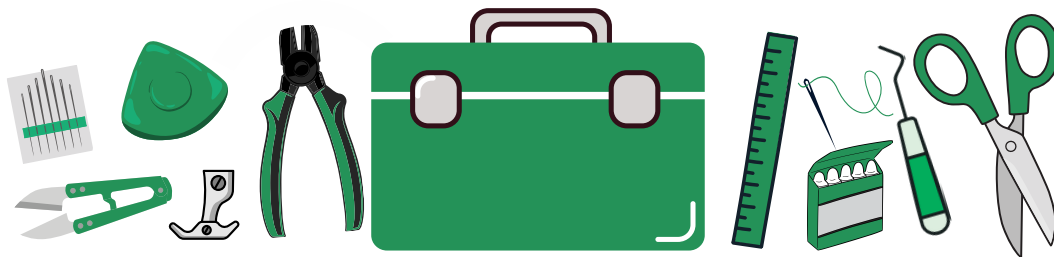




The LUCKY NEEDLE

Tools of the Trade

A Helpful Guide Containing Information
About The Tools Of The Trade
& What Upholstery Tools You Need to Get Started



A Lucky Needle 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.

Congratulations on becoming a part of [The Lucky Needle!!!](#)

This is a helpful guide containing Tools of the Trade. Don't worry, you won't need all of these tools to get started, I just want you to know what tools are available, to make the job easier! My advice is to accumulate the tools over time as you need them. As you add tools to your collection, don't be afraid to look at both new and used options. I buy many of my tools used and am often scanning second hand selling websites for the best deals. I even have a video about this: [Buying Tools on Craigslist: How to Find and Make Great Deals!](#)

I've included links in this guide to help you find the tools you need. They are highlighted in [green](#). Just click on the [green text](#) to be taken to helpful videos, articles and even where you can buy that tool online. We tried to include links to all of the items listed, however items 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, 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



TOOLS OF THE TRADE: WHERE TO START?

In order to keep this guide simple, it only lists upholstery related tools. For larger projects, you may find you will need other basic tools for disassembly and reassembly. These are all tools you may already have, or that can be found at any basic hardware store. In order to understand what upholstery tools you need right away, and what upholstery tools you can add to your collection over time, I've separated the upholstery tools you will be using into the following three categories:



TOOLS NEEDED TO GET STARTED:

These are the tools I feel you truly need to get started. Use these tools to practice and on your first basic projects. Find these tools on pages 2-4.



TOOLS TO ACQUIRE AS NEEDED:

As you move on in your work, you will find that it is beneficial to have more of the proper tools to help you complete your project. These are tools that you can add to your collection over time, you don't need to run out and buy them straight away.

Find these tools on pages 5-13.



TOOLS THAT ARE NICE TO HAVE:

These are tools that you can get by without having. Having these tools will just make certain task much easier and much faster to complete.

Find these tools on pages 14-16.

TOOLS NEEDED TO GET STARTED



These are the tools I feel you truly need to get started. Use these tools to practice and on your first basic projects.

INDUSTRIAL WALKING FOOT SEWING MACHINE



The first and most important tool you will need to start learning upholstery is an Industrial Walking Foot Sewing Machine. When you are shopping for your first machine, you need to make sure it is a **WALKING FOOT MACHINE**. The walking foot feature is what allows an upholster to sew multiple layers of fabric and foam together with ease. The non-walking foot machines are meant for light weight applications and will not work for the types of projects we are doing. For more info check out this [Lucky Needle Video](#):

[What is a Walking Foot Sewing Machine? How it Works & Why You Need One!](#)

Industrial sewing machines come with two motor options; clutch type and servo type. The most common is the clutch type motor. Clutch type motors work by using a clutch that engages the motor to the machine when the pedal is pressed. While they are considered to be the more powerful of the two options, the sewing speed can be difficult to control because the clutch motor spins full speed all the time. If your machine has a clutch type motor, I would suggest getting the smallest pulley available to reduce the speed and make it easier to control.

I use a clutch type motor in The Lucky Needle Course Videos, as it is the most common and most likely what you will be starting with. (The motor to the right is a clutch motor).



