

WORKSHOP: “SETTING UP TO SEW” – THE BASIC KIT

Summary: The materials/equipment in the basic kit are used in a lot of the workshops and are listed here for easy reference. We will go through the sewing equipment provided and talk about what each item is used for.

Some of these items you may have indicated you already have in our introductory survey. We have supplied the missing items unique for each participant.

If you prefer to hand sew instead of machine sew we have included alternatives wherever possible.

Reference guides explaining hand sewing stitches and needle types are provided as printouts. An electronic reference guide explaining sewing machine presser feet types has been provided on the Google. All reference guides were found free online and the sources are noted on each.

Specific stitches and equipment use will be taught as needed on each project, so the guides are just for easy reference and do not have to be remembered.

We’ve divided all the materials and equipment between participants and done our best to give you a good selection of colours. We hope you like what we chose. You are also welcome to add any of your own materials and equipment to any/all of the projects. Happy creating!!

MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT

Hand Sewing and General Items

pencil, eraser, sharpener
scrap regular paper
roll of wide paper
ruler
masking tape
paper scissors
small sharp sewing scissors
sewing shears
hand sewing needles
needle case (not provided)

pins

pin cushion (not provided)

tape measure
liquid fray preventer
thread for basting

sewing thread, 100% polyester
washable marker
chalk, chalk pencil or dressmaker’s pencil
tracing wheel
tracing paper for fabrics
needle threader

What is This For?

- drawing patterns, sketching ideas
- sketching, making small pattern pieces
- pattern paper
- drawing small pattern pieces, drawing ideas
- joining pattern paper, marking distances
- cutting out patterns
- cutting out small items, tight corners and snipping thread
- cutting out large pieces of fabric and thicker fabrics
- stitching where hand sewing is preferred
- storing needles you use regularly
- we will make one
- holding fabrics while you assemble a project
- transferring pattern markings to fabric
- storing pins and needles while you sew
- we will make one
- measuring fabrics and shapes that aren’t flat
- sealing ends to prevent fraying
- sewing where the thread type doesn’t matter
- temporarily holding fabrics together, removed later
- project sewing thread for hand and/or machine sewing
- marking fabrics temporarily
- marking fabrics temporarily
- transferring markings to fabric with transfer paper
- making marks on fabric with a tracing wheel
- threading needles any time it is difficult otherwise

thimble
stitch ripper
iron
ironing board
cotton muslin press cloth
optional: pliers (not provided)
basic kit instructions/ideas sheet

- finger protection when repeatedly pushing the needle
- removing unwanted stitches
- smoothing fabric wrinkles, pressing creases
- ironing on
- protecting fabrics while ironing, particularly synthetic
- pulling a needle through fabric when stuck
- inspiration

Machine Sewing Items

sewing machine
machine needles – sizes 70, 80, 90
machine needles – stretch knit
machine needles – denim
6-10 bobbins

What is This For?

- machine sewing
- regular sewing, larger needle # for heavier fabrics
- sewing stretchy fabrics
- sewing thick jeans type fabrics
- holding lower thread in the sewing machine

Optional Extra Items You Might Already Have

overlocker
cones of overlocker thread
pinking shears
zipper foot for sewing machine
walking foot for sewing machine

small brush for cleaning sewing machines
90 degree angle ruler or protractor
sewing machine oil

What is This For?

- finishing raw edges, machine sewing stretchy fabrics
- sewing with an overlocker
- cutting zigzag edges
- sewing zips into projects by machine
- grips the top fabric and helps it move smoothly through
- used for quilting several layers for even feeding
- removing lint from a sewing machine
- pattern drafting
- keeping a sewing machine running smoothly

