

Basic Upholstery for Woodworkers  
Course Outline

SATURDAY

Introduction and Welcome

“The Art of Upholstery” &  
“A Brief History of Chairs”

Powerpoint Presentation

Some common myths about upholstery

**BREAK**

Welcome to the Shop

Tools and Materials of the Trade

A tack for all seasons

Upholsterer’s Tool kit

Webbing and Springs

Lofting, decking and duck

Working up “Into the White”

Soft Goods Plain and Fancy

And all the trimmings

**LUNCH**

Upholstering a Simple Slip Seat

Demonstration

**Materials**

Samples of various classic materials including cotton, horsehair, jute, burlap, and examples of modern replacement products.

Including why tacks are sterilized, and why those feed sacks are in Aunt Millie’s chair ?

Samples of all manner and form of common and fancy fasteners made for the trade

That must be for upholstery, right ?

Samples of the most common support foundations and the tools to tame them.

Making the seat high, tight and handsome

Creating a proper undergarment for the show cover.

A collection of covers from silk, to horsehair cloth, to leather and vinyl and how they behave differently

All manner of beads scrolls, welts and tassels

## Upholsterer

Frames vs. panels	Demonstration of covering of traditional webbed frames and modern plywood panels
Soften the hard edges	Demonstration of the critical contact area between covers and frames, with various methods of work
Stretch that webbing 'til it sings	Use of various webbing stretchers Hands on Demonstration with class.
<b>BREAK</b> What is your "Sit Number" ?	Stuffing and lofting the seat with horsehair, cotton and lots of different foam
Spittin Tacks vs. Shootin Staples	Examples of fastening systems with emphasis on their good and bad "points".
Finding true north in your fabric	Layout and cutting tips, and techniques
Who put the dust cover on the bottom ?	A happy seat is a ventilated seat whose bottom is neat.

### **DAY'S WRAP UP**

## Basic Upholstery for Woodworkers Course Outline

### SUNDAY

#### Materials

#### **"A Tale of Two Chairs"**

Powerpoint Presentation

Hand tied, coil springs vs. ziggers  
Horsehair vs. foam

Why they don't make 'em like that  
Anymore ?

Traditional built-up foundation vs.  
modern stapled edge roll, with samples

#### **BREAK**

#### **A Proper Webbed and Sprung Seat**

Demonstration

Traditional seat frame basics

Tack em, don't crack em.

## Upholsterer

No Shredded Wheat for breakfast

Old and new methods for dealing with damaged frame members.

Weaving the Webbing

Traditional hand methods for applying structural jute webbing.  
Hands on Demonstration with Class

### **LUNCH**

The Taming of the Spring

Italian twine, cowboy knots, and little bit of bad language.

Hands on Demonstration with class

Putting the “sit” in the seat

Horsehair, cotton, foam, and some surprises from the home center

Keep your eye on the flower

Pattern matching, and other optical illusions.

### **BREAK**

#### **Common Upholstery Repairs**

“A curved needle?”, asked the blind man.

Special demo of the most common repair technique of “blind stitching”, for all participants to sample.

Hands on Demonstration with class

When your zigger takes a zag.

Methods of dealing with errant continuous “zigger” springs, from the bottom up.

A button in time

The coolest way to replace a button, period.

Convincing a zipper that won't

Several tricks for dealing with cantankerous, man eating zippers

Whatever comes up...

#### **Question Time**

### **COURSE WRAP UP**

# MICHAEL MASCELLI

## UPHOLSTERER



### **“BASIC UPHOLSTERY” TOOL LIST**

#### INTRODUCTION

One of the wonderful things about the venerable craft of upholstery is that has been and for the most part still is, practiced with just a few very basic hand tools. Having said that, I must confess that I am something of a tool guy, and have a pretty extensive collection of both common and unusual tools related to the trade, many of which I will bring to show and explain in class. Within the short format of a two day class, we will not be able to get into to very involved projects, and I have set this up so that there will be no materials fee, and so that you can literally attend without bringing any tools. We will work teams of 2, and I will have sufficient materials and practice pieces, as well as tools which can be shared by team members. However, I am sure that some of you will want to go ahead and assemble some tools to bring with you and so that you can take your new skills home and put them to work! So here are my suggestions:

#### TACK HAMMER

By far the most important tool in the upholsterer's kit is a good tack hammer. There are many on the market but my personal favorite is the industry standard C.S. Osborne #33. It has the classic shape, weight and balance needed for heavy and light tacking, and the bronze body will not rust. It also has a permanent magnet on one end, which is far superior to the “split end” style cast iron hammers, even those by Osborne. I know many old timers who literally “spit tacks” by placing them in their mouths, but I prefer to deftly pick them up with the magnet end, give them a tap to set, and a solid hit to drive them home. Almost any long narrow tack hammer will do, and you can buy them used for \$10-20 on eBay or at a garage sale. A brand new #33 is about \$30. (See sources of supply list)