To the left, is a servo type motor. These motors are electronically controlled and don't start spinning until you press the pedal. The best feature about this type of motor is that you can control the speed with a dial on the motor, giving you much more control over your machine. They are thought to have less

power than the clutch type, but I personally have not found this to be an issue. I actually prefer servo motors over clutch type, but it's not likely to find a used machine with a servo motor for an affordable price. If it is in your budget, I recommend getting a machine with this type of motor. In recent years, servo motors have become much more affordable. One good option that has become very popular, is finding a well priced used machine and then fitting an aftermarket servo motor to the used machine. This is a pretty easy thing to do and you can find new servo motors for around \$150. Here are two examples of popular options:

- [Consew Industrial Sewing Machine Servo Motor](#)
- [Consew CSM 1000 Servo Sewing Machine Motor](#)



SHEARS



Shears are another important tool you will need. You will use these for cutting everything, so make sure to get nice heavy-duty shears. I prefer the heavy-duty style, as seen in the picture, compared to the lighter, more expensive styles. This is because the weight of the shears actually helps cut through material, so you are not using as much of your hand strength. This makes a big difference when your cutting fabric for long periods and for larger projects! You don't need to spend a lot on top of the line shears, around \$40 will get you shears that will last your lifetime. It's also important to keep your shears sharp so you can cut accurately. Most large upholstery supply shops will sharpen them for a few dollars and once you're a regular, usually for free!

RULERS



You will be using rulers all the time for marking, layout and measuring. I suggest getting a 72" Ruler and a large Carpenter's Square to start off with. You will see me using all types of rulers in different ways throughout the videos and you can add more to your collection over time.

TOOLS TO ACQUIRE AS NEEDED



As you move on in your work, you will find that it is beneficial to have more of the proper tools to help you complete your project. These are tools that you can add to your collection over time, you don't need to run out and buy them straight away.



AIR COMPRESSOR

An [Air Compressor](#) is a great tool to have. You may even already have one! You will see me using a few different air tools in The Lucky Needle Course Videos. I recommend having at least a 30-gallon air compressor, in this case bigger is better if you have the room. Anything smaller will not be able to keep up with your glue gun and you will run into problems when trying to glue larger sections.



ANGLE GRINDER

We will use an [Angle Grinder](#) and [Sanding Disc Kit](#) often, for sanding and shaping foam, panel board and many other materials. This will also save you a lot of time from having to sand things by hand.



BAKER CLIP PLIERS

[Baker Clip Pliers](#) are used to install baker clips. Baker clips are used to repair spring seat frames.

FABRIC STEAMER



A [Fabric Steamer](#) is a must have tool when it comes time to installing your upholstery. We use this to relax the fabric, steaming the covers making them much easier to install. It will also remove wrinkles from covers once installed. You can even use a fabric steamer to bring the life back to old foam and wrap shapes you wouldn't think were possible. Once you learn all the ways to use this tool, it will be your best friend!

FOAM CUTTER



The top picture is an [Electric Carving Knife](#) that you can buy in the kitchen section at most home stores. This is what I use in The Lucky Needle Course Videos. They are inexpensive and work surprisingly well for cutting and shaping foam. This tool is what I recommend.



The bottom picture is a [Foam Saw](#) designed specifically for cutting foam. They do work very well, but I only recommend purchasing one if you are going to be cutting a lot of foam because they are expensive.

GLUE SPRAY GUNS



You will be using contact cement a lot, so it's important to have a spray gun to spray the glue with. I recommend using the style of glue spray gun pictured on the left. This [Spray Gun](#) is made for spraying thick material like house paint, it's easy to use, very easy to clean and is about \$50-\$55. I have been using this style of spray gun for years, and it always works great!

GLUE SPRAY GUNS



The style of spray gun is called a [Pressure Pot](#). These guns are a lot more expensive, but they do hold 5-10 gallons of glue at a time. This can be nice, so you don't have to refill your glue in the middle of a job. I only recommend using a pressure pot if you will be using a large amount of contact cement every day, because I have run into problems with the cement drying in the lines and it's impossible to clean once this happens. You'll also probably need some glue for your spray gun, I like using [Weldwood Landau Top Contact Adhesive](#).



HEAT GUN

A [Heat Gun](#) is a handy tool to have around. You will find many uses for it, including tasks like removing wrinkles from leather.



HOG RING PLIERS

[Hog Ring Pliers](#) are used to install hog rings, a very common fastener in upholstery. You will need these to install most seat covers. They are inexpensive and are an important tool to have.



HOLE PUNCH

A [Hole Punch](#) is a tool that allows you to select different size holes to punch in fabric. You won't use this all the time but it's inexpensive and is handy to have when you need it.

MARKING PENCILS AND CHALK

You can find most of what you will need in terms of marking pencils and chalk at the upholstery store. I am always searching for different things to use to mark on fabric, because some things work better on different types of fabric than others. The most important thing is to make sure that whatever you are using to mark with can be easily removed from the fabric when you are done.

