



The Identity Store

Guide to machine sewing leather



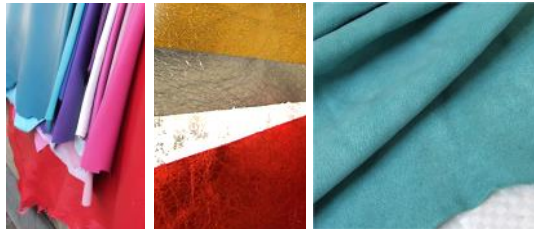
www.identityleathercraft.com



IDENTITY LEATHER CRAFT

for people who make, mend or adapt things out of leather

Machine Sewing Soft Leathers



This guide is designed to offer you advice on sewing up upholstery weight (cowhide), garment weight sheepskin, gloving leathers or metallic or suedes with a sewing machine.

It is important to use a leather needle and to replace the needle often to keep a good sharp tip and avoid catching the fibres.

Cut with sharp cutting knives, rotary wheels (use on a good cutting mat to protect the blades) or bend shears to get good clean lines.

With cutting and sewing it is always advisable to try on a test piece first see what alterations to pressure and tension need to be made.



Leather mini skirt and suede dress by Angela Holland , suede dress by Sarah Brittner

Useful links/articles:

Looks Like I Made It— sewing blog by Angela Holland

Craftsy: Tips for Sewing with Leather

(<https://www.craftsy.com/blog/2013/10/tips-for-sewing-with-leather/>)

Instrucables: Sewing Leather <http://www.instructables.com/lesson/Sewing-Leather-1/>

1. Lay out your pattern on the unfinished (flesh side) of the leather. Try to avoid any areas with faults – these can more easily be seen on the flesh side. Rather than pin the pattern to the leather, use small bits of double-sided tailor's tape. Trace the pattern with tailor's chalk.
2. Cut out your pieces with good sharp scissors (code 3047-00, 3050-00). Sharpen your shears after as necessary.

TIP: Save two scraps of leather that you will use to test your sewing machine settings.

3. Glue or tape, rather than pin, the pieces together using either rubber cement (2526-01) or leathercraft cement (2540-01). Paint on a thin layer along the seams to hold the leather in place and avoid movement when stitching. This will not harm your material, needle or machine.
4. Adjust your sewing machine for longer stitches – 3-4mm per stitch or 6-9 stitches per inch. The shorter stitches you use on fabric will weaken this leather, causing it to split with wear.
5. Load your sewing machine and bobbin with normal sewing machine thread and with a size 14 or 16 leather universal sewing machine needle with diamond tip (11194-00). If your machine is able to change the presser foot over to a walking foot or roller foot, and adjust the feed dog height accordingly.

6. Test your machine on your scrap pieces of leather before you attempt to sew the finished piece. The leather should pass as easily as would any other material.



7. Adjust your machine as needed for tension and needle height.

8. Test the more complicated stitches, like triple thicknesses, bunching sleeves and button holes.



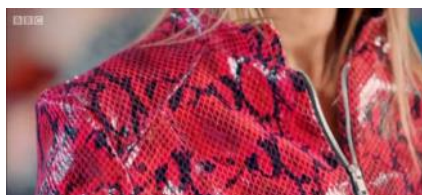
9. For complicated stitches or area with several layers of leather turn the sewing wheel by hand guiding it over these areas.
10. You may find it easier to hand sew in places – for this use a ‘glovers’ needle which has a sharp diamond tip to pierce the leather (1191-13)
11. Sew according to the pattern. Sew slowly so you can correct mistakes or adjust the material before damaging the leather.
12. Use a bone folder or roller to press down seams on the reverse.



List of useful tools/materials available from our website

www.identityleathercraft.com

- 11194-00 Leather sewing machine needles – universal needles
- 1191-13 ‘Glovers’ needles (pack of 10)
- 1201-00 Hand sewing needle pack including curved needles
- 2014-00 Beeswax block – use to run your threads through for hand stitching
- 2526-01 Rubber Cement
- 2540-01 Leathercraft Cement
- 2536-01 Repositionable adhesive tape
- 3045-00 Bend Shears with 11” blade (keep aside for leather use only)
- 8116-00 Bone folder – for smoothing over stitched seams and glued areas
- 8080-00 Hand Roller—for smoothing/pressing down seams



Images from BBC Sewing Bee—sewing with leather

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