

# Important Information for this Course

## Sew Fabulous! Sewing Machine Fundamentals

Level 1 – Beginner & Level 2 – Intermediate

Canterbury Community Association (CCA) Spring 2025 Session

**Level 1 introduces the basics**

**Level 2 introduces more complex construction & finishes**

You've got the sewing machine and a vision but not sure how to make that happen? In this course, you will learn the skills and best practices you need to work up to sewing the projects that inspired you in the first place. This means sewing samples and test swatches; playing with different stitches, fabrics, and needles; being curious. As we progress through a mix of small projects together as a class, we'll discuss the whys; explore 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. To get the most out of this experience, try to find time to sew at home. Take notes, ask questions, and you'll be on your way to sewing all the things. In the same way, 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. Poor results could be due to the tools not working properly, user error, or both, making it difficult to gain any proficiency.

## Equipment, Tools & Supplies

**Sewing Machine \*in good working order\* – Bring your own to each class**

This class differs from ones where the sewing machines are supplied and inspected before students come. In this course, you get to learn on your own machine. Making sure it's 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 by 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.

## Student Supplies Required for this Course

The instructor will send students an email with additional info about sourcing supplies and a link to a questionnaire about any specific skills or projects they want to cover.

### Required Supplies

Sewing machine *in good working order*	Iron & thick towel to iron on
User Manual for sewing machine	
Thread, 100% polyester all-purpose Bobbins compatible with your machine	
Straight edge ruler 12" – 30 cm long	
Needles for your sewing machine	Measuring tape
Extension cord / power bar	Hand sewing needles & safety pins
Fabric Scissors	Glue stick
Craft scissors for paper	Heat erasable pens, eg., Frixxion
Straight Pins, glass head are best	Pencil & eraser
Magnetic dish or pin cushion	Chaco pen or tailor's chalk
Seam ripper or "un-picker"	Permanent markers: red, black, other colors
Small paintbrush, cheap craft kind	Highlighters
Sewing awl or stiletto	Painters tape & clear cellophane tape
Fine-tip tweezers	3-ring Binder for handouts

### Optional - but very handy, makes a task much easier

45 mm rotary cutter	Clips
Self-healing mat 24" x 36"	Fabric snips or embroidery scissors
Quilting ruler 22" x 2" – 6" wide	Ruler with a 90 square

## Course Outline

There are three themes: 1) How to get the most from your sewing machine; 2) Sewing with woven fabrics; and, 3) Sewing with knit fabrics. Projects will be tailored to the students' interests. The pace will depend the mix of students, time available to sew outside of class, condition of the sewing machine, etc. The projects listed below are examples of what we may choose to work on.

### 1 – Basics of using a sewing machine

Topics	Projects
Tools, supplies, fabrics	Storage cube or basket
Threading the sewing machine	Scrunchies
Sewing in a straight line	Cleanser pads & washcloths
Turning a corner, following a curve	Lovies bonding hearts
Pressing, ironing & hemming	Table napkin
Measuring, cutting & tearing	Drawstring bag

Casings, drawstrings, & straps	
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## 2 – Sewing with woven fabrics

Topics	Projects
French seams, boxed corners	Zip pouch
Closures & fasteners	Toiletries bag
Structure & reinforcement	Tote bag with pockets
Piping & binding	PJ pants, draft your own
Choosing the right fabric	Tunic top, draft your own
Patterns	Throw pillow
Body measurements & Ease	Curtains

## 3 – Sewing with knit fabrics

Topics	Projects
Considerations for sewing knits	Neck warmer
Stretch	Hat & Mittens
Selecting patterns	Wool sweater throw pillow
Cuffs & ribbing	Re-fashion t-shirt to tank top
Waistbands	Copy a t-shirt
Zippers	Pullovers & Hoodies
Modifying a pattern	Jogging pants

### Patterns

Patterns will be provided for the sample projects. Where students wish to work on an independent project, the instructor can suggest either free or paid options for the student to obtain themselves.

### Fabric, notions, books, additional supplies & materials

In most cases, the instructor will bring fabric & notions needed for the lesson, demo and sample projects. These materials include a variety of tools, books, notions, etc., that are either foundational or will elevate your sewing experience to try. For some classes, the instructor will provide a handout. Where students choose to work on a full-size project, they will need to bring their own fabric and pattern.

## Books

There are a lot of books out there, most will be good general references. 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