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## **What is the main equipment that you need to start sewing?**

A comprehensive but basic range of tools and equipment is an excellent starting point for any sewer. More specialized pieces of equipment may be purchased in time. Small pieces of equipment such as pins, needles and cutting implements are relatively inexpensive items while a sewing machine is more costly but indispensable. A steam iron and an ironing board are both essential and a sleeve board is helpful. Tools such as hem markers, stitching tapes and fabric markers are useful for specific purposes.

**Pins:** are available in several different thicknesses and lengths and in brass, stainless steel and nickel plated steel. Standard dressmakers pins are 26 mm long while shorter fine lace pins used on lightweight fabrics are 2.5 cm. Glass headed pins are easy to handle and T-pins will stay in position on open weave fabrics.

**Hand sewing needles:** The range of needles used for hand-stitching varies in size, length and point shape. The most common needles are known as sharps. Specialized tasks are catered for by specific needles in a variety of lengths and widths. When choosing a needle, be guided by the structure and weight of the fabric and the thread being used.

**Cutting tools:** Always buy good quality cutting tools made of high-grade steel and keep them well sharpened, since dull blades can damage fabric and slow the cutting process. Bent-handled shears are used for cutting out and sewing scissors for trimming seams and facings. Pinking shears are used to form fray resistant edges and embroidery scissors are designed for needlework. Leather shears cut leather and suede and rotary cutters produce precise straight edges. Awls are used for piercing small holes in fabric for eyelets and buttonholes. Thread clippers snip threads, while seam rippers open seams and are used for detailed work such as undoing buttonhole stitching. Stitch rippers are smaller than seam rippers and can cut stitches close to the fabric.

**Tape measures:** Using a range of suitable tools for taking measurements helps to produce successful results when making up items. Measuring tools are needed for obtaining both pattern and body measurements in order to make any adjustments that are necessary on pattern pieces. Making these adjustments ensures that the finished item is a good fit. Some tools are designed for a variety of general sewing purposes and are required each time a garment is made up. Others are useful for more specific purposes, such as making adjustments to necklines and other curved pattern parts, adjusting hemlines or measuring pleats, this is where the tape measure comes in as one of the most commonly used sewing notions available today.

**Marking tools:** One or more marking tools are required for transferring pattern markings to garment fabric pieces and for marking alterations on garments. There are various types of marking tool to choose from. The best choice for the job in hand has much to do with personal preference, so it is a good idea to try out different options.

Our list of basic equipment for your sewing projects.

1. One pair of fabric shears.
2. Two sets of embroidery scissors for trimming threads.
3. One pair of paper shears for pattern cutting.
4. A box of dress makers pins.
5. A seam ripper and a stitch ripper.
6. A set of hand sewing needles.
7. three sets of tape measures.
8. Tailors chalk.
9. A sleeve board.

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