2 small pieces of wood with metal clips holding the steel rod.

(The unused treadle was an attempt to add 2 treadles with hinges – didn’t work and has been removed. Don’t try this at home!)
The pegboard is attached at a slant to two 4x4 posts that fit under existing loom parts and are strapped on to the back of the loom. The peg board is attached to a 1x1 stick at either end with magnets, resting on screws for vertical support. How you do this will vary by loom type.

This was supposed to be the prototype to make sure it would work. It works so well that I have left it in place. The option to easily remove it all seemed a wise idea.
The texsolv cords come up from the steel rod, thru holes in the peg board, and fasten with arrow pegs. I’ve knotted all the cords so they don’t get pulled back through when no peg is attached, and only use the arrow pegs on cords that are tied. The pegs have been colored black to show up better.

The cords are colored on the ends, a color for each shaft, and additional brown to mark the cord from the lam that will pull the shafts down. (brown for earth)
I used Avery labels to number each set of cords and mark the up and down side. Across for treadles, down for shafts, with the color code.

To tie up the loom I go around to the back, turn the tie up diagram upside down and connect the pegs accordingly.

And here’s the pretty baby blanket that was in progress!
Addendum:

This system has worked so well that I recently permanently attached it to the loom using broom hangers, with eye bolts to keep them from sliding down.
NOTES:

This idea is not new. It can be found in:

Parts list:
For each cord to be tied:
  2.5 inch eyebolts
  washers to go above wood
  locking washers and nuts below
Masonite pegboard, 2 sheets wide as your loom with enough holes for each cord.
1x1 board, or other method of stabilizing the pegboard to prevent bending
Steel bar and a way to attach it at the back
I used C clamps to hold 2 small pieces of wood with metal clips holding the steel rod.
Enough Texsolv cord to cover the distance required