



The



LUCKY NEEDLE

MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES



The Apprentice Course E- Book

All content belongs to The Lucky Needle and may not be re-used
or resold in any way without consent of The Lucky Needle.

MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES



Congratulations on beginning The Apprentice Course from [The Lucky Needle!](#)

This is a helpful guide containing many common Materials and Supplies you will use when doing upholstery. Please know, this does not detail every single material and supply you will come across in upholstery. Rather, this guide is meant to familiarize you with the materials and supplies that you will see me using throughout The Lucky Needle Course Videos. I encourage you to visit a few upholstery supply websites and browse all of the options available to you.

However, remember to not get stuck researching all the details and specifications of everything. You don't want to become overwhelmed before you even start your project. There is so much information out there, it can be daunting! My advice to you is, if you are doing automotive or marine work, use automotive or marine grade materials, move on to your project and don't overthink it. This should be a fun learning process!

Readers Outside the US: All the material in this book is what we are accustomed to using here in the US. If you live in another country, many of these materials and supplies will be called a different name or be a different brand. You shouldn't have to pay high fees to order these exact supplies from the US. There should be similar products for all of the products I use, available to you in your country.

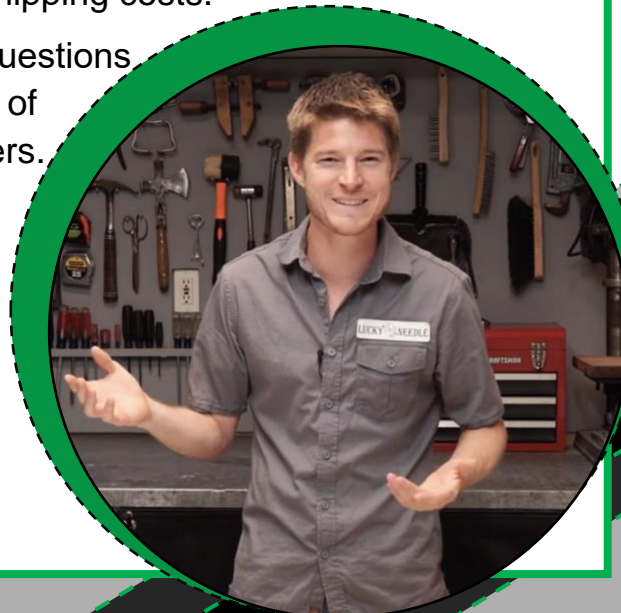
I've included links in the document to help you find the materials and supplies you need. They are highlighted in [green!](#) Just click on the [green text](#) to be taken to helpful videos, articles and even where to buy that item online. We have tried to include links to all of the items listed, but those that do not have a link are items we could not find a reliable online source for, or items that will make much more sense to source locally due to shipping costs.

Don't forget if you ever get stuck, as we all do, take your questions to [The Upholstery Forum!](#) This is a community of all levels of upholsters with questions just like yours, and lots of answers.

The most important thing is to just get out there, and start practicing!

Good luck on your project!

- John Pollock | Founder



MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES



MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES: WHERE TO START?

In order to make this guide easier to navigate, it has been separated into three sections: Materials, Supplies and How to Find A Supplier.



MATERIALS: There is a lot of material out there to choose from! This list includes common upholstery materials. You will see me use many of these materials in The Lucky Needle Course Videos. Find these materials on pages 2-13.



SUPPLIES: This list includes all of the common supplies you may come across in upholstery. You will see me use many of these supplies in The Lucky Needle Course Videos. Several of these supplies will accompany the tools listed in The Lucky Needle's Tools of the Trade E-book. Find these supplies on pages 14-25.



HOW TO FIND A SUPPLIER: When first starting upholstery it is a good idea to explore different suppliers and find which one is right for you. Find more information about finding a supplier on page 26.

MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES



MATERIALS



There is a lot of material out there to choose from! This list includes common upholstery materials. You will see me use many of these materials in The Lucky Needle Course Videos.

VINYL

While there are many types of vinyl out there, most all vinyl material can be separated into three varieties: [Automotive Vinyl](#), [Marine Vinyl](#) and [Contract/ Hospitality Vinyl](#).



Vinyl is the most used and versatile fabric in upholstery. It is also known as pleather, imitation leather, faux leather, naugahyde, etc. Vinyl is graded and tested for its durability and comes in various qualities depending on its use. This information is usually available on the back of a sample book. For the type of upholstery seen in The Lucky Needle Course Videos, automotive or marine rated vinyl will work well. However, be careful not to use vinyl that is only rated for furniture, or furniture grade, as this type of vinyl will not last under UV rays.

Vinyl usually comes 54" wide and in some cases, 60" wide. Keep this in mind when planning projects and calculating how much material to buy. Vinyl, like most fabric is sold by the yard, half roll and full roll. Usually a roll is 30 yards, but this can vary by the distributor. Most suppliers also offer price breaks on half rolls and full rolls. This is definitely something to keep in mind because sometimes it can be cheaper to buy a half roll (15 yards), than it is to buy 12 yards of material. This is usually something most shops will not tell you, so make sure you ask!

MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES



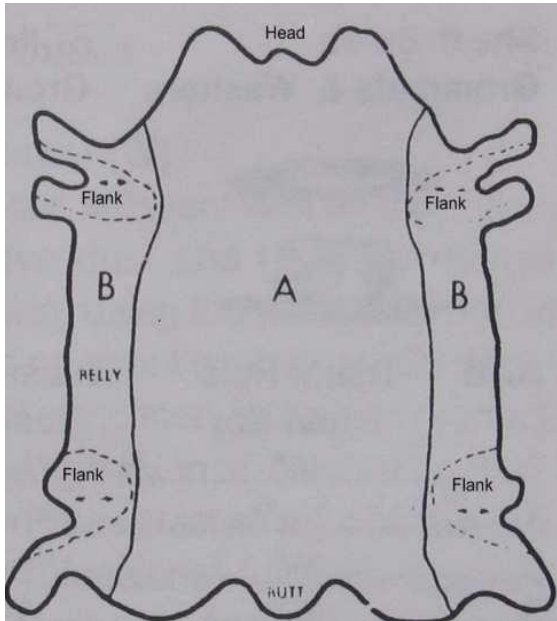
LEATHER



Leather is a very common material used in automotive upholstery. Leather is sold in full hides and half hides only, it's not common to find a place that will sell leather by the foot. One hide is typically 50-60 square feet and sometimes a lot of the hide gets wasted working around scars, brands and imperfections in the hide. The best quality leather comes from Europe because the cattle there are free range and they are less likely to have damage on their skin from barbed wire fences, like the cattle in America.

Leather can be very expensive, usually costing \$5 to \$10 a square foot and around \$450 to \$750 per hide. This is why I recommend learning with vinyl before using leather on a project. If you are using leather, you need to make **absolutely sure** it is automotive grade leather. There is a huge difference in UV protection between automotive grade and furniture grade leather. Some small upholstery supply shops will tell you their leather is automotive grade, when in fact it is not. If the price seems too good to be true, that's because it probably is! I have seen people use furniture grade leather in cars and it looks completely faded and dried out in less than a year.

MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES



To the left is a diagram showing the sections of a leather hide. Section A is the strongest most durable part of the hide and should be used for areas that will get the most wear. Examples of these include the face of a seat cover that gets sat on, an arm rest, steering wheel, etc.

Section B is the belly of the cow and the hide is not as tough. This should be used in areas that will not see as much wear. Examples of these include door panels, sun visors, sides of a seat, etc.

The section labeled flank is usually not useable hide, except for small parts.

Leather is technically a skin like ours, and it needs

to be taken care of properly or else it will dry out, crack, and fade. You need to regularly clean and condition leather with quality leather cleaner and leather lotion. These products are all available at your local upholstery store. Doing this will not only keep your project looking nice and new, but will add years to the life of the leather.



SUEDE

Automotive Suede is synthetic material made from polyester microfiber that is then woven into a thin, soft, but very tough fabric, used to give a very luxurious feel to an automotive interior. Automotive suede is more durable than natural suede, which is made from the delicate underside of an animal's skin and often can tear, thus making it too delicate to use in cars. "Alcantara" is actually a brand name of suede, but now has become a universal name for automotive suede.

MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES



TWEED



Tweed is a coarse woven fabric used in upholstery. It comes in many colors and patterns. Tweed was very popular in the 1980's for custom auto interiors but is not used as much anymore.



VELOUR

Velour is a plush, woven fabric with a fuzzy, velvety face. It is usually used in auto upholstery to contrast vinyl and sometimes for a full interior.



HEADLINER MATERIAL

Headliner Material is usually cloth or suede backed with 1/8" foam. It is usually sold 60" wide and is used on the headliner and sun visors of cars.

MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES



CARPET

As you work on different projects, you will come across many different types of carpet. The following are a few of the most popular types of carpet you will use.

AUTOMOTIVE CARPET



[Automotive Carpet](#) has UV protection, making it much higher quality than regular carpet, which is important to remember when selecting carpet for automotive applications. Automotive carpet is sold in two forms, (shown in the pictures to the left). The top picture shows Loop Pile carpet, and the bottom picture shows Cut Pile carpet. In addition to automotive carpet, marine grade carpet is both UV and mildew resistant and can be used for automotive applications. However, because of its lack of mildew resistance, automotive carpet cannot be used for marine applications. (See Marine Carpet below)

GERMAN SQUARE WEAVE CARPET



[German Square Weave Carpet](#) is an automotive carpet with a tight loop weave, making it very easy to keep clean. This premium automotive carpet was originally used in Porsche, Mercedes and Volkswagen vehicles. Today, German Square Weave Carpet has become very popular in the Hot Rod community, because of its luxurious appearance and classic vintage feel.

MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES



ENGLISH WOOL / WILTON WOOL CARPET

English Wool, or Wilton Wool carpet, was originally used in many European exotic and luxury vehicles. It is very soft and has a shorter nap length than that of typical automotive carpets. This type of carpet has become very popular in the automotive custom upholstery world.

NEEDLE PUNCH/ TRUNK LINING/ FLEXFORM CARPET



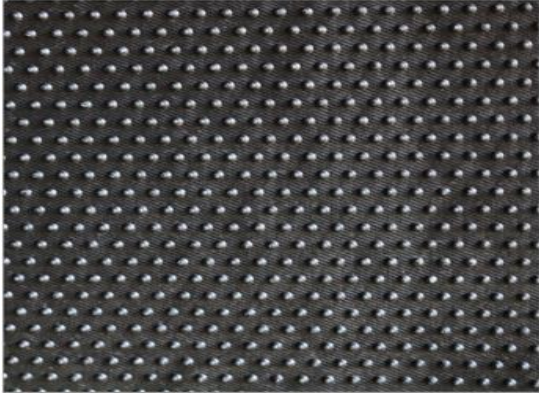
Needle Punch, Trunk Lining or Flexform Carpet all represent the same type of material which is classified as carpet but is actually more like thick felt. This type of carpet has no backing and therefore is very flexible, allowing for very complex shapes to be wrapped without any seams. This type of carpet is frequently used when carpeting trunks and when wrapping speaker boxes. This carpet is sold by an "Oz rating" which translates to how thick the material is.

MARINE CARPET

Marine Grade Carpet is soft, durable and easy to clean. It has both mildew and high UV resistance, making it perfect for marine applications, because this carpet can get wet and its color will not fade in the sun.



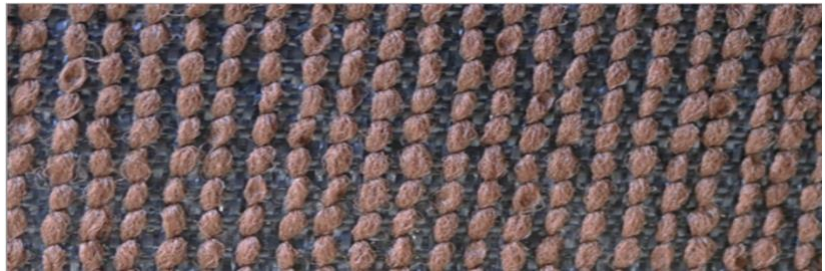
MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES



NIBBED BACKED RUBBER MATTING

[Nibbed Backed Rubber Matting](#) is used to back things like carpet floor mats. It adds rigidity to the carpet, so that it holds its shape and the nibbs on the back help prevent the floor mat from moving around while driving.

The two pictures to the left show the backing comprised of rubber nibbs to help things like floor mats stay in place and the picture below shows the glue compatible threaded face.

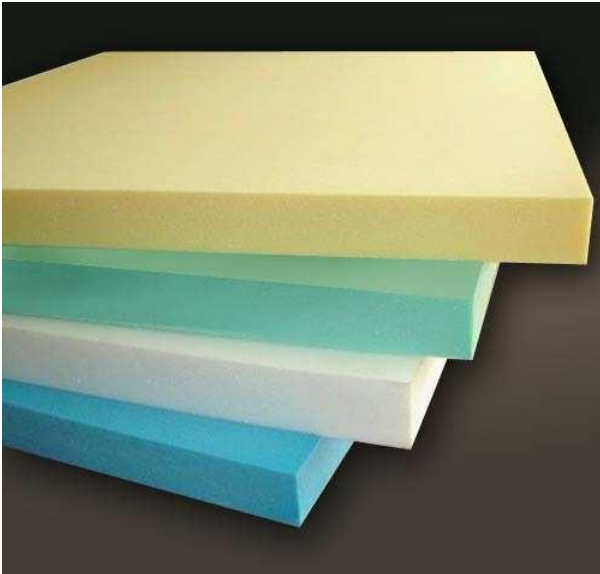


JUTE

[Jute](#) is used for padding underneath carpet. Installing jute underneath carpet not only acts as a cushion, but also acts as a great sound and heat barrier. Jute is usually sold at a width of 36" and in 20 oz or 40 oz thickness.



UPHOLSTERY FOAM



Upholstery Foam is a low-density, flexible material available in different varieties and used in a wide range of upholstery applications. Upholstery foam has two ratings that are important to understand when choosing foam for your project, density and firmness. Density is how much the foam weighs per cubic foot. If foam has a density of 28, this means that it weighs 2.8 pounds per cubic foot. Firmness is how much weight it takes to compress the foam by 1/3. If foam has a firmness of 25, this means that it takes 25 pounds to compress the foam by 1/3.

When shopping for foam these ratings are usually represented with density first then firmness. Example: Foam marked 15/30 is a foam with a density of 1.5 pounds and firmness of 30 pounds.

