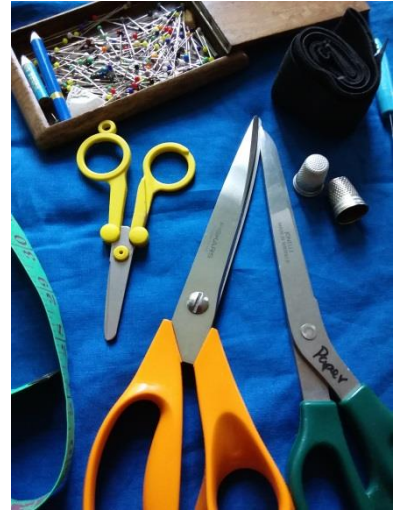


ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT

Most people have the basic items already and there is no need to rush out to buy a long list of items immediately. Scissors are however essential.

Scissors for cutting out: these should be used for cutting fabric only, never for paper, as it will blunt them. Often it is recommended to have ones with really long blades but get what you are comfortable with and if you are left handed then get the correct ones. The cost of scissors relates to the length and quality of the blade. The blades should be at least 5 inches long and are easier to use than a shorter (cheaper) pair. Fiskars 25cm dressmaking scissors are good, and so are John Lewis' own brand.



Scissors for cutting paper patterns and a **small pair of scissors** for trimming threads are also useful.

Stitch un-pickers

Tailor's chalk or chalk pencils are both very useful and inexpensive.

Tape measure, marked in metric on one side and imperial on the other. It is worth looking carefully before you buy as some are much easier to read than others and the inches should be divided into 1/8ths not 1/10ths.

Pins: I like the glass headed ones. A few safety pins in different sizes are useful.

Weights: can be useful for holding down paper patterns while you are positioning them. You can use weights especially made for this but items in the house such as new heavy washers, curtain weights etc. work just as well.

Some needles for hand sewing. A general rule is to use the finest that you can thread easily. **A needle threader** is cheap and useful.

Wax is about £2.00 and very useful if you struggle to thread a needle especially for threading the overlocker.

Tacking/basting thread, this is soft and breaks easily. It is not the same as normal thread. You may need to ask for it in the shop. It should cost about £1.00

Good quality sewing thread: Gutermann and Coats are established companies. Make sure you buy cotton or polyester thread for normal sewing and **not** one of the many other types available such as those for machine embroidery, quilting, top stitching, silk, etc. I do not advise buying a cheap 'bargain box' of thread from an unknown maker.

Sewing machine. Please check that it is working well before you come and that it has been brought into a warm room, if necessary, a few hours earlier. Transport it carefully.

Pressing:

To get a really good result seams should be pressed as you go along as this makes all the difference to how professional your garment looks when you have finished.

A steam iron.

Muslin cloth half a metre of inexpensive muslin, (washed without fabric conditioner) is extremely useful for pressing.

Tailor's ham and a sleeve board are things you may never have heard of but once you've tried them you will not want to be without. These are available on the internet and sewing shops.

For making patterns; pencils, pens, ruler, tracing paper, lined paper, and Sellotape. Invest in a **soft** pencil, 3B or 4B is much easier to use on the pattern.

Notebook: When you finish a project it is useful to make notes on what worked well for you or what did not, where you bought the material, how the fit was, any changes you made to the pattern etc.

Lastly. You may have a relative who used to sew and has now given up. People are often delighted to pass on various items that they have acquired over the years to a new enthusiast. Vintage buttons are lovely and can 'make' an outfit and vintage thread is often fine to use.