#### WEBBING STRETCHER

For all traditional and much modern work, it is necessary to install and stretch heavy jute webbing to support the springs. There are a number of ways to do this, and the one I will recommend for basic work is to use an Osborne #253 “Gooseneck” stretcher or an Osborne # 255 plain stretcher. These tools look like torture devices and can cause a nasty puncture wound if used incorrectly, so please use care if you do buy one and try it out. I will have a number of these available for use in class, but it is a good tool to own, and they are not expensive.

#### STAPLE / TACK LIFTER

The tack hammer puts them in, and you also need something to get them out! There are without doubt, 100 variations of this simple tool, and Osborne makes 6 or 8 to this day, all of which have

their place in certain situations. If I could only have one, it would be the Osborne # 121 which has a short handle and a blade that looks like a coarse toothed saw. This tool is wonderful for both tacks and staples and is especially useful to remove the many temporary tacks that must be installed, and re-installed as coverings are carefully stretched and fitted. You often see these for sale by folks who don't know what they are, and they were also much favored by shoemakers. If you see one marked USMC that is for United Shoe Machinery Company. (Not the Marines!) Any of the claw foot style removers will work, and the smaller ones are generally more useful. This tool is also used to remove old work.

## WOODEN MALLET

A good hardwood mallet is especially important for ripping out old work, as it is used to strike either a tack lifter, or a ripping chisel placed underneath the old covers. I will demonstrate these techniques, but we will not have time enough for each team to really tear into some old work in class. My favorite mallet is a carver's type, with a tapered cylindrical head. There are some nice ones with urethane covers, such as "Wood is Good" sold by suppliers of good chisels, but pretty much any shape wooden mallet will do, as long as it is comfortable in your hand.

## SCISSORS / SHEARS

Of course there could be no fine upholstery without good sharp scissors and a really complete kit would have several sizes, from big shears for heavy fabric, to tiny ones for trimming light threads. The tool I have on my hip at all times is a Wiss #20 "Inlaid", which is 10" long. This has a bent handle for bench work, unlike the straight models meant for dressmaking and tailoring. There are several variations of the #20, such as the W which has a wider heavy blade and the P which has cushion grips. They also make a left handed (LH) model, which comes in handy even for those of us who are hopelessly right handed. There are literally zillions of these tools out there, and many good used ones can be had cheaply, though beware of any that show signs of excessive sharpening as the "inlaid" cutting edge of chrome steel is not that thick. A brand new #20 is only about \$35, and there are many similar models made by very good competitors such as Clauss, Gingher or Gold Seal. If you like one with a more ergonomic design, check the Fiskars #9911 shear from South Star Supply.

## NEEDLES

The craft of upholstery is always associated with needles and you really only need ONE for basic work. A "3" curved needle, with a large eye is the secret to "blind stitching" and also useful for a lot of basic hand closing and anchoring springs to webbing. These are widely available in fabric shops and usually sold in packs of multiple sizes. Most of these will be round shank needles which are fine for basic work, however if you happen to see ones that have a triangular shank (like a harpoon) those are useful for leather and heavy work. As with most these tools, needles are not expensive and I will have a supply available for class use. I will also show some REALLY big needles and the magic that they can do...

## UPHOLSTERER'S REGULATOR

This simple tool is often mistaken for a skinny ice pick, but it is anything but that! It looks like a long needle and has a blunt end with a large hole, which is NOT for sewing!! This is the all purpose, tucking, folding, adjusting, or "regulating" tool which is used constantly in the process of

getting the stuffing and covers to behave the way they are supposed to. These come in various sizes and I would recommend an 8 inch to start.

## CHUNK of BEESWAX

Something that will fit comfortably in your apron pocket. Get the real stuff, no substitutes, you will be amazed at how often you reach for it !

That is really IT, for the basic kit. Really!