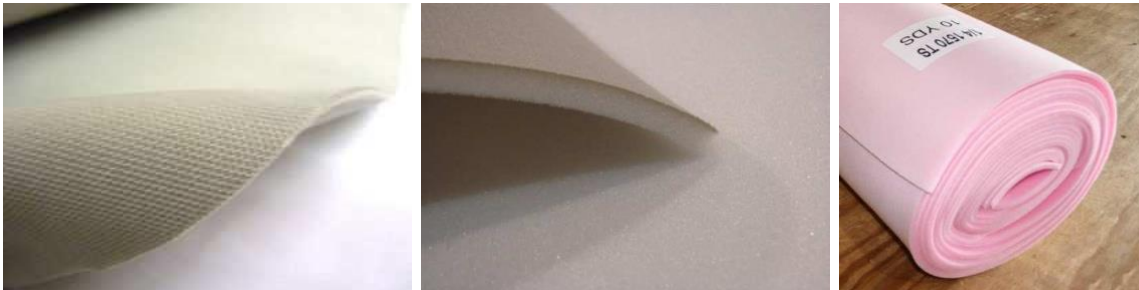
When choosing foam for your project the most important consideration is the density. The higher the density the longer the foam will last before it starts to lose shape and firmness. The firmness is nice to know, but your feel is the best way to judge what is best for your project. Also keep in mind when choosing foam, once you make and install your cover on the foam it will feel firmer than it did with no cover. Knowing this, it is better to use a little softer foam to start with.

Foam is also available in marine grade and outdoor foam. Marine grade foam is mold resistant and is used mostly in boats. Outdoor foam is very porous and does not hold water, so it dries much faster than normal foam, which can take days to dry out completely.

MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES



SCRIM FOAM



[Scrim Foam](#), or sew foam, is foam with either a netting or woven fabric covering one side. The reason for the netting or woven fabric is to catch the thread, not letting it tear through the foam when sewing. It is most commonly available in 1/4" and 1/2" thickness. Scrim foam is used for two main purposes. First, it is used to back the fabric that gets sewn together to make covers, giving the cover a nice, tight and filled look. Second, it is used for sewing pleats and other decorative stitches. In my experience there are four types of scrim backing. For more info check out [Albright's Upholstery Insight Video: Sew Foam](#)

Fish Net Backing: This is the cheapest and worst scrim foam available. This foam has a backing made of plastic squares in a netting pattern. The problem is the squares are spread too far apart, so the backing does not hold the depth of top stitches on things like pleats. I never use this type of scrim foam.

Tightly Woven Fish Net Backing: This type of backing is what you see on higher quality scrim foam. This foam works well because the netting is much tighter and holds the depth of top stitches very well. You will usually see this scrim foam in pink and green. This is typically regarded as the best scrim foam available.

Headliner Backed / Muslin Backed / T-Shirt Backed: These three terms are pretty much the same, and all represent the type of scrim foam you see being used in The Lucky Needle Course Videos. This type of foam is my favorite because in my experience the backing holds the depth of top stitches the best. It is also usually a pretty good price!

Make Your Own: In the old days you would have to glue muslin to the foam and make your own scrim foam. This is a good way to make backed foam because you can choose both the quality of foam and the backing material. However, it is very time consuming and therefore more expensive, so this option usually does not make the most sense.

MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES



CLOSED CELL FOAM

Closed Cell Foam is most commonly sold in 1/8" and 1/4" thickness. It is also known as landau foam, because it is the type of foam used on landau vinyl tops. This foam is mainly used on panels that you want a nice firm, but not hard, feel. For example, door panels, kick panels, firewall, etc. You can also use this foam to cut out designs to make custom panels.



MARINE FOAM

Marine Foam has antimicrobial properties that resist mildew in wet environments. This type of foam is the best choice for anything that will be exposed to water.



DRY FAST FOAM

Dry Fast Foam is a type of outdoor foam, also known as Open Cell foam. This foam is made of many open cells that allow water and air to pass through them quickly, allowing the foam to dry very fast. Dry fast foam also has antimicrobial properties. You should consider using this on projects that will be getting wet on a very regular basis. It is not necessary to use this on typical boat cushions.

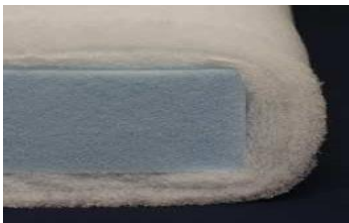
MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES



BATTING AND DACRON



Batting comes in two types; cotton (pictured on the top left) and synthetic (pictured on the middle and bottom left). Synthetic batting, also known as Dacron, is a polyester filling material.



[Dacron](#) batting is used to wrap cushions, to help fill the cover and to make a nice tight fit.



