

## Important Information for this Course

### Sew Fabulous! Sewing Machine Fundamentals

Canterbury Community Association (CCA) Fall 2025 Session

#### Level 1 – Beginner (6 classes)

For beginners who have sewn zero to a few items. Also for people looking to refresh their sewing skills. Lessons will focus on the basics of setting up a sewing machine; sewing straight seams and curves; and, exploring a variety of fabrics, tools & supplies. We will sew mostly with woven fabrics. By sewing several projects that can be made in a few hours each, student will learn how to: choose the right fabric for a given project; prep fabric; cut with scissors and a rotary cutter; press vs iron; pin vs clip; glue baste; choose the correct needle and thread; select an appropriate stitch; understand when and how to finish edges; and, use interfacing when more structure is required.

#### Level 2 – Intermediate (6 classes)

For the Adventurous Beginner or Intermediate student who has sewn several items they're happy with. Level 2 builds on the basics covered in Level 1. Lessons will focus on getting more out of our sewing machine by playing with stitch settings and presser feet. We'll explore how sewing stretchy knit fabrics is different from woven. We'll discuss what makes a "good" pattern, how to take body measurements, and how to arrive at patterns that fit the way we want them to.

### Approach

In this course, you will learn the skills and best practices you need to work up to sewing the projects that you want to make. This means sewing samples and test swatches; playing with different stitches, fabrics, and needles; being curious. As we make several small projects together as a class, we'll discuss the whys; try variations. Students are encouraged to set their own sewing objectives which will be incorporated into the lessons. Sewing is about creativity. Projects will feature various fabric types & techniques while leaving space for individuals to make choices about style, color, and complexity. As with most skills, the more you practice the better you'll get.

The number of projects and pace will depend on the mix of students, learning styles, time available to sew outside of class, the working condition of the sewing machine, etc. At the end of each class we'll have a quick chat about what we want to focus on next. My approach is to provide options so everyone has something they can work that meets their needs. Where we won't have time to go over a specific request in class, I'll do my best to find a resource that provides that info.

Having good tools that work well are important to having an enjoyable time that yields satisfying results. Good quality does not have to mean expensive. It does mean that they do the job reliably with ease. Otherwise, trying to do the thing with a poorly made or maintained tool will be frustrating. Take notes, ask questions, work on projects at home when you can, and you'll be well on your way to sewing all the things!

## Sewing Machine – Bring your Own

In this course, you get to learn on your **\*own\* machine**, so you'll need to bring it to each class. Making sure that it is in **\*good working order\*** is essential so class time is spent on learning to sew vs diagnosing issues that require a technician to resolve. Read your user manual or watch some videos about your specific model. Look into how to thread, wind a bobbin, select stitches and adjust their size. The instructor will help you in class, but is not an expert on each brand and model. If the machine has been in your basement for who knows how long, or is an older machine vs bought new recently, it is worth bringing it to a technician to have it professionally serviced. The service fee is typically about \$150 for a cleaning, alignment, and stitch test.

## Fee for class materials

There is a \$75 fee to cover the costs incurred by the instructor to provide what's needed for students to sew the sample projects in class; this is not part of the registration fee charged by the Canterbury Community Association (CCA). The fee can be paid through cash or e-transfer to the instructor. Materials refers to all the things that go into the projects such as fabric, notions, trim, handouts, access to specialized equipment, tools & resources that contribute to a fulfilling experience.

## Supplies

### Required

Sewing machine **\*in good working order\***  
User Manual for sewing machine  
Bobbins compatible with your machine  
Needles for your sewing machine  
Extension cord / power bar  
Fabric Scissors  
Craft scissors for paper  
Straight Pins, glass head are best  
Magnetic dish or pin cushion  
Seam ripper or "un-picker"  
Small paintbrush, cheap craft kind  
Sewing awl or stiletto  
Fine-tip tweezers

Iron & thick towel to iron on  
Thread, 100% polyester all purpose  
Straight edge ruler 12" – 30 cm long  
Measuring tape  
Hand sewing needles & safety pins  
Glue stick  
Heat erasable pens, eg., Frixxion  
Pencil & eraser  
Chaco pen or tailor's chalk  
Permanent markers: red, black, other colors  
Highlighters  
Painters tape & clear cellophane tape  
3-ring Binder for handouts