## EXTRAS

If you were putting together a more complete kit, I would include:

- A “soft” cloth plastic coated tape measure for curved surfaces (get one with BIG numbers)
- Some dressmakers pins , T pins or small skewers (2’-3”)
- A good wooden straight edge at least 54” long (fabric width)
- A small chunk of real beeswax, comfortable to fit in an apron pocket
- Tailor’s chalk, the kind with a razor edge or some aquarellable white pencils such as Swan “Stabilo” which wipe off with water and don’t leave a mark
- A utility knife, with replaceable blades

## LUXURIES

- An electric knife for cutting foam, preferably one that has not been used for carving turkey! This is a great garage sale item, and requires GREAT care to use safely. I will have one that everyone will be able to try out.
- A pneumatic staple gun. This is the nuclear weapon of upholstery, and more than any other tool has transformed the trade. The standard of the industry is made in Germany by BeA, and shoots a 3/8” crown fine wire staple referred to as a “C” wire size. Senco and many others make similar tools, but the ones made for carpenters have much too heavy a wire. Porter Cable makes the UP-56 which is a nice gun, and Sears also has a good one which shoots a 1/2” crown staple. You can find some of these on EBay. I will bring at least one or two guns that everyone can try, and we will go over the various sizes of staples and their uses.

## PROJECTS

If you have the ability to bring a project piece to class, it might be very helpful, though the short time available will make it impossible to complete very much on any one piece. However, I can promise a full evaluation and suggestions of anything you bring. If you can email me photos, I will be glad to start that process with you ahead of time.

By far the most important tool you can bring is an open mind !! I am looking forward to seeing you in class.

## SOURCES OF SUPPLY:

Albany Foam and Supply (my local guys !!)

