

The Beginner's Essential Toolbox

Which tools do you actually need to get started with sewing? Which ones are actually worth buying? Discover my top 10 tools for a beginner's toolbox to borrow, buy, or perhaps find already around your home.



1. Reliable beginner sewing machine

“If you're on a budget, try borrowing a machine to get started.”

A solid entry-level machine is the engine of everything. A machine that stitches consistently will take you much further than an expensive machine you don't understand. You don't need bells and whistles — you need:

- Straight stitch
- Zigzag stitch
- Reverse
- Adjustable stitch length



2. Universal sewing machine needles

“Without a needle, nothing gets sewn.”

Universal needles (size 80/12) will sew a wide range of fabrics, suitable for most beginner projects.

I suggest changing the needle after approx. 8 hours of sewing to prevent skipped stitches, broken threads, and frustration. This is often the invisible fix to those “my machine hates me” moments.



3. Good quality thread

“The foundation of strong seams.”

An all-purpose polyester thread feeds smoothly and doesn't break. It also reduces lint and produces stronger seams.

Reliable brands are Rasant, Gutermann, Mettler, DMC, and Coats.

One neutral colour (light or mid-grey) will suit many fabrics when starting out.



4. Large blade fabric scissors

“Your workhorse for accurate fabric cutting.”

Sharp fabric scissors are essential for cutting fabric cleanly and accurately.

They should:

- Be comfortable in the hand
- Cut cleanly and easily through fabric
- Never be used on paper as this blunts them

A cheap pair is fine — as long as they stay dedicated only for cutting fabric.



5. Small pointy scissors

“The sewist’s precision cutter.”

Short, pointy blades become a beginner’s best friend very quickly.

They’re used constantly for:

- Trimming threads
- Snipping corners
- Tidying seams at the machine

They’re easier to manage than large blades for precision work.



6. Seam ripper / quick-unpick

“Even the best sewists need to undo mistakes.”

Your best tool for moving forward, because everyone makes mistakes.

A seam ripper is:

- A tool for learning
- A tool for refining
- A tool for confidence

Knowing mistakes can be undone removes fear and encourages experimentation.



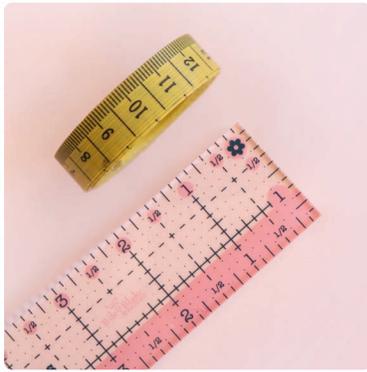
7. Pins or binding clips

“Keep layers aligned while you sew”

You need something to align layers accurately — but this can be flexible.

- Pins are inexpensive and great for thin layers
- Clips work great for thick layers where pins can bend

Choose the option that suits the fabric and layers you’re working with



8. Measuring tools

“Accuracy begins with measurement.”

A flexible tape measure and a small clear ruler is enough at first.

This supports:

- Accurate seam allowances
- Project sizing
- Precise measuring and marking

I recommend tools with both metric and imperial markings for pattern flexibility.



9. Iron & basic pressing setup

“This often surprises beginners — but pressing is half of sewing.”

All you need is:

- A basic household iron
- A small ironing board or pressing mat

Pressing improves accuracy, helps seams behave, and makes projects look polished — even at beginner level.

Sewing is stitching and pressing, always.



10. Fabric-safe marking tool

“For temporary markings that guide your sewing.”

Transfer markings to fabric clearly.

Options include:

- Heat erasable pen
- Wash-away pen
- Chalk pencil

Choosing one reliable marking tool is essential.

Not sure which tools to buy?

Shop Ali’s recommended beginner sewing tools.

Click the link below to shop a list of affordable, reliable tools ideal for getting started.

bit.ly/beginners-toolbox

