



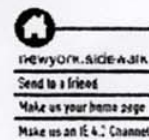
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sewing classes city survival guide



Q: Every time I walk into Barneys, I think "I could make that for pennies." Where can a stylish but domestically challenged New Yorker go to learn how to sew?

A: If the word sewing conjures dreadful images of high school home ec, we've got a news flash for you: Sewing is cool again. For one thing, it's economical — what better way to be chic on the cheap than to make your own version of the \$300 pencil skirt you saw at Prada?

Sewing is also a great stress reliever and

way more constructive (literally) than unwinding at a bar. (In fact, a Home Sewing Association study found that women who sew have lower blood pressure and heart rates.) And sewing classes provide an easy way to meet people. New York City sewing circles are an eclectic lot: You'll find savvy young professionals, aspiring fashion designers, homemakers, drag queens, theater people and, increasingly, even a guy or two.

The following three sewing schools offer fun, low-key classes geared toward beginners.

Sew Fast, Sew Easy (147 W. 57th St., Second Floor, between Sixth and Seventh Avenues, 212-582-5889; www.sewfastseweasy.com)

Any notions that sewing is just for June Cleaver types are firmly put to rest at Sew Fast, Sew Easy's hip, creative and proudly irreverent classes. "It's sewing for the 21st century!" proclaims founder Elissa Meyrich, a fashion designer and former instructor at Parsons who's made it her mission to "take sewing out of the '50s." The focus is on of-the-moment trends

— summer offerings include courses on how to make a princess-line dress, a knit shrug and Daryl K—esque hip-hugging pants — and the instructors are all fashion industry professionals. Courses are divided into four levels: Level One teaches basic techniques like working with commercial patterns, using a sewing machine, custom fitting and sewing hems and buttons. Too intense? Try their one-time "Sewing Rx" class (\$45, includes supplies) and learn how to make a funky pouch bag, while overcoming your sewing anxieties. There are also specialized one-session seminars, as well as the one-and-only Stitch and Bitch Café — a brilliantly conceived periodic Friday evening sewing circle/social hour for the "fashion vigilantes" who've completed Level II and above. You go, girls. Tuition for Sewing I is \$180 (includes pattern and workbook) for four three-and-three-quarter-hour classes, plus the cost of supplies. ...



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