



# Notions & Fabrics

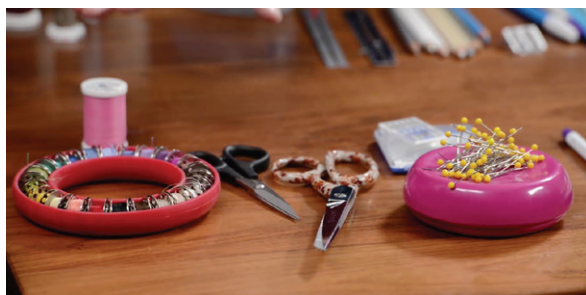
## Basic Sewing Equipment & Notions

As you learn to sew, you will need some basic, household sewing equipment and supplies. Most equipment and notions can be purchased at local fabric stores\* or quilting shops. You will also need fabric for your projects. Choose from various types and weights. The instruction sheets for each project contain a list of equipment, notions, fabric recommendations and yardage for the project and its variations.

We have found several notions very helpful for cutting out and sewing projects, and recommend that you have the equipment and notions on the following list on hand for use during this course. You will find that many of the items will last for years to come!

### Basic Equipment List

- Sewing machine
- Sewing machine bobbins
- Steam iron and ironing board
- Rotary cutter system *or*
- Cutting board & pattern making paper



### Basic Notions List

- Thread to match your project
- 7" to 8" dressmaker shears
- 4" sharp sewing scissors
- Hand sewing needles
- Sewing machine needles (size 12-14)
- Straight pins
- Pincushion
- Marking utensils
- Seam ripper
- Bodkin or large safety pin
- Point turner
- Small ruler *or* seam gauge
- Masking tape
- Sewing machine oil
- Small screwdriver & machine lint brush



\* See Sewing Suppliers List at end of document.

## Sewing Supplies – Descriptions and Tips

### Main Equipment

- **Sewing Machine**

The main piece of equipment you will use is a sewing machine. Choose one in good working order. Don't try to learn to sew on a machine that is not working properly! You will need a machine that has a straight stitch, zigzag stitch and a buttonhole feature. It is also nice if it has a removable table with a free arm beneath.



- **Steam Iron & Ironing Board**

A midgrade steam iron that works well is ample for pressing as you sew. If you use distilled water in your iron, it should last a long time.



- **Sleeve Board (Optional)**

A sleeve board is a very helpful tool to add to your supplies. Use it as a small ironing board when pressing fabric sewn into cylinders. A rolled up towel can be substituted.

### Notions

All the supplies, items and tools you use when sewing are called **notions**. Although there is a myriad of choices at most fabric shops, you will need only a few basic items. As you sew more frequently, you will develop favorites.



- **Thread**

Try to match your thread type to your fabric, using cotton thread with cotton fabric and polyester thread for synthetic fabrics. It is best to use high quality thread. Don't use old thread as it may be brittle. Cheap quality threads can be weak and interfere with proper tension or break in the sewing machine.

If you choose to use a spool larger than the standard size, consider using a thread stand. It will feed thread to your machine much better.

Some sewing machines are sensitive to the type of thread they use. European-made sewing machines work best with European-made threads such as the high-quality Gutermann and Mettler threads.

Serger thread is excellent for serging, but avoid using it in a sewing machine. It has one ply less than sewing thread.



- **Pins and Pincushion**

Any straight pins will work. Extra long, large headed pins work well for most sewing projects.

Glass head pins are nice for sewing clothing. They have a fine, long shaft and the glass will not melt if the heads accidentally come in contact with a hot iron.

Magnetic pin cushions secure pins well but any pin cushion works fine.

- **Sewing Machine Bobbins**

Use the correct size bobbins or your machine. You will need one bobbin for each color of thread you will be using, so start with 1 or 2 dozen. A bobbin holder is also very useful.

- **Scissors**

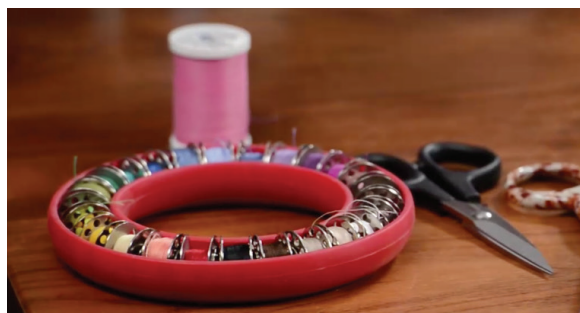
You will need sharp 8" dressmaker's shears (7" for smaller hands) for cutting fabric. These should be the best quality you can. Set them aside for fabric use only.

You will also need a pair of 4" sharp sewing scissors to use at your sewing machine.

- **Sewing Needles**

Hand sewing needles – size 12 or 14

Machine needles – Buy the correct kind for your sewing machine, and the correct size



for the fabric you are sewing on. For most fabrics, use a size 12 or 14. If you prefer a larger eye, choose the 14.

For sewing upholstery or denim, use a jeans/denim needles.

Ballpoint needles are used to sew on knits. Avoid them for woven fabrics.

- **Seam Ripper**

Any type of thread ripper will work fine. You may prefer one with an oval handle that won't roll off your work surface!

- **Point Turner**

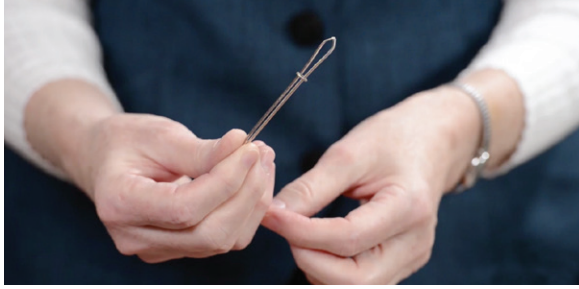
This can be any object used for gently poking corners square. It should be dull and not sharp or it will poke through the fabric! A medium crochet hook or mechanical pencil with the lead retracted can be used. Fabric stores carry several different types. Avoid using the points of scissors for turning corners – they can easily cut right through your fabric.

