



INTRODUCTION TO UPHOLSTERY

A three-day course

09:30 to 17:00

Next available course dates are listed on the website



Upholstery is one of the most rewarding, creative and practical skills to master. Of course, learning to be a professional upholsterer takes years of study and practice... but this is a chance to discover the main ideas and techniques in just three days. It's a challenging but enjoyable way of sampling the creative world of upholstery. Will it be the start of a new hobby... or a whole new lifestyle for you? Whatever you decide, you'll be able to take these core skills away and use them on a wide range of projects in future.

Our expert tutors also teach elite students on the upholstery industry's three-year professional diploma, so they are well qualified to lead you through the most important techniques of both traditional and modern upholstery. You'll pick up skills that will stay with you forever and enable you to work on a wide range of simple upholstered furniture.

We teach this course by showing you how to restore your own pieces of furniture. Bring along something that needs reviving – but nothing too complex. You'll be surprised how rewarding it is to go home with a beautifully restored piece of furniture.

The course

This skills-packed upholstery course is designed to introduce tools and techniques to budding upholsterers. Training for three full days, students build up their techniques working on an antique dining chair, and a modern footstool with shallow buttoning.

These projects cover two important modules in an upholsterer's repertoire: traditional upholstery with hair and hessian; modern upholstery built with foam and equivalent materials. These skills will enable students to confidently carry on upholstering a wide range of furniture at home, from chairs to headboards and ottomans. The course also serves as an important first-step for students considering the professional upholstery diploma.



Module One: Upholster a drop-in or pin-stuffed seat - traditional methods

Using hands tools which have been used by generations of craftspeople, you will learn the correct techniques for webbing a frame, building up a hair pad, and fitting calico to create a perfect domed shape. You will make the chair uniquely yours with the top fabric, and learn to confidently tackle achieving perfect corners – the hallmark of a professional upholsterer.

Module Two: Upholster a shallow buttoned footstool - modern methods

With post-1950s furniture featuring increasingly in re-upholstery work, modern upholstery skills are vital. In this module you will build your footstool frame using foam to create the padded top. Students will be encouraged to think creatively about their choices of fabric and use of buttons. The stool can be made using a simple frame or solid wooden board and ready-made furniture legs.

Everyone is encouraged to work at their own speed, do a good quality job and – of course - enjoy it. The workshops tend to be busy and workmanlike, with a friendly banter and frequent tea, coffee and cake.

The Traditional Upholstery School is one of a handful of select specialist training centres in the UK for professional students. But for these three days this highly equipped centre of excellence will be your classroom.

What is provided?

- All upholstery materials and sundries are available for use, and charged on an as-you-use-it basis
- Specialist upholstery tools for use on the course. Of course, if you have your own tools that you are comfortable with, feel free to bring them
- Tea, coffee, cold drinks and snacks are provided throughout the day.

What to bring?

Your pieces of furniture.

The most important thing is that it should have a solid frame. If in doubt, do ask us. There are a few images at the end of this letter to give you an idea of what works well. Feel free to send a photo if you already have a project in mind and would like some advice. If you're really stuck, let us know and we can provide elegant handmade wooden footstool frames for you to work on and take home.

You also need to bring the top fabric(s) you want to use to finish or cover the pieces you are working on. Choosing the fabric is part of the fun but make sure you have more than enough and it's strong enough for the project. If in doubt, get in touch with us for advice.



And don't forget:

- Camera or smartphone (to capture the best bits...)
- A notebook and pencil (...to write down the important bits)
- Consider comfy clothes and sturdy shoes. It's a big, airy, spacious workroom with a concrete floor in a breezy rural site. We have strong heating but some people still find it chilly on a cold day – so please pack extra layers and a scarf just in case you need it. We promise no-one will laugh if you work in a woolly hat.
- Something for lunch.
There's a microwave, sink and kettle in the kitchen area and the village shop is a three-minute drive away. There's usually a 'lunch dash' for those who need something.
Many students however are keen to crack on with their projects so take a short-ish lunch break in the workroom.
- Take as many or as few breaks as you want. We want you to achieve what you want but it's meant to be relaxed, informal and fun too.

Timetable

We need some undisturbed time to set up the class first thing. Then you are welcome to arrive from 9.10am onwards. Classes officially begin at 9.30am and finish at 5pm.

Health and safety

As with all soft furniture and upholstery crafts, there are some small risks due to the processes and tools involved.

There will be a short health and safety talk at the start, covering things like working safely with long sharp needles, and keeping your fingers safe when using a ripping chisel.

Parking

The course is held at the workshops of the Traditional Upholstery School in Wiltshire. The address is Holt Holdings, East Lane, Holt, Wiltshire, BA14 6QU.

If you are a long-standing student please note we have moved from the Old Glove Factory in Holt. The School is now part of a rural business estate so there's plenty of parking.

When you drive in, park on the left, just outside the wooden gates. The school is inside the gates. The entrance is halfway along the large wooden barn-like building with a plant pot outside.

You are welcome to drop your heavy bags, equipment or furniture right at the door. Drive through the metal gate to the right of the main building. Our doorway is halfway along (there's always a plant pot outside). Please keep on the left of this narrow stretch



because other businesses use it for access and may need to get past. When you've dropped your stuff you need to reverse back to the parking area.

Directions

From Holt on the B3107 towards Melksham

After Holt, take the first left into East Lane immediately after Hillview Riding Stables, signposted 'Atworth' and 'Broughton Gifford'.

Holt Holdings is about 200 metres along on the left. You'll see a convex mirror in the hedge opposite the turning.

From Melksham on the B3107 towards Holt and Bradford on Avon

About two miles along this winding road you left. Immediately after, take a sharp right turning into East Lane, which is signposted 'Atworth' and 'Broughton Gifford'.

Holt Holdings is about 200 metres along the East Lane on the left. You'll see a convex mirror in the hedge opposite the turning.

Booking

Places on these courses are limited in order to maximise experience. Course dates and availability can be found on the [website](#) and you can book your place there too.

Any other queries?

If you have any requests, questions or concerns, please get in touch. Email traditionalupholsterschool@gmail.com.

Joanna Heptinstall