Class Plan: Talking About Materials and Equipment

1. Hand sewing needles come in a variety of sizes and suit different purposes. Included is a guide describing some of the types and uses. Here are some of the most common. We will be using the first four a lot.
 - a. Sharps are general purpose needles used by dressmakers for day to day use.
 - b. Betweens or quilting needles are shorter to allow stitches to be made quickly.
 - c. Darning needles are long and sharp and used for darning or mending.
 - d. Embroidery or crewel needles have longer eyes for threading embroidery floss and stranded cotton.
 - e. Leather or glovers needles have triangular cutting tips to reduce abrasion on the thread.
 - f. Milliners needles or straws are similar to sharps but longer and are used for pleating and decorative work.
2. A guide for the most commonly used hand stitches is included, with the online source noted.
 - a. Running stitch is a simple up and down stitch and is the easiest for seams.
 - b. Basting stitch is running stitch with longer stitches, used to hold fabrics together and transfer markings for machine sewing. Basting stitches are usually removed after machine stitching.
 - c. Gathering stitch is 2-3 rows of longer running stitches, where one end of each thread is pulled together to gather fabric along the length of the threads.
 - d. Backstitch is the strongest hand stitch for seams.
 - e. Whipstitch goes over the fabric edges and is useful for thick non-fraying fabrics and joining.
 - f. Slip/ladder stitch is good for mending holes along seams and closing gaps.
 - g. Blanket stitch finishes raw edges of non-fraying thicker fabrics, for applique and embroidery.
3. There are many different types of pins available. Always test your pins on a scrap of the fabric you are using to see how it recovers after the pins are removed.
 - a. Generally the finer the fabric, the finer the pin.

- b. Pins with pearl or round balls on the heads are easier to put in and remove.
 - c. Finer pins are used in bridal applications because the pins are likely to be in the fabric longer.
 - d. Don't iron over pins with plastic heads because they will melt, damaging your fabric and iron.
 - e. Ball point pins are ideal for stretch and knit fabrics.
 - f. Silk threads are very delicate and can break leaving a hole in your fabric. Use silk pins with silk fabric.
 - g. Quilting pins are stronger and longer to accommodate many layers of fabric. Slightly curved quilting pins are also available to avoid shifting layers of fabric when pinning.
 - h. T-pins are good for holding down upholstery fabrics.
4. Tracing wheels can be smooth or spikey for transferring pattern lines onto fabric.
- a. Dot lines transfer better onto bulkier fabrics with the spikey tracing wheel.
 - b. A needle point tracer looks like a tracing wheel but has sharp points and is used for transferring the outline of existing garment sections onto paper by making lines of holes in the paper. Use a porous surface underneath like cork to protect your table.
5. Sewing machine needles also come in a variety of sizes and suit different purposes. Here are some of the ones we will look at in this art program.
- a. Universal needles sizes 70, 80, and 90 are for general purpose sewing. The larger the number the larger the needle, and the heavier weight fabric it is used on.
 - b. Stretch or jersey needles are used for sewing stretch knit. They have blunt or ball point tips to go in between yarn fibres to avoid cutting them. Stretch fabrics are often knits, where there is a continuous yarn. Cutting the yarn anywhere can cause the fabric to unravel in ladders.
 - c. Demin needles are thicker and meant for going through heavier weight fabric in multiple layers.
 - d. Twin needles can be used on some sewing machines and accommodate two spools of thread from the top of the machine. The bobbin thread zigzags between the two lines of stitching on the back of the fabric and can be used to overcast a raw edge folded up.
 - e. Spring needles are used for machine embroidery instead of an embroidery foot. I use these on my machine without a presser foot, but always lower the presser foot guide when sewing. Keep your hands away from the feed when using these needles because there is no protection for fingers that get in the way.
6. Sewing machine presser feet come in a variety of shapes, with specific purposes. See the electronic guide on our Google drive for an overview of the types. For this workshop we will use the universal one most of the time. Other types that are handy to have are:
- a. A zipper foot, where the attachment to the machine is to one size, to allow the foot to run along the edge of the teeth of a zip when sewing it into your project.
 - b. A button hole foot has a long rectangular open space in front allowing all parts of the button hole to be visible while it is being stitched.
 - c. An embroidery foot is more open and allows you to see the stitches as they are formed.
7. Bobbins hold the lower thread for machine sewing. This thread is looped around the upper thread with each stitch to form your stitch line.
- a. You can use a metal or plastic bobbin, but changing between might need a tension adjustment on the upper machine sewing thread. The metal bobbins are heavier and it takes more top thread tension to match the resistance of pulling thread out of them during sewing.
8. A bodkin (not provided) is a long thin piece of metal with a hook on one end and a handle on the other. It is inserted into long narrow fabric shapes and used for turning them right side out after sewing.
9. Happy creating, and please share your knowledge of sewing materials and equipment with the class if you feel comfortable.