- **Small Ruler**

You will need some type of small ruler approximately 1" by 6" for measuring hems and folds. Omnigridd makes several sizes of clear acrylic rulers. You may also want an adjustable metal seam guide.







- **Bodkin (Optional)**

This handy tool helps you thread elastic, ribbon or cording through a casing. A large safety pin also works fine.

- **Marking Pencils & Sharpener**

Use a marker appropriate to your project. A mechanical pencil can be used for marking light or colored fabrics on the wrong side. These pencil marks cannot be erased easily.

Lighter colored fabrics can be marked with disappearing ink quilt markers. Purple ones disappear with air but sometimes fade faster than anticipated. Blue ones normally come out with water. Do not iron over blue marks; they will leave a permanent residue.

On dark fabrics, you can use white, silver, or yellow pencils. Chalk, chalk pencils and chalk wheels mark readily and brush out easily. Soapstone also marks well but can break.

Always test markers first on a scrap of fabric to make sure the mark will come out. As you use them, you will find your favorite kinds.

- **Masking Tape**

Masking tape comes off readily and will not leave a residue. It is handy too use on your sewing machine to mark seam guides.

- **Sewing Machine Oil**

Choose a high quality sewing machine oil.

- **Small Sewing Machine Brush & Screwdriver**

These tools will help you keep your machine lint free and in service.

- **Iron Cleaner (Optional)**

This product cleans your iron plate when it gets anything on it that causes it to drag.



## Cutting Systems

- **Rotary Cutting System *Highly Recommended***

Rotary cutter

Self-healing cutting mat with 1" grid

6" x 24" Omnigrd ruler

We highly recommend this system for cutting out the projects. It provides a fast, precise way to measure and cut fabric pieces for a multitude of sewing and quilting purposes.

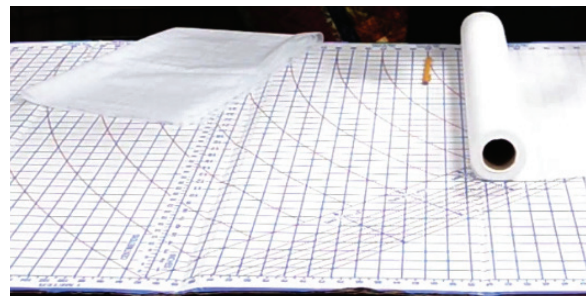
The circular razor blade in the cutter cuts a neat, clean edge. The mats and rulers have accurate grids and come in a variety of sizes. If you get only one ruler, purchase the 6" x 24".

- **Cardboard Cutting Board & Pattern Paper**

If you choose not to use a rotary system, you can use a cardboard cutting board with 1" and curved grids. This board was designed for cutting fabric with scissors. It folds up for easy storage.

Use it when making clothing, especially if you want to protect your table or if you must cut on the carpet.

You can make project patterns from rolled paper or tissue paper using the cutting board grid as a guide. For more permanent pattern pieces, use interfacing with 1" grid marks. It can be purchased in most fabric stores.



## Overview of Fabric Used in Projects

The type of fabric, yardage, dimensions for each project piece and notions will be listed at the beginning of each project page.

### Light to Medium Weight Cotton Fabric

For most of our projects, we recommend using light- to medium-weight cotton fabrics.

### Drapery Fabric

A few projects like the Shoe Bag use drapery weight fabric. It has a little heavier feel to it and drapes well.

### Upholstery Fabric

The Flange Pillow and Tote Bag are best made from upholstery fabric. Avoid upholstery fabrics that are too heavy or have a plastic back. Choose those that have a soft feel.



*Light to Medium-Weight Cotton*



*Drapery Weight Fabric*

### Stripes, Plaids & Directional Fabric

Stripes and plaids look very nice in many of our projects. If you choose to use these fabrics, you will need to be prepared to take a little extra time to lay them out carefully and cut them straight with the lines of the fabric.

If you choose fabric with a directional design, make sure you purchase enough for the design to be upright on the finished piece. These likewise require a little more care and consideration, to make sure that the design will be going the right direction on your finished project.

Review this video: [Notions & Fabrics](#)

Watch the next video: [The Sewing Machine](#)



*Upholstery Fabric with a Soft Feel*



*Stripes, Plaids & Directionals*

## Questions about Sewing?

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Submit any questions for Cindy in the Q&A section on the course homepage or post it to our blog at [www.sustainlife.org/blog/category/sewing/](http://www.sustainlife.org/blog/category/sewing/)

## Sewing Suppliers

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### Simply Fabrics

6408 Gholson Road  
Waco, Texas 76705  
254.829.7119  
[info@simplyfabrics.com](mailto:info@simplyfabrics.com)

## Additional Videos

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### Beginning Sewing

- Introduction to Sewing
- Introducing the Projects
- The Sewing Machine
- Cutting Methods
- Foundational Practice Sampler

### Project Videos

- 1 Lined Tissue Holder
- 2 Shoe Bag
- 3 Gift Bag
- 4 Double Drawstring Bag
- 5 Bag Caddie
- 6 Bread Cloth
- 7 Basic Pillowcase
- 8 Lined Drawstring Bag
- 9 Pillowcase with Contrasting Band
- 10 Flange Pillow
- 11 Tote Bag
- 12 Lined Apron