[Cotton](#) batting, meaning real cotton straight from the field, is not used very often anymore. Cotton batting is used to fill the pleats in really old school tuck and roll pleats, like those seen in vintage cars. Today, most people complete tuck and roll pleats with foam as it makes the job much faster. You will also see cotton batting used to fill low spots in automotive seats. This is a quick fix that I do not recommend doing unless you are in a big rush, where quality is not a top priority.

CLEAR VINYL



[Clear Vinyl](#) is most commonly used to make flexible windows. Clear vinyl is also what I use in The Lucky Needle Course Videos to make templates for custom covers. Clear vinyl is sold in different gauges, usually from 4 to 40 gauge, where the gauge indicates the thickness of the vinyl. For example, 30 gauge is equal to .030 inches. For templates, I use the cheapest clear vinyl available. The clear vinyl used in the videos is 12 gauge, but anything between 4 and 12 gauge will work fine (4 gauge can be a little too thin and stretchy so be careful). Typically, most upholstery supply shops carry 12 gauge as their thinnest vinyl, for thinner options you will usually have to shop around online.



MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES



OUTDOOR CANVAS



Arcadia
Outdoor Fabric



Odyssey III
Coated Polyester



Recacril
Acrylic Canvas



Recacril DecorLine
Furniture Canvas



Recwater
PVC Backed Canvas



Top Gun
Coated Polyester

[Outdoor Canvas](#) is a heavy-duty durable fabric. There are multiple brands of outdoor canvas, many of them are very durable and of high quality. By far, the most common and well-known brand is [Sunbrella](#). Over time Sunbrella has become a general term for outdoor canvas. You will see this type of canvas used in many applications such as; boat covers, bimini tops, awnings, protective outdoor covers, etc.

MUSLIN



[Muslin](#) is a basic, light weight, uncolored, inexpensive, canvas type material, that has many purposes in a variety of applications. In upholstery, I typically use muslin for backing french seams and for gluing over the top of foam repairs. You will see these examples in The Lucky Needle Course Videos.

BURLAP



[Burlap](#) is a very old material that has been used in upholstery for a very long time. Burlap is most commonly seen covering the springs on old car seats, in order to protect the springs from digging into the foam. I highly recommend never using burlap for any project, unless it is absolutely required for originality purposes. Burlap makes a huge mess, leaving small brown fibers everywhere! This happens when the fabric is new, and it only gets worse as the material ages. If you do use burlap to cover seat springs, be prepared to vacuum your car every time you sit in the seat, because it will drop fibers all over the carpet as it degrades.

MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES



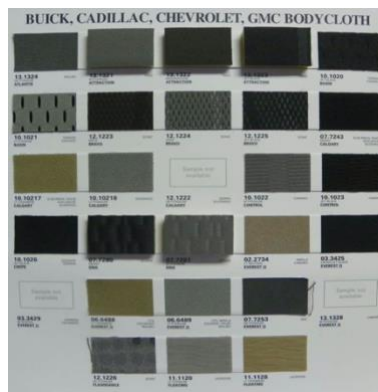
DENIM

Denim is another inexpensive lightweight canvas type material that is stronger than muslin. I use denim in a variety of ways when completing projects. I typically use denim for backing french seams and for gluing over the top of foam repairs. You will see these examples in The Lucky Needle Course Videos.



OEM FABRICS

Finding OEM, or Original Equipment Manufacturer, exact match materials can be a very difficult task and is often not worth the time it takes to find. The reason for this is because manufacturers get access to many fabric patterns that are not available to the public. Most of the time there is a limited run of the fabric to support the manufacturer and then the fabric is discontinued. In most cases you will have to make a compromise for something close enough. There are multiple companies that specialize in supplying OEM material, just do a google search for “OEM automotive fabric”, but it comes at a high price! Companies are able to do this because they buy up all the leftover fabric from manufacturers and store it until people start to need it years later. Some of these companies even remanufacture the fabric if it has a high enough demand.



When I do need OEM fabric, my favorite place to search is on:

[Albright's Auto Originals Database](#).



Another helpful resource when searching for OEM fabric is Detroit Books. These are books that have cataloged all of the fabric used by automotive manufacturers by year. For more information on this read our article:

[The Lucky Needle: Free Detroit Books OEM Fabric Guide](#)

MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES



SUPPLIES



This list includes all of the common supplies you may come across in upholstery. You will see me use many of these supplies in The Lucky Needle Course Videos. Several of these supplies will accompany the tools listed in The Lucky Needle's Tools of the Trade E-book.



BAKER CLIPS

[Baker Clips](#) are metal clips, used to hold springs together on seat frames. These are typically used when doing spring seat repairs.



BASTING TAPE

[Basting Tape](#) is a double-sided adhesive tape, that has a paper backing on one side protecting the adhesive prior to use. This tape has many uses and is essential for making large patterns. You will typically see me using basting tape to hold pattern material in place when making patterns. It can also be used to hold a perfect hem while sewing.



