

## Boot-making Workshop Guide

Welcome to the Boot-making Workshop guide! I'm so excited you're getting ready to tackle boots. Please read this guide carefully as it contains important information about the workshop.

My boot-making workshops are suitable for people who have made shoes before (either by attending my shoemaking workshops or elsewhere), so I assume you are already familiar with the processes of stitching uppers, lasting, inserting stiffeners and attaching soles. All of those techniques will be used when creating boots, but there are some key differences in boot-making as opposed to shoemaking.

Firstly, the pattern creation is a little different when making boots. We'll tape up the last as with shoes, but we only create half a boot, and we'll also go through a series of stages from master patterns, draft patterns and final patterns. This will all become clear at the workshop.

Secondly, there is a major extra step when making boots as opposed to shoes. No matter how experienced you are, it is virtually impossible to get your pattern to be a perfect fit first time. For this reason, when we make boots we first create a mock-up, roughly last this and then test the fit. Once we know which areas need adjustment, we can modify our patterns. It can be necessary to create a second mock-up, depending on how close the first was to fitting. This is important to bear in mind, as it means you will need to allow plenty of extra of your chosen fabric.

Thirdly, I suggest including zips in your boots or, if you want an easier option to fit, laces. You can make pull-up boots but the problem is that they allow absolutely no room for error in terms of sizing. Therefore, it is generally easier to include zips/laces as part of the design.

### FAQ

#### *Why does it take two days to make boots?*

I run the boot-making workshop over two days because of the extra time it takes to create larger patterns and then make a mock-up, as well as making adjustments and a second mock-up if necessary. By the end of the first day, you should have an adjusted pattern and, depending on how many mock-ups were necessary, your uppers and linings cut and possibly stitched. On day two, we'll stitch the uppers and linings (if not already done), last the boots, put in stiffeners and attach soles.

#### *Can I reuse my shoemaking lasts?*

Yes, absolutely. It is possible to buy boot lasts but they are very rare so it's unlikely you'll be able to find the right size. The way we'll be constructing the pattern for our boots will be based on an ordinary shoe last and we'll also be able to use the shoe last to last the boots. If you're making long boots, it is very important that your lasts have a working alpha hinge, so please test this prior to the workshop.



*What kind of boots can I make?*

I recommend making one of the following styles:

- Zip-up ankle boots
- Zip-up knee high boots
- Lace-up ankle boots



As explained above, I don't recommend pull-up styles like cowboy boots until you've had some practice, as the measurements need to be 100% perfect in order for these to fit. Chelsea boots (ankle boots with side elastic panels) are also an option, but again I wouldn't recommend them for beginners because they are very tricky to sew (they are made on industrial sewing machines and don't translate well to the domestic machine). There is considerable variation on all boot styles in terms of placement of seams, with some options being easier than others, so I recommend finding some pictures of a few boots you like the look of and we can chat about the best option for you to try.

As with shoemaking, I strongly recommend avoiding heeled shoes at this stage. This is even more pertinent with boots, as a full-size drill cannot fit inside the boot, meaning that you have to use a mini drill to attach the heels. Not only does this require considerable physical strength, but it also requires a great deal of patience! Heeled shoes/boots are best kept for follow-up projects at home where you will have a lot more time than at the workshop.

#### What You Will Need to Bring

- Pair of flat lasts adjusted to the correct width if necessary
- Material for uppers and linings (as with shoes, the amount needed depends on the size of your feet and also the style of boot you will be making. As a rough guide, if making knee high boots you are likely to need at least 1m of each fabric per pair of boots (so if making one final pair + one mock-up you would need at least 2m upper fabric and 2m lining fabric). I would err on the side of buying extra fabric rather than risk running out).
- Zips or shoelaces

I will supply:

- Insoles
- Stiffeners
- Soling resin
- Tools, glue and equipment

Please refer to my shoemaking guide for suggestions on suppliers and links. Fabric recommendations are the same for boots, although I do recommend reasonably sturdy fabric for boots, especially if you are making longer boots, as otherwise they will slip down the leg. As with shoes, the stretchier the fabric, the easier a time you will have lasting the boots, so keep this in mind when choosing fabrics.

As always, if you have any questions, please get in touch!