### Optional – very handy

45 mm rotary cutter  
Self-healing mat 24" x 36"  
Quilting ruler 22" x 2" – 6" wide

Clips  
Fabric snips or embroidery scissors  
Ruler with a 90 square

## Course Outline

There are three themes: 1) Foundational Skills; 2) Woven Fabrics; and, 3) Knit Fabrics. Level 1 will focus on foundational skills and sewing with woven fabric. Level 2 will expand the skill set as well as move into knit fabrics. Projects will be tailored to the students' interests. Listed below are some project options. The pace will be based on students' comfort level. The instructor will bring fabric & notions needed, as well as any patterns. For some classes, there will be a handout.

The number of projects completed and pace of the course will depend on the mix of students, learning styles, time available to sew outside of class, the working condition of the sewing machine, etc.. At the end of each class we'll have a quick chat about what we want to focus on next. My approach is to provide options so everyone has something they can work that meets their needs. Where we won't have time to go over a specific request in class, I'll do my best to find a resource that provides that info.

### 1 – Foundational Skills

- Tools, supplies, fabrics
- Threading the sewing machine
- Stitches, presser feet, feed dogs
- Sewing in a straight line
- Turning a corner, following a curve
- Pressing, ironing & hemming
- Measuring, cutting & tearing
- Casings, drawstrings, & straps

#### Project options

Pennant Banner  
Storage cube or basket  
Scrunchies  
Cleanser pads & washcloths  
Table napkin  
Drawstring bag

### 2 – Sewing with woven fabrics

- Seams vs edge finishes
- French seams, boxed corners
- Closures & fasteners
- Structure & reinforcement
- Piping & binding
- Choosing the right fabric
- Patterns
- Body measurements & Ease

#### Project options

Zip pouch  
Tote bag with pockets  
PJ pants  
Throw pillow  
Tunic top, shirt dress  
Tiered skirt, circle skirt  
Wrap & go storage roll  
Curtains

### 3 – Sewing with knit fabrics

- Considerations
- Needles & blades
- Stretch & Recovery
- Selecting patterns
- Cuffs & Ribbing
- Waistbands
- Zippers

#### Project options

Neck warmer  
Hat  
Wool sweater throw pillow  
Refashion a t-shirt into a tank top or skirt  
Copy a t-shirt  
Pullover & Hoodies  
Jogging pants

## Books

There are a lot of books out there, most will be a good general reference. The ones I've listed here are some of the best I've come across.

Bara, Brett (2011). "Sewing in a Straight Line: Quick & crafty projects you can make by simply sewing straight". Potter Craft, Crown Publishing Group, Random House Inc., New York. pp 160

Clair, Alyson (2014). "The Colette Guide to Sewing Knits: Professional techniques for beautiful everyday garments". Colette Patterns, San Bernardino, CA, USA. pp 168

Emodi, Barbara (2018). "Sew... The Garment-Making Book of Knowledge: Real-Life Lessons from a Serial Sewist". Stash Books C&T Publishing, Lafayette, CA, USA. pp 255

Francois-Campbell, J. (2016). "Simple Tailoring & Alterations: Hems - Waistbands - Seams - Sleeves - Pockets - Cuffs - Darts - Tucks - Fastenings - Necklines – Linings". GMC Publications. pp 174

## Websites

Catherine Sews <https://www.youtube.com/c/CatherineSews>, [Thread your machine and start sewing!](#)  
BC sewing instructor, focus on upcycling clothes, "make it work" approach

Craftsy <https://www.craftsy.com/sew/sewclasses/>  
Sewing courses and patterns, some for free, most on a membership basis

Curvy Sewing Collective <https://curvysewingcollective.com/>  
Curated content with focus body positivity

Downtown Tailoring <https://www.youtube.com/@DowntownTailoring>  
Ottawa-based alterations expert, novel, efficient ways to alter clothes with a professional finish

Free Bespoke Sewing Patterns <https://freesewing.org/>  
Free patterns that you can customize to your measurements, wardrobe basics

Jalie Sewing Patterns <https://jalie.com/>  
Quebec-based, focus on knits, wide size range within each pattern from child to adult