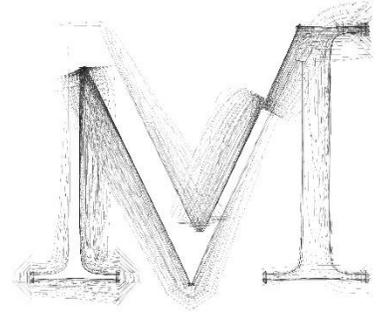


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UPHOLSTERER



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## ***Upholstery: Open Shop – Bring Your Own Project August 24 -28, 2020***

**Please note: There is a \$75.00 supply fee payable to Mike when you are here for this class. Please bring a check with you to pay Mike directly.**

### Tool List & Sources of Supply & Suggested Reading 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. In order to complete the project for the full week class student are encouraged to bring their own hand tools, loaner tools will be available. Specialty tools such as air staplers, foam cutters, spring bender and button machine will be provided for use in class.

#### **TOOL LIST**

##### **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 \$35.

##### **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, which is the one I prefer. However, these tools look like torture devices and can cause a nasty puncture wound if used incorrectly, so please get the gooseneck version if you are a bit nervous with the plain model. These are about \$30.

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## **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 US Marines!) Any of the claw foot style removers will work, and the smaller ones are generally more useful. The Osborne 121 is about \$20 new.

## **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, and how to minimize frame damage. 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. Prices vary.

## **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 TWO for basic work. A "2-3" 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 AND a 3-4" straight needle with a large eye. These are widely available in fabric shops and usually sold in packs of multiple sizes. The Osborne "K1" set has several useful needles and these are 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 webbing work. The Osborne K1 kit is about \$15.

## **REGULATOR**

This tool looks a bit like an ice pick, or a large needle, but it is not for sewing, it is for manipulating fabric and stuffing materials using both the pointed end and the rounded end. These tools come in various sized from 8" up to 12", however an 8" regulator is a good overall choice. I do not like the ones with the plastic handles as much as the traditional ones, but they are readily available and useable. About \$10.



## **OPTIONAL TOOLS**

### **PNEUMATIC STAPLE GUN**

This is the nuclear weapon of upholstery, and more than any other tool has transformed the trade. For upholstery, it is important to have a gun with an extended nosepiece and the standard of the industry is made in Germany by BeA, model 71/16-401 and shoots a 3/8" crown fine wire staple referred to as a "C" or #71 series. This gun is about \$150-\$200 new. Senco, Bostitch and many others (including cheap imports) make similar tools, which use the same staple and are OK. 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 several guns that everyone can use, and we will go over the various sizes of staples and their uses. Heavy wire staplers for construction work or electric units for carpet installation are not appropriate.

### **PROJECTS**

Students must bring their own project to class and it requires **PRIOR APPROVAL**, so please email me some photos so I will have a basis to discuss it with you, either by email or by phone, prior to class.

### **PLEASE NOTE**

Complex projects such as wing chairs or large couches are probably not appropriate for beginning students, and ANY piece with a loose cushion which will require a machine sewn cover will NOT be able to be completed during class.

I want everyone to have a great week, and the best way to insure that is to talk through your project and your goals for it. A wide range of projects can be considered, and they can be at skill levels from beginner to advanced.

## **SOURCES OF SUPPLY**

### **Albany Foam and Supply**

800-235-0888

salesdept@albanyfoam.com

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

### **Upholstery Magazine and Supply Company**

[threadclips@juno.com](mailto:threadclips@juno.com) 518-618-5699

Upholstery Discussion Board  
<http://www.upholster.com/supply/>

**Rochford Supply**  
<http://www.rochfordsupply.com>  
1500 Washington Ave. N  
Minneapolis, MN 55411

**PerfectProductsOnline.com**  
236 West Portal Avenue, #170  
San Francisco, CA 94127 Phone: 415.738.8601 Fax: 415.333.4611  
[www.PerfectProductsOnline.com](http://www.PerfectProductsOnline.com)

**upholsterystuff.com**  
Professional Hardware and Supply Company  
<http://www.profhdwr.com/upholsterystuff/>

**DIY Upholstery Supply / Charlebois Fabrics**  
Southaven MS  
<http://diyupholterysupply.com/>  
Phone 1 662 280 0020 Toll free 1 866 812 3495 Fax 1 662 280 5501

## SUGGESTED READING

**“Upholstery, A Complete Course”**, by David James Guild of Master Craftsman Pub. 1990  
ISBN 094681919X This is the BIBLE for traditional work, period.

