

# Clothing and TEXTILES

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY COOPERATIVE EXTENSION PROGRAMMING

## PROJECT: UPHOLSTERY FOR BEGINNERS



Webster's Dictionary defines upholstery as "materials (as fabric, padding, and springs) used to make a soft covering especially for a seat". This fact sheet is an easy upholstery project that will transform an old chair into something beautiful and functional. As you search for a chair to upholster, look for seats and chair backs that can be removed from the frames easily. Before you begin, stabilize the chair with screws and / or wood glue, if needed.

### Supplies:

- second hand chair
- upholstery weight fabric
- screw driver
- staple gun and staples
- wood glue, if needed



Note: Each chair will be slightly different, so you may need to modify some steps to accommodate your specific chair. All upholstery projects should use an upholstery weight fabric. This fabric is durable and is made to withstand use.



1. Gather your supplies and remove the upholstered seat and back cushion from the frame of the chair. The example chair has screws on the underside of the seat cushion which were loosened and removed.

2. Determine how much fabric you need by placing the seat and back pieces on the fabric. Let the old fabric that is on the seat be your guide and allow enough overhang on each side so that it can be secured to the back with staples.



3. Begin stapling the fabric to the back of the chair seat. To do this, fold the raw edges of the fabric under so that you have a strong, clean edge. Then start on one side and staple the fabric once in the center. Move to the opposite side, stretch the fabric tight and staple in the center. Continue stapling the fabric to the seat, alternating between the opposite sides and pulling the fabric tight as you progress.



## PROJECT: UPHOLSTERY, continued.



4. Now move to the other two sides of the chair seat. Repeat the same process of alternating sides, stapling and pulling the fabric tight. Again, remember to fold the raw edges of the fabric under before you staple.



5. As you near the corners, fold and staple the corners neatly so that the fabric looks clean from the visible side. Because each chair is different, it may take several trial and error attempts before the corner is perfect.

6. Now cover the seat back. Note how the original fabric is secured and try to imitate it. This seat back was stapled along the bottom and along each side. The most important step is to ensure that the fabric is tight as you staple. Again, finish the corners as neatly as possible.



7. Simply reattach the seat and back to the chair frame with the original screws and you are finished!

### Sources:

Sowle, D., & Dye, R. (2005). *Complete step-by-step upholstery*. London, England: New Holland Publishers Ltd..

Thomerson, C. (1996). *The Complete upholsterer*. London, England: Francis Lincoln Limited.



Jen Giddens, USU Interior Design student  
Lindsey Shirley, PhD, Clothing & Textiles Extension Specialist



Utah State University is committed to providing an environment free from harassment and other forms of illegal discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age (40 and older), disability, and veteran's status. USU's policy also prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in employment and academic related practices and decisions.

Utah State University employees and students cannot, because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or veteran's status, refuse to hire; discharge; promote; demote; terminate; discriminate in compensation; or discriminate regarding terms, privileges, or conditions of employment, against any person otherwise qualified. Employees and students also cannot discriminate in the classroom, residence halls, or in on/off campus, USU-sponsored events and activities.

This publication is issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Noelle E. Cockett, Vice President for Extension and Agriculture, Utah State University. (FC/Clothing&Textiles/2010-04pr)