Above: Single Fold



Above: Double Fold

BINDING



[Binding](#) is a strip of fabric with a pre-folded edge or edges, used to give a clean, finished look to the edge of various applications. It is commonly used to finish the edges of carpet or canvas projects. Binding is sold in multiple different materials, colors and sizes. There are two types of binding you need to be aware of; single fold and double fold binding. Single fold binding only has one side folded over and is used on things that only need to have a finished edge on the top face, such as carpet. Double fold binding is folded over on both sides and is used to make a nice finished edge on both the top and bottom faces.

MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES



BUTTONS



#9 Wire Eye Buttons Size 22



#44 Wire Eye Buttons Size 30



Dura Snap Buttons



#9 Wire Eye Buttons Size 30



#9 Wire Eye Buttons Size 36



#44 Wire Eye Buttons



Size 30 Button Shells



Size 36 Button Shells



Prong Button Washers

You don't see [Buttons](#) on cars and boats too often. However, if you will be doing furniture upholstery you will likely come across these buttons. The way these buttons are made is by wrapping fabric around the metal cap and then crimping the cap around the button base. I know that sounds complicated, but don't worry they make a button tool that does all of this for you. For more information on buttons and button makers see The Lucky Needle's Tools of the Trade E-book.

CHIP BOARD



[Chip Board](#) is a rigid cardboard that is used extensively for making patterns and templates in upholstery, so it is great to have around. You will also see this used to make sun visors.

EDGE WIRE



[Edge Wire](#) or boarder wire, is a spring steel rod, typically used to repair seat frames and to attach seat covers to the seat frame using hog rings. It is best to try to source this locally, as it is sold in 8-foot or 12-foot lengths and shipping can get expensive.

MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES



CONTACT CEMENT GLUE

[Weldwood Landau Top Contact Adhesive](#) is the best upholstery contact cement I have found and is pretty much an industry standard. We will be using this glue for basically everything in automotive and marine upholstery. It is both sprayable and brushable. You will learn how to use this in The Lucky Needle Course videos.



TEMP TACK GLUE

“Temp Tack” is a generic industry term that means any cheap spray can glue. This is used for temporarily holding things in place, like patterns, and not used for permanent gluing. The cheapest can available to you should get the job done.



HH-66 VINYL CEMENT GLUE

[HH-66 Vinyl Cement](#) is a high quality, fast drying adhesive, and it is a good glue to have around for different uses. It is used for bonding vinyl coated and vinyl laminated fabrics to themselves or to other various materials. HH-66 is also used to bond urethanes, vinyl foams, vinyl films, rigid plastics, synthetic fabrics, wood, leather, and metals. HH-66 dries quickly with a very strong, yet flexible bond. It is not affected by weather or temperature extremes, and is highly resistant to oil, fuel, grease, and many other chemicals. This glue works great for waterproofing sewn seams as well.

MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES



GROMMETS

Grommets are used to make a strong finished hole with brass or stainless steel. Grommets come in many sizes from small to huge. Typically, in automotive upholstery the most common sizes you will be using are #1 or #2 size grommets.



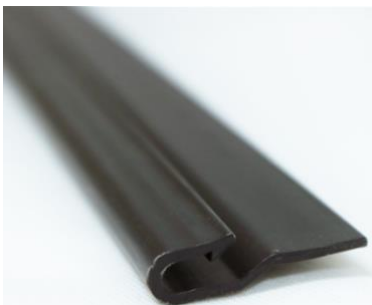
HIDEM

Hidem is a decorative finishing supply that is used to hide staples in between its two folds. It is usually used to finish off the bottom side of boat seats so that it hides the unfinished edge of the seat cover. Hidem is mostly used in marine applications but can be used for other purposes as well.



HOG RINGS

Hog Rings are a very common fastener in upholstery. You will need these to install most seat covers. They are inexpensive and good to have around. Hog Rings are sold in a few sizes, I mostly use 3/4", but 1/2" is also nice to have around for areas where less bulk is needed.



J CLIPS

J Clips are used on seat covers in more modern vehicles. They are sewn around the edge of the cover and then the J Clip hooks around a part of the seat frame to hold the cover on. They can get old and brittle, so it's important to know where to get them if you need to replace them on your project.

MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES



PANEL BOARD

There are many types of materials that can be used for making upholstery panels. When choosing a panel substrate, you will want to use a thickness of 1/8" or close to that. Most of these materials you will have to find from a local plastic supplier or a home improvement store. The following are a few of the most commonly used panel boards.

ABS PLASTIC PANEL BOARD



ABS is ideal for a wide range of applications. This is my favorite type of panel board to use. It is easy to work with, it will last forever, it will not warp from moisture and it can be reused! One thing to be careful of is using ABS in very hot climates because it can warp in extremely high temperatures if left in the sun. For more information on how to source ABS plastic in your area check out [The Lucky Needle Video: The Right Size ABS Plastic Sheets and Where to Buy ABS Plastic Sheets Near You!](#)



PVC FOAM PANEL BOARD

PVC Foam is a very common lightweight material that can be used for making panels. Some home improvement stores occasionally stock this, but usually you will need to source it from a plastic supplier.