The pencils at the top are what I use most often. I usually call these upholstery pencils, but they are also commonly called [Marking Pencils](#).

Below those are [Trimmers Chalk](#), and regular chalk. I use trimmers chalk mostly on carpet because it marks well and comes in multiple colors, which comes in handy for different colors of carpet.

The bottom picture is [Charcoal Pencils](#). These work great for marking on the back of vinyl. You can buy them online or at any art supply store.

If I do not have anything that marks well on the color and fabric I am using, I will go to the art store and usually can find something new that works well. Just be sure you can remove your marks after you are finished.

For more tips on marking fabric check out this [Lucky Needle Video: Marking on Fabric - What I Use & Don't Use!](#)



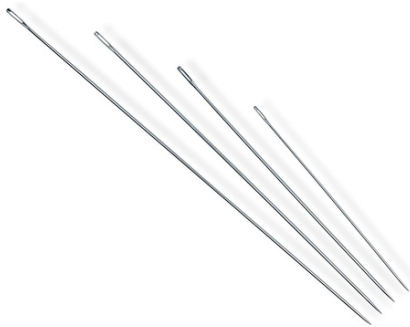
NEEDLES



There are many different types of needles you can use in upholstery. The needles at the top left are the type of needles you will use in your sewing machine. For everything done in The Lucky Needle Course Videos, a size 17 or 18 universal needle will work just fine. There are specific needles that fit in different manufacturers of sewing machines. Be sure to check your sewing machine manual for the proper type. For more information on needle sizes and types, check out this [Lucky Needle Video: What Size Needle? What Type of Needle?](#)



The middle picture shows all of the different types of [Hand Sewing Needles](#) you can use for hand sewing. You will use these needles if you are wrapping things that cannot be sewn on a machine such as wheels, shift knobs, hand brakes, etc.



The bottom picture shows long, [Tufting Needles](#) used for installing buttons into thick foam. It's not very common anymore to see buttons in cars or boats, so you probably won't need to use these very often. However, they are inexpensive and handy to have around. If you venture into furniture upholstery you will use these needles more often.



PICK TOOL

You will see me using a [Pick Tool](#) like this in many ways in the videos. This is a great tool to have on hand.

PLASTIC PRY BARS



[Plastic Pry Bars](#) work really well for removing interior trim panels without scratching or damaging the cars paint or the trim pieces themselves, as they are plastic, not metal. You will find many uses for these once they are in your toolbox.

PRESS N' SNAP TOOL



This [Press N' Snap Tool](#) makes installing snaps and grommets fast and easy. If you have a project that requires installing snaps or grommets, I recommend getting this tool. It is a huge time saver compared to using the hammer and die alternative.

RESPIRATORS



This should be common sense but most people in the industry forget to use respirators (myself included)! You should use a respirator whenever you are grinding or sanding, as it will protect your lungs from all the particles that get released into the air. Definitely make sure you use one when sanding and shaping foam. Foam dust is highly attracted to moisture and will go right into your nose and mouth. It's not fun! While you should always spray glue in a well-ventilated area, if you ever have to spray glue in a closed area, I recommend getting a set of charcoal filters for your respirator. These will protect you from the fumes.

RULERS



You will be using rulers all the time for marking, layout and measuring. I suggest adding [16” Rulers](#), [36” Rulers](#) and [48” Rulers](#) to your collection as needed. You will see me using all of these rulers in different ways throughout The Lucky Needle Videos.

SAFETY GOGGLES



Most of the time you will be fine using normal safety glasses, but I highly recommend having a pair of these [Safety Goggles](#) that actually seal around your face for sanding and shaping foam. The foam dust created when sanding is highly attracted to moisture and it will go right into your eyes like a magnet. With just safety glasses on, the foam dust will get around the edges of the frame and into your eyes. Take it from me, it’s not fun getting foam dust in your eyes!

SANDING TOOLS



[Sanding Blocks](#) and [Sanding Boards](#) are really nice to have for sanding things and keeping things flat. Sanding with a tool like this will keep your project much smoother and level, as these tools back the sandpaper with an even, hard surface, unlike just using sandpaper in your hand. I recommend having a small sanding block and a long sanding block, as they are both handy to have around. You will see me using these a lot in The Lucky Needle’s [“Door Panels & Kick Panels”](#) Course!

SMALL BOLT CUTTERS



These [Small Bolt Cutters](#) are a great tool for removing hog rings. Most people use side cutters to do this, but your hands will be killing you after removing just one seat cover. Using small bolt cutters makes the job much easier and they are inexpensive at the hardware store!

