

# Finding a Sewing Teacher

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## SEW-lutions Guidelines

Your Guide  
to  
Successful  
Sewing

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Whether you're a complete novice, a highly experienced hobbyist, a latent sewer or a sewing professional, there's always something new to learn. A class is a fun way to learn a basic skill, master an innovative technique or get to know a new product. It's also a fun social interaction with others who have similar interests.

### Classroom Cues

Formal sewing classes vary greatly in duration, format and scope. A beginning sewing class is likely to require a commitment to attend several sessions. A project class might be a one-day event. A process class, in which you master a specific technique and make samples, could be only a few hours long.

If you learn best by doing, be sure to sign up for a hands-on class instead of a lecture/demo class where you'll just listen and watch.

### Personal Matters

Private lessons are also available. Expect to pay more; but as the sole customer you'll be in a position expect class content and format tailored to your personal needs and interests.

### Terrific Teachers

Finding a good sewing teacher is much like finding the right fabric for your project—it needs to be a good mix for success.

The Sewing & Craft Alliance (SCA) offers a Trained Sewing Instructor program for sewing experts who want to teach others. Finding an SCA trained instructor is as easy as logging on to [www.sewing.org](http://www.sewing.org). Simply click on the link "Finding a Sewing Instructor" and search the database for sewing instructors in your area. Contact each educator individually to find out whether organized classes are offered through a store, school, adult education program, in their home or on a private basis.



*Photo courtesy of American Sewing Guild.*

### Store Classes

Stop at local fabric stores or machine dealers to inquire about on-site classes. Even if a store doesn't have classroom space, be sure to get on the shop's mailing list. Both independent and chain stores often host special events featuring industry experts or nationally-known sewing educators and sometimes they're held off-site.

If a shop doesn't currently offer classes, ask the owner and staff about sewing professionals in the local community—they may be frequent customers.

### Back to School

Enthusiastic beginners and experienced sewers alike are encouraged to seek out adult education classes at colleges and community colleges, community centers, YMCA's and senior centers. In some locales the county cooperative extension agents also offer classes.

### Guilds

Guilds, both national or local, frequently offer classes and they also attract teaching professionals as members. Log onto the American Sewing Guild's web site at [www.asg.org](http://www.asg.org), to find a chapter in your area.

If you're willing to travel consider attending conferences and expo's. These events are filled with classes from well-known sewing experts. Visit the Sewing Events website at [www.sewingevents.com](http://www.sewingevents.com) to get started.

To find out about locally-organized sewing, quilt, wearable art or stitchery guilds, check the "community calendar" section of the local newspaper or see if your library maintains a database of clubs and organizations.

### Go Pro

Another resource is the body of custom dressmakers and alteration specialists in your area. Ask if they also teach, or know who does. Because it's common for the non-sewing public to inquire about sewing services at local fabric stores, look there for business cards or a bulletin board of local professionals. Also check the Yellow Pages.

### Show Time

Another option, depending on where you live and if you're willing to travel, is to attend a sewing expo or convention. Usually held in metropolitan areas, sewing shows provide the opportunity to learn from nationally-known sewing experts. Show promoters advertise in sewing magazines, so the best way to stay informed about show schedules is to watch for ads in your favorite sewing publications.



*Photo courtesy of American Sewing Guild.*

### A Trade-off

If none of the suggestions above address your particular situation, don't despair—just become inventive! Don't rule out the potential for getting help from someone who has good sewing skills, but no teaching experience. Go back to the fabric store staff,

the guild members or the dressmakers you've talked to and inquire about private lessons. It's common for those without prior teaching experience to be uncomfortable about setting a price for instruction. To put a potential teacher at ease, offer to barter for services. A proposal to trade professional services, child care, meals or gardening may be just the incentive needed to bring out the teaching ability in a sewing friend.



*Photo courtesy of American Sewing Guild.*

### Sew Virtual

Self-starters and sewers who prefer to work at their own pace are encouraged to explore online sewing classes (try typing "online sewing classes" or online + sewing + classes into your favorite search engine). The downside, of course, is that the instructor isn't able to look over your shoulder. Before enrolling in an online class, be sure to thoroughly research the class format, method of presentation (video, downloadable graphics, etc.) and schedule. Some Internet classes provide interactive opportunities via chat sessions or e-mails; you may even be able to ship actual samples to the instructor for evaluation.

Sew, where there is a will to learn, there is also a way! 🖱️