UPHOLSTERY PANEL BOARD

This is the type of panel board that is commonly seen on stock door panels from the factory. It is basically a compressed rigid black cardboard. I do not recommend using this type of panel board unless you have to for originality purposes. It warps from moisture and does not last a long time.

MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES



1/8" PLYWOOD PANEL BOARD

Plywood panel board, also known as Luan, is a very popular option that lasts longer than upholstery panel board but can still be affected by moisture. It is also messier to work with and requires a bit more effort, as you have to use a saw to cut it.



HARDBOARD PANEL BOARD

Hardboard panel board is basically the same material that clip boards are made with. I prefer hardboard over 1/8" plywood because it is more consistent and straighter. It is also a very inexpensive option.

ALUMINUM



Occasionally people will use aluminum sheets for panels. Aluminum is a good option, but it is fairly expensive and more difficult to work with, which is why it is usually reserved for high-end projects. One of the reasons aluminum is popular is because it is available in 1/16" thickness which makes for a thinner panel. I prefer not to use aluminum because you cannot shoot staples into it, thus limiting your options of attaching foam and fabric to the board only with glue.

MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES



PANEL CLIPS

[Panel Clips](#) are used to attach upholstered panels to a car's interior. There are literally hundreds of styles available, and can be called by different names, but the following three types are the most common.

CHRISTMAS TREE PANEL CLIPS



I am sure you can guess why these panel clips are referred to as [Christmas Tree Panel Clips](#). These plastic panel clips are very commonly used on door panels and other panels and typically are only good for one or two removals. For this reason, I try to avoid using these panel clips unless absolutely necessary.

FROG LEG PANEL CLIPS



[Frog Leg Panel Clips](#), or #808 clips, are my favorite panel clips. They are very easy to use and can be reused as many times as needed. I prefer to use these over the following Ford/ Chrysler clips, because these clips make it easier to get your panels lined up perfectly. It is a little more work because you need to staple canvas around the head after it's installed to prevent the clip from pushing up the foam and material, but I think it's worth the extra time. I will show you how to use these in [The Lucky Needle's "Door Panels & Kick Panels" Course!](#)

FORD / CHRYSLER DOOR PANEL CLIPS



[Ford/ Chrysler Door Panel Clips](#) are similar to the above Frog Leg/ #808 clips, except to install them they need to be slid over the panel. Many people like this style because you do not need to reinforce the clip with canvas. However, with this style of clip you have to drill the hole in the panel offset from the hole in the car. This makes it difficult to get panels to line up perfectly.

MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES



SEM COLOR COAT PAINT

[SEM Color Coat, or Classic Coat Paint](#) is a very flexible coating that is used to recolor various fabric, plastic and rubber parts. This paint works very well and can really make a quick job of recoloring things that normal paint will not. Watch this video by SEM for more information on how to use their product:

[SEM Products – Color Coat](#)



SHOCK CORD

[Shock Cord](#) is just bungee cord sold by the yard. You can get it in multiple thicknesses, and it has many different applications in upholstery like making pockets on the back of seats or door panels.



SNAPS

[Snaps](#) are typically sold in nickel plated brass or stainless steel and are a very useful accessory for making things easily attachable and removable. You will see snaps a lot on boats and on tonneau covers on cars. I usually use stainless steel snaps because they don't corrode, and they last much longer.



T-NUTS

[T-Nuts](#) are used to add a threaded insert to a wood or plastic panel. You will mostly see these used on boat interiors. I recommend always using stainless steel T-Nuts.

MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES



TACK STRIPS



[Tack Strips](#) are a flexible, rubber like material, that are installed in the metal structure of the car's interior, thus allowing you to staple fabric to the tack strip. They are mostly used for holding suspended headliners and windlace in place. You will see these mainly used on older cars. It is common to need to replace tack strips because as they get older, they become hard or decompose. You can use new tack strips, shown on the left, to replace old tack strips or sometimes I will use strips of ABS plastic. ABS is a little more work, but it will last forever.

THREAD

Thread is what holds our projects together. Because of this, it is very important to use quality thread on your projects. Thread comes in many different sizes and materials. Below are the three most common types of thread you will see available.

BONDED POLYESTER THREAD



Bonded Polyester thread is a very versatile thread that has great UV resistance, and it is the thread I recommend most people buy and use. I use size #92 Bonded Polyester thread 95% of the time on all of my projects. With this type of thread there are two brands that stick out above the rest, I recommend sticking with these brands because in my experience they will give you the least amount of problems. They are:

1. [Coats Ultra Dee Polyester Sewing Thread](#)
2. [Amman Serabond Polyester Sewing Thread](#)

MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES



NYLON THREAD



Nylon thread is a type of industrial thread that is mostly meant for indoor furniture use. It does not have the UV resistance needed for automotive or marine applications. I generally recommend staying away from this type of thread.

