

Basic Sewing and Pattern Making Tools

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<http://www.burdastyle.com/techniques/basic-sewing-and-pattern-making-tools>



In this How To, we explain the uses for basic sewing supplies and pattern making tools. As with any craft, having the proper tools makes a world of difference in the ease of your work as well as the quality of your end result.

Step 1



Your scissors are some of your most important tools, and you should use a sharp pair that fit nicely in your hands. Try many different pairs before choosing one; think of it like buying a pair of shoes. Most scissors can be sharpened, so if you decide to spend a lot of money, they can last you a very long time. Some people prefer to use the less expensive scissors, they are lighter and may be easier for some, although these need to be replaced more often. The two scissors on the left are basic all-purpose scissors. The two in the center are basic dressmaking scissors. The big ones on the far right are for cutting oak tag when making patterns, and to the right are pinking shears, which cut in a zig-zag, which is used to keep unfinished raw edges from unraveling.

Step 2



Snippers, used to snip threads. Using a snipper to cut excess thread is much easier than using a scissor: there is less action for your hand to do. Instead of putting your fingers through the scissor handles, just pick up your snippers, give a squeeze, and Wah-la! I always keep a pair sitting with me at the machine. You can also use them for marking notches on your fabric.

Step 3



A seam ripper, another tool you mustnât go without. As everyone makes mistakes, everyone should have a seam ripper. Seam rippers are basically all the same, but the size of the curved blade and the handle may differ. When using a ripper, work from the bobbin thread side of the seam.

Step 4



Machine needles. There are many different shapes and sizes of machine sewing needles. [This How To](#) explains the different sizes of machine needles. Always check that you are using the right correct needle for the job.

Step 5



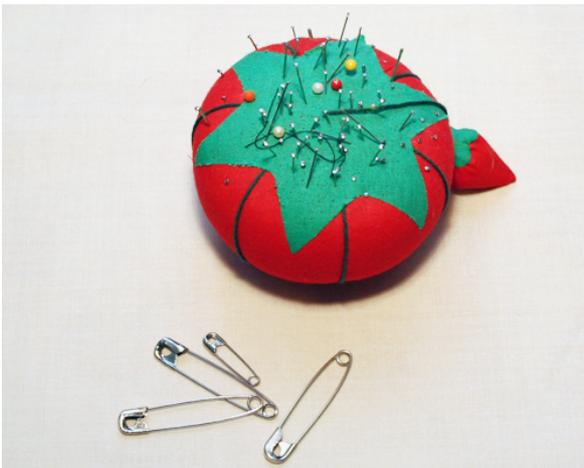
Hand sewing needles for hand sewing, putting on buttons, tacking down appliques, embroidery, beading and minor repairs. On the left is a needle threader, handy if you have a hard time getting the thread through the eye of the needle. On the right is a thimble: if you are handsewing something heavy, like denim or leather, a thimble is handy for pushing the thread through the material.

Step 6



Like needles, there are many different types of thread. Your thread must correspond to both the needle size and fabric you are sewing with. See this [How To](#) for more information.

Step 7



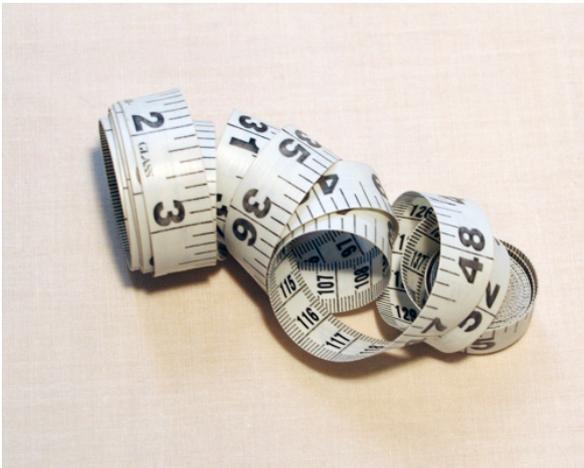
Dressmaker pins, pincushion and safety pins. Your pincushion keeps your pins one place. Dressmaker pins are useful for keeping your pieces together until you stitch them together, as well as for fitting garments to the body, and for draping on a dressform. Safety pins are useful for quilting, patchwork, and fittings.

Step 8



Iron, tailor's ham, and sleeve roll. For most sewing projects, an iron is a must to get a good finished product. A tailor's ham (on the left) is used for pressing shapes like like sleeve caps and bust points. A sleeve roll (on the right) is used for ironing seems in sleeves and pant legs. The woolen plaid sides are for pressing heavier fabrics, the white cotton side is for lighter fabrics.

Step 9



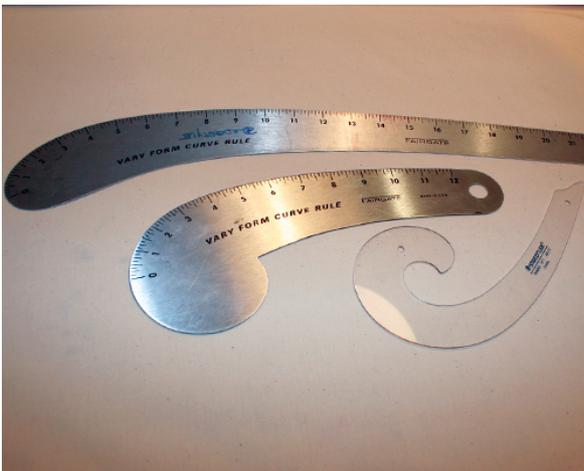
Tape measure, a must for fittings, pattern making, sewing, and draping.

Step 10



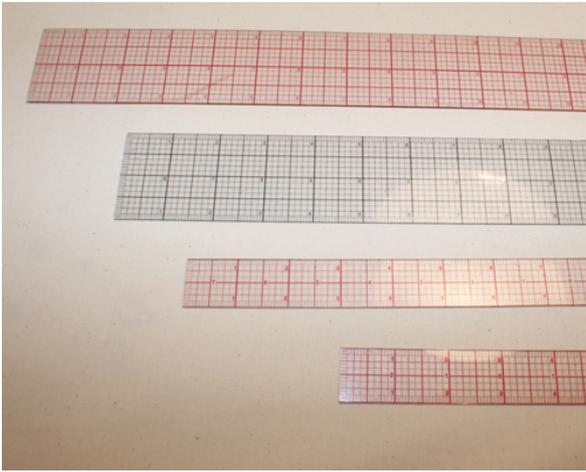
Tracing wheel, tracing paper, colored and white chalk wheels, and water soluble marker. The tracing wheel and paper are used in pattern making for marking on muslin and paper. The chalk and water soluble markers are for temporarily marking fabric: for instance, transferring pattern markings, cutting bias, and marking hem lines. When using light colored and/or expensive fabrics, be sure to test that the markings completely come out of the fabric.

Step 11



Curves. Hip curve, on top, is used for drawing curved hems, hips, and other slightly curved areas. French curves are used in pattern making for drawing armholes, necklines, and other small, severe curves.

Step 12



Clear gridded rulers. These allow you to measure pencil markings from the top, and are a must in pattern making for adding seam allowances and the like.

Step 13



Alpha-numeric or dot paper, awl, notcher, clear tape, stapler. Pattern making on dot paper versus unmarked paper is infinitely easier: the markings help keep you grainlines true and your angles right. An awl is used to mark darts, pocket placement, and the like on patterns and fabric. A notcher marks various important points on patterns (dart intake, center front and back, etc). Clear tape often comes in handy when modifying patterns. Be sure to use matte transparent tape rather than the shiny kind: pencil markings don't show up on the shiny kind.

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