SPRING CLAMPS



I use [Spring Clamps](#) a lot for holding things in place when I need a few extra hands. Get a few of these, you will use them all the time!

STAPLE GUN



You will be using a [Staple Gun](#) a lot. I strongly suggest buying a quality air staple gun because you will literally be using thousands of staples on some projects. This is one tool where you do not want to buy the cheapest you can find, as you will be using it so much! I have had a lot of issues with cheaper staple guns malfunctioning and it's very frustrating when you have to remake something all because of a bad staple gun. I also suggest getting an [Inline Regulator](#) so that you will be able to adjust air pressure on the gun. Most air staple guns list a minimum of 1/4" staples, including the BEA gun we recommend, but I have been using 1/8" and 5/32" staples in it for ten years without a 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.

STAPLE PULLER



[Staple Pullers](#) are an important tool to have for removing old upholstery. They are inexpensive and come in a different styles. I recommend trying a few out, and see what works best for you. I have a few different types that I use for different jobs.

The bottom picture is the style of [Staple Puller](#) that I use most often. You will have to grind this style to a sharper point, as these are originally meant for a different purpose, but once modified they work great!

TUCKING TOOL



This [Tucking Tool](#) is used for pressing fabric into corners, channels and under panels without damaging the fabric. You will find many random uses for it as well. This is a good tool to have around.

SEWING MACHINE FEET - WELT FEET



Welt Feet, shown on the left, are sewing machine feet that are used to make welted seams. If you plan on doing any welted seams you are going to need a set of welt feet. I recommend purchasing 3/16" and 1/4" welt feet for difference size welt cords and fabric thicknesses.

SEWING MACHINE FEET - ZIPPER FEET



Zipper Feet, shown to the left, are sewing machine feet that have part of the foot missing so that you can sew closer to the zipper. These feet are optional, but I like to have them around for different uses, mostly for sewing windlace. I typically sew zippers using regular flat feet, but zipper feet can be useful at times. The bottom left picture shows the difference between Flat Feet, Welt Feet and Zipper Feet. For more information see The Lucky Needle's Apprentice Course Video: Sewing Machine Feet! (Apprentice Course, Lesson Six)



Flat Feet



Welt Feet



Zipper Feet

TOOLS THAT ARE NICE TO HAVE



These are tools that you can get by without having. However, having these tools will just make certain tasks much easier and much faster to complete.

ACCUSCRIBE TOOL



This [Accuscribe Tool](#) is a really helpful tool that I have just recently started using. It makes it very easy to mark out a profile when making patterns for trim panels. In The Luck Needle's "[Door Panels & Kick Panels](#)" Course, you will see multiple instances where this tool would have sped up the process, had I known about this tool when the course was filmed.

BUTTON MACHINE



A [Button Machine](#) is used to wrap buttons with any fabric you are using. You won't need to own one of these unless you are doing a lot of projects with buttons. Most upholstery supply stores will make buttons for a small price or will let you use their machine if you buy your supplies from them. If you do decide to buy one of these machines, you need to make sure you buy the proper size die for the thickness of fabric you are using. This is a very common mistake that can be very frustrating if you are unaware. Each size button die is sold in three different types for different materials. Trying to cover very thin and very thick material with the same set of dies will result in poor quality buttons. For more information check out this [Button Covering Dies and Cutter](#) from the C.S. Osborne website.



HOT KNIFE

A Hot Knife is used for cutting canvas, webbing, rope and any synthetic materials. Hot knives melt whatever you are cutting so the edge will not fray. I like both this [Hot Knife](#) (orange, pictured on the far left) and this [Hot Knife](#) (green, pictured directly left).



PERFECT BUTT SCRIBING TOOL

The [Perfect Butt Tool](#) is another great tool that I have recently started using. This scribing tool is great for accurately transferring profiles to a pattern.



POINT TO POINT LAYOUT TOOL

The [Point to Point Layout Tool](#) is a fantastic tool that I recently found. It makes really quick work of plotting out screw holes evenly without having to calculate and measure each one. This also makes very quick work of plotting out your pleat lines.



THREAD SNIP

[Thread Snips](#) work great for cutting thread, removing stitches and many other things. You will see me using this tool all the time!

Remember, you won't need all of the tools mentioned in this guide to get started. I just want you to know what tools are available, to make the job easier! Focus on what tools you truly need to learn, practice and get the job done, and build your collection from there. My advice is to accumulate your tools over time as you need them. As you add tools to your collection, don't be afraid to look at both new and used options. I buy many of my tools used and am often scanning second hand selling websites for the best deals. The most important thing is to just get out there and start practicing!!!