PTFE THREAD



PTFE thread is specialty thread made out of teflon and is 100% UV resistant and will never break down in the sun. You will only want to consider using this on applications that will be outside in the sun for the duration of its life. It is expensive, so on most projects using bonded polyester will work fine, but this is an option if you think it is needed. Common brand names for this thread are: Tenara and SolarFix.

UPHOLSTERY STAPLES



[Upholstery Staples](#) are sold in sizes from 1/8" to 1/2", in either stainless, galvanized or steel. I recommend using stainless staples whenever you can, but they are much more expensive than galvanized or steel staples. Most air staplers list a minimum of 1/4" staples, including the BEA gun we recommend in The Lucky Needle's Tools of the Trade E-book, but I have been using 1/8" and 5/32" staples in it for ten years without problem! 1/8" staples have recently become hard to find, so now I always use 5/32" staples. When choosing a staple gun, I recommend getting a gun that shoots 3/8" crown staples, because this type of staple is easier to find and typically comes in a variety of length options.

MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES



VELCRO



Velcro, or hook and loop fasteners (Velcro is actually the first inventor and brand name) has many uses across all areas of upholstery. Velcro is available in multiple sizes and colors, and some Velcro is also available with an adhesive backing for applications that cannot be sewn.

WEBBING



Webbing is a strong strap material that has many purposes in all areas of upholstery. Webbing is available in multiple sizes, colors, and materials. Typically, I buy the cheapest webbing available, unless the webbing will be getting a lot of sun exposure. In this case, polyester webbing will work the best.

WELT CORD



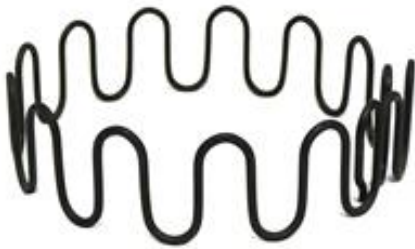
Welt Cord, or piping, is what you use to fill a welted seam. Welt cord comes in many different sizes and in three different materials; paper, foam, and plastic. Plastic welt cord is what I use the most, because it is more rigid and looks more defined when finished. Foam welt cord is softer and is good for automotive and marine uses if you want a softer welt than plastic. Paper welt cord is soft as well and is mainly only used on furniture.

MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES



WINDLACE

Old cars did not have weather stripping to seal the door opening when closed. Instead, they used what is called [Windlace](#). It is a large round cord that is wrapped in fabric and stapled around the door frame. When the door shuts, it seals up against the wind lace to help reduce wind noise. There are a few types of windlace cording, but I always use what is known as sponge rod.



ZIG ZAG SPRINGS / NO SAG SPRINGS

[Zig Zag Springs, or No Sag Springs](#), are the springs that older automotive seats are made from. If you ever have to replace a broken seat spring this is what you will use. You will also see these used on furniture as well. They are sold in multiple lengths and wire gauges.



ZIPPERS

[Zippers](#) are sold in numbered sizes, ranging from #3 to #10. Smaller sized zippers, pictured on the far left, are usually sold in a roll and do not have a stop built in. This kind of zipper is also called zipper tape. The larger sized zippers, directly left, are usually sold in premade lengths with stops built in.

MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES



HOW TO FIND A SUPPLIER



When first starting upholstery it is a good idea to explore different suppliers and find which one is right for you!

Sometimes ordering supplies online just doesn't make sense if you need something today or if shipping is expensive. That's why it is also important to find any local suppliers that are in your area. Sometimes this is an easy task and sometimes this proves to be a bit more difficult, depending on your location. Also, be aware that some upholstery suppliers are wholesale only and will only sell to you if you have a business license. Here are a few tips on how to find suppliers in your area:

1. Do a google search. I recommend trying these search terms first:
 - Upholstery Supplies + “Closest large city or area code”
 - Upholster Supplier + “Closest large city or area code”
 - Leather Supply + “Closest large city or area code”
 - Fabric Warehouse + “Closest large city or area code”
 - Automotive upholstery supplies near me
2. Log on to [The Upholstery Forum](#) and ask if anyone knows of a supplier in your area. You may find just the answer you are looking for, as this is a community of all levels of upholsters with questions just like yours, and lots of answers! There are also many large Facebook Upholstery groups you can get advice from as well.
3. Ask other local upholstery shops where they order supplies. This is kind of a last hope effort because many shop owners are reluctant to share this information. Hopefully you catch someone in a good mood, and they will give you some advice.

It is important to have some online upholstery suppliers you trust as well, because you will find that most local suppliers do not carry or stock everything you need. My favorite online supplier is [Albright's Supply!](#) They have a really helpful staff and an easy to use web site! The best part? You get free shipping on orders over \$150!



You can find many other online upholstery suppliers by doing a google search for “Upholstery Suppliers” or “Automotive Upholstery Supplies”.