

Waistcoat Making, the Savile Row Style Syllabus
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Waistcoat Making, the Savile Row Style

Best suited for levels 2 & 3

Novice – competent

There are of course many ways to make a waistcoat, but only one is handcraft.

The HTA uses the method which is most traditional when facecloths (thick felt like fabric) were used in its construction.

It is a close link to the coat and tailcoat in its development and is a great garment for the student to hone their hand sewing skills on before attempting the coat.

The foreparts are almost completely made by hand. The only machine sewn stitches are in the dart and welt pockets, and just like any handcraft garment, the waistcoat is hand finished with top stitching and buttonholes.

At The HTA, students can opt to start the course online and complete it in-house or vice-versa. We also host introductory courses for beginners who wish to master the art of Savile Row tailoring.

Week 1

Lesson 1:

Introduction to tools, head units and measurement chart

Students will take turns measuring one another to become competent in assessing figures

Lesson 2:

Drafting the pattern

The student will draft a waistcoat pattern based off their measurements

Lesson 3:

Threading the sewing machine, setting the tension and machine sewing samples (straight stitch)

A detailed explanation of the use of an industrial sewing machine is given

Lesson 4:

Machine sewing matching seams

The student will develop much needed handling and control of the sewing machine ahead of making the garment

Lesson 5:

Sewing darts and parallel seams

Simple sewing challenges will be given to help develop confidence and control of the industrial sewing machine

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Week 2

Lesson 6:

Needle and thimble work and basting in hand

It is impossible to be a competent tailor without first learning the proper use of a needle and thimble

Lesson 7:

Basting on the board and diagonal basting

Time is taken to develop control of stitching both in-hand and on the board

Lesson 8:

Pick stitching and buttonholes

The buttonhole is taught early in the course so the student is able to continue practising the skills needed for the completion of the garment

Lesson 9:

Cut, lay and inlays

The project begins by cutting in cloth

Lesson 10:

Fixing the pockets and cutting the linings and canvas

All trimmings are cut to size and ready to sew

Week 3

Lesson 11:

Mark stitching

The *mark stitch*, also known as *the tailor's stitch* or *thread mark*, is used to transfer the pattern from one side of the cloth to both layers

Lesson 12:

Sample welt pockets

Sample pockets are made before attempting to sew into the finish garment

Lesson 13:

Sewing darts and preparation for pockets and centre back

The two foreparts are sewn and prepared for pockets

Lesson 14:

Welt pockets

The method used in this lesson is the same that is used in both the out-breast of the morning coat and large coat

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Lesson 15:

Canvassing off

Once the pockets are sewn in, the canvas is attached to the foreparts

Week 4

Lesson 16:

Basting in the back

The foreparts are basted to the back so that a *check fitting* can be made

Lesson 17:

Joining the shoulders

Fullness is added to the lining shoulder seams to add shaping for the shoulder blades

Lesson 18:

Fitting – rip and re-mark

This lesson will teach the student how to conduct a fitting, identify fitting issues and how to remedy them

Lesson 19:

Shaping and taping

The front edges are shaped and bias tape draws the edge. The same technique is found in the tail and lounge coats

Lesson 20:

Pick stitching the pockets

The edges of the pockets are finished to hide the *raw edge*

Week 5

Lesson 21:

Facing

Using the traditional method of attaching a facing, the front edge seams are hand-sewn

Lesson 22:

Forepart linings

The forepart linings are basted in with fullness

Lesson 23:

Lining the back

In one straight shot, the waistcoat is transformed into a finished garment

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Lesson 24:

Bagging out the back

This is possibly the trickiest part of making a waistcoat – the back is sewn out in one step starting at the hem on one side to the hem on the opposite side

Lesson 25:

Felling the linings

The forepart lining is finished by hand

Week 6

Lesson 26:

Pick stitching

To prevent the front edge from swelling, the edge is *pick stitched*

Lesson 27:

Buttonholes

Six buttonholes are found in the waistcoat and two days are given for the student to complete them in their garment. Students will refer back to lessons taught in week 2, lesson 8

Lesson 28:

Buttonholes cont.

Students are given another day to continue working on their waistcoat buttonholes

Lesson 29:

Buttoning

The basting stitches are removed and the buttons are added

Lesson 30:

Pressing off

All chalk marks are brushed out and the whole garment is *pressed off* and ready to be worn