



INTRODUCTION TO UPHOLSTERY

A three-day course

9:30 to 17:00

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 beginner's course is a chance to discover some of the most useful core skills in just three days.

The idea is that you will learn by restoring your own pieces of furniture. Ideally, you will bring a drop-in seat dining chair or small stool as your traditional project. It is deliberately simple, allowing you the chance to take your chair home finished, yet includes some of the most useful upholstery techniques. For your modern project, which we will tackle on day three, a simple footstool such as the one pictured above will be perfect.

Our expert tutors also teach students on our three-year AMUSF professional diploma. You will use the same tools and materials that we use professionally, working in a typical upholstery workroom space. You'll pick up transferable skills that will enable you to work on a wide range of simple upholstered furniture at home.

This three-day course is unique to the Traditional Upholstery School. It is 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?



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 drop-in seat dining chair, and a modern footstool.

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

Using hand tools which have been used by generations of craftspeople, you will learn the correct techniques for webbing a frame, building up a hair pad using animal hair or plant fibre, 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. The stool can be made using a simple frame or solid wooden board and ready-made furniture legs. Buttons can be added for a final flourish.

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, frequent tea and coffee and a full biscuit tin.

The Traditional Upholstery School is one of a handful of select specialist training centres in the UK for professional students.

The skills learned 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.



What is provided?

- All upholstery materials and sundries are available for use, and charged on an as-you-use-it basis. A typical charge for drop-in seat chair materials is £16, and £10 for a small footstool.
- 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?

- A **drop-in seat dining chair** for the traditional upholstery module.
- A **simple footstool** for the modern module.
- **Top fabric** that you want to finish the pieces you are working on. Choosing the fabric is part of the fun but make sure you have more than enough, especially if centring a pattern, and it is upholstery weight fabric.

If in doubt that your chosen furniture or fabric is suitable, 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.

Stuck? We can provide

Any student arriving with an unsuitable piece of furniture will be invited to choose from our selection of Edwardian chairs and modern footstools. The price we charge for these pieces is very much what we paid for them, so a typical Edwardian drop-in seat dining chair will be £15. A purpose-made footstool with Queen Anne style legs will be £48.

If you think you may need to buy one of our pieces, please do arrive in good time so that you can choose your chair and crack on at the start of the class without delay.

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. Many students 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. Again, tutors need undisturbed time in the workroom at the end of the day to tidy up and prepare for tomorrow before they go home.

Health and safety

As with all upholstery tasks, 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:

Traditional Upholstery School, Unit 2, Holt Holdings, East Lane, Holt, Trowbridge 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 through the gate, park on the left against the wall. Our entrance is halfway along the large wooden barn-like building. You are welcome to drop your heavy bags, equipment or furniture right at the door. 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. The entrance is a wide gravel driveway. Drive through the large gateway in the wall to park.

From Melksham on the B3107 towards Holt and Bradford on Avon

About two miles along this winding road you will drive by West Wiltshire Riding Centre on the right. Immediately after, take a sharp right turning into East Lane, which is signposted 'Broughton Gifford'.

Holt Holdings is about 200 metres along on the left. The entrance is a wide gravel driveway. Drive through the large gateway in the wall to park.

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.

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

Joanna Heptinstall