1335 Broadway

Albany NY 12204

1-800-235-0888

<http://www.ausinc.net/>

Ansaldi & Sons

29 Sullivan Road

Hudson, NH, 03051

1-877-686-7201

<http://www.ansaldi.com/>

South Star Supply Company

PO Box 90147

Nashville TN 37209

1-800-288-6739

<http://www.southstarsupply.com/>

Rochford Supply

1-866-681-7401

<http://www.rochfordsupply.com/>

Upholstery Supplies.Com

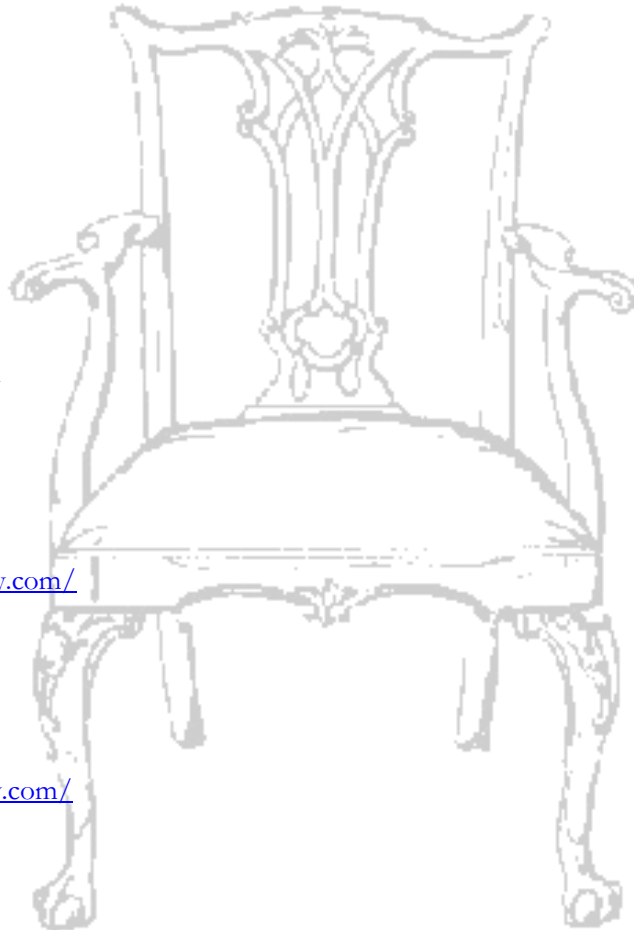
<http://www.upholsterysupplies.com/>

DIY Upholstery Supply

<http://www.diyupholsterysupply.com/>

Furniture Restoration Tools and Supplies

<http://www.furniturerestorationtoolsandsupplies.com/>



## ALL SATURDAY AND SUNDAY CLASSES START AT 9:00 AM EASTERN TIME

For all classes it is a good idea to bring is a pencil, notebook, a dust mask, ear plugs and without a doubt, safety glasses and a camera, if you would like to take pictures. ● **Classes marked with dot (●) do not have a specific tool list.**  
If your class requires hand tools, the tool list will be with this page. Lunch is included and will be served around noon.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Class</b>	<b>Instructor</b>
April 21-22, 2012	Introduction to Translucent Mineral Inlay	Stephen Hatcher
April 21-22, 2012	Fine Finishing with Hardware Store Materials	Tim Puro
April 28-29, 2012	Build A New-Lebanon Stool with a Splint Seat	Kerry Pierce
April 27-29, 2012 (Fri eve- Sun)	Making A Venerated Keepsake Jewelry Box	Paul Schurch
May 5, 2012	●Getting the Most from you Bandsaw	Michael Fortune
May 5-6, 2012	Build an Arts & Craft or a Modern Indoor/Outdoor Bench	Tim Celeski
May 5-6, 2012	Cold Bronze Casting & Mold Making	Scott Grove
May 5-6, 2012	Handplanes & Their Uses	Lie-Nielsen & Schwarz
May 19-20, 2012	●Machines: Safety, Set-ups & Uses	Steve Latta
May 19-20, 2012	Decorative Finishes with Flair	Mitch Kohanek
May 19-20, 2012	Teapots: Vessels with Carved Feet & Handles	Michael Hosaluk
June 9, 2012	●25 Ways to Machine Mortise & Tenon Joints	Jerry Forshee
June 9, 2012	●Chain Saw Safety by Stihl	Craig Walker
June 9-10, 2012	Dancing Glass: Stained Glass with a Twist	Cathy Claycomb
June 9-10, 2012	Making a Skateboard or Longboard, Parent/Child	Chris Gochnour
June 16, 2012	●Laser Marquetry: An Introduction to the Future of Veneering	Marc Adams
June 16, 2012	Making the Roubo Bookstand	Roy Underhill
June 16-17, 2012	Making a Router Table	Doug Dale
June 23-24, 2012	The Basics of Wood Finishing	Mitch Kohanek
June 23-24, 2012	Introduction to Intarsia	David Roth
June 23-24, 2012	Decorative Chip Carving	Craig Stevens
July 14, 2012	Fretboard Inlay: Secrets of Dealing with a Radius & Frets	Grit Laskin
July 14, 2012	What You Need To Know Before Starting Your Own Business	Carl Booth
July 14-15, 2012	Pattern Inlay & Decorative Borders	Steve Latta
July 14-15, 2012	Son of Skew	Alan Lacer
July 21-22, 2012	Husband & Wife Woodturning	Alan & Mary Lacer
July 21-22, 2012	Parent/Child Magic Class	Jeff Scanlan
July 28-29, 2012	Basic Veneering	Marc Adams
July 28-29, 2012	Principles of Wwkg Through the "Eyes" of a Simple Table	Keith Neer
July 28-29, 2012	Web Page for Woodworkers	Mark Sterner
July 28-29, 2012	Your Turn: Starting Out Right on the Lathe	Michael Mocho
August 4-5, 2012	Make a Beautiful European Style Cherry Cabinet	Zane Powell
August 4-5, 2012	Pyrography: An Introduction to Wood-Burning	Julie Bender
August 11-12, 2012	Making a Mountain Dulcimer	John Ressler
August 11-12, 2012	Gilding & Leafing: A Priceless Art	Peter Gedrys
August 11-12, 2012	Various Jigs & Fixtures of a Modern Boxmaker	Doug Stowe
August 18, 2012	Tricks to Installing All Kinds of Hardware	Doug Stowe
August 18-19, 2012	Hammer Veneering	David Orth
August 25, 2012	●Photographing Your Work	Michael Fortune
August 25-26, 2012	Carving Soap Stone	Mohammed Taheri
August 25-26, 2012	Really Cool Band Saw Puzzle Boxes	Jeff Vollmer
September 15, 2012	Getting Started in Spray Finishing	Mitch Kohanek
September 15-16, 2012	Back to Basics: Exploring Form	J Paul Fennell
September 15-16, 2012	Making Your Own Jigs for Accurate Mortise & Tenon Joinery	Jeff Miller
September 16, 2012	Lacquer Systems	Mitch Kohanek
September 22, 2012	Making Tambours & Angled Corner Cabinets	Zane Powell
September 22-23, 2012	●Sawing, Sorting & Stacking: How to Harvest of Log	Alf Sharp
September 22-23, 2012	Scroll Saw Potential	Marc Berner
September 22-23, 2012	Raise Your Woodworking Profile: Using Molding Planes	Williams & Mc Connell
October 6-7, 2012	Epoxy Surface Treatments for Woodworkers	Mark & Carol Hedin
October 6-7, 2012	●Machine Maintenance, Jigs & Fixtures	Powell & Dale
October 13-14, 2012	Making a Federal Executive Document Box	Headley & Hamilton
October 13-14, 2012	Taking Control of Color: The Next Step in Finishing	Mitch Kohanek
October 13-14, 2012	A Touch of Texture	Jennifer Shirley
October 20-21, 2012	The Making of Woodturning Tools, Jigs & Accessories	Alan Lacer
October 20-21, 2012	Basics of Upholstery	Mike Mascelli
October 20-21, 2012	Jigs & Fixtures for the #1 Chair	Michael Fortune