**“Beginner’s Upholstery Techniques”** by David James Guild of Master Craftsman Pub.  
2009 ISBN 9781861084958 A very good introduction by the top author in the field.

**“Singer Upholstery Basics”** Cowles Creative Publishing 1997 ISBN 0-8657318 X (hard cover) 0865733198 (soft cover)  
This is a VERY good beginner’s book with wonderful pics.

**“Singer Upholstery Basics Plus”** by Steve Cone Creative Pub. International 2007  
ISBN 139781589233294 This is the updated and improved version, also very good.

## ADDITIONAL READING

**“Upholstery a Manual of Techniques”** by Hugh O’Neill Crowood Press 1999  
ISBN 1861261403 This is similar to D. James and has good photos.

**“Essentials of Upholstery”** by Herbert Bast Bruce Publishing 1928  
Reprinted as “New Essentials of Upholstery”

[threadclips@juno.com](mailto:threadclips@juno.com) 518-618-5699

ISBN 9780028104201

The one that everyone has.... It is cheap on ebay

**“Practical Upholstering and the Cutting of Loose Covers”** by Frederick Palmer

Benn Bros. London 1921

Reprinted by Stein & Day

1980

ISBN 0812827538

This is the classic Brit textbook from the Victorian era

**“Practical Upholstering”** by John W. Stephenson

Hall Pub. Co. NY

1944

This is an American version of the old school textbooks

## COURSE OUTLINE

### MONDAY

#### **Introduction and Welcome**

#### ***“The Art of Upholstery”***

Powerpoint presentation:

Classic techniques in the English style, and modern methods with new materials.

#### **Welcome to the Shop**

#### ***“Tools of the Trade”***

Powerpoint presentation:

Hammers plain and fancy, stretchers, pullers scissors, and so many different needles!

#### **Review of Basic Upholstery Techniques and Materials**

Demonstration and class participation

- Measuring & Cutting
- Webbing
- Spring tying
- Edge roll

#### **Designing an Upholstery Treatment for each piece**

Demonstration and class participation

- Proper seating height
- Appropriate sit and loft
- Finishing details

#### **Creating a cut list for each piece**

Demonstration and class participation

- Laying out on paper for table cutting
- Cutting for maximum yield
- Allowing for bias cut welting

### TUESDAY

#### ***“A Classy Victorian” & “Teresa’s Chair”***

Powerpoint presentations:

Step by step guides for completing a fully upholstered chair, similar to class projects

#### **Table Cutting of Show Covers for all Projects**

- Using cut lists
- Marking and folding
- “True North”

#### **WORK BEGINS ON PROJECT PIECES**

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## **End of Day All Class Wrap Up**

- Discuss aspects of each piece

## **WEDNESDAY**

### ***“Victorian Suite”***

Powerpoint presentation:

Altering loft and sit within a suite of pieces

## **WORK ON PROJECT PIECES**

## **End of Day All Class Wrap Up**

- Discuss aspects of each piece

## **THURSDAY**

### ***“Small Wing Chair”***

Powerpoint presentations:

Step by step guide for completing a fully upholstered chair, similar to class projects

## **WORK ON PROJECT PIECES**

## **End of Day All Class Wrap Up**

- Discuss aspects of each piece

## **FRIDAY**

### ***“Cavalcade of Cars”***

Powerpoint presentation:

Some fun and interesting projects from Mike’s archive

## **WORK ON PROJECT PIECES**

## **End of Day All Class Wrap Up**

- Discuss aspects of each piece

## **COURSE WRAP UP**