

SEMPER HOPKINS

Introduction to Interior Design

Create a room that works for you and feels like you

Workshop Workbook



Welcome to Introduction to Interior Design

Designing a room should be exciting, but with so many choices — colours, furniture, fabrics, lighting, flooring and finishes — it can quickly start to feel overwhelming.

The secret is knowing where to start and what order to make your decisions in.

Today, I'm going to take you through a simple step-by-step process to help you create a room that not only looks beautiful, but works for the way you live and feels like you.

There are no perfect homes and no one 'right' interior style. This is about understanding what you love, making confident choices and bringing everything together into a room that feels personal to you.

Contents

1 — UNDERSTAND YOUR ROOM

- Your Room & Vision
- Who & What Is the Room For?
- What Are You Working With?
- Core Summary: My Room Brief

2 — PLAN YOUR ROOM

- Budget
- Space & Layout
- Plan Before You Buy
- Lighting
- Core Summary: My Room Plan

3 — DEVELOP YOUR DESIGN DIRECTION

- Finding Your Design Direction
- Colour
- Creating Colour Combinations
- Build Your Colour Palette
- Balance Your Colour Palette
- Pattern, Texture & Shape
- Core Summary: My Design Direction

Contents

4 — BRING YOUR SCHEME TOGETHER

- Research Your Scheme
- Create Your Design Board
- Bring Your Scheme to Life
- Use Visualisation Tools
- Core Summary: My Room Scheme

TURN YOUR PLAN INTO YOUR ROOM

Your step-by-step plan for bringing your scheme to life

By the end of this process you'll have a clear vision for your room, a practical room plan, your design direction and a process for bringing your complete scheme together.



1.Understand Your Room

Start with you, your room and how you actually live.

Before thinking about colours, furniture or finishes, this section will help you get clear on how you want your room to feel, what it needs to do and what you already have to work with.

By the end of this section, you'll have created your Room Brief.

Your Room & Vision

Before thinking about paint colours, furniture or what you've saved on Pinterest, start with how you want your room to feel. Your home has a real impact on how you feel, so instead of starting with “What do I want this room to look like?”, ask yourself:

“How do I want to feel when I'm in this room?” These words become your guide. As you make decisions throughout the day, you can come back to them and ask: Does this choice help me create the feeling I want?

Which room are you focusing on? What would you most like to achieve with this room?

Are you:

□ Starting from scratch
□ Renovating
□ Refreshing an existing room

What would you most like to change or improve about the room?

Choose three words that describe how you'd love your room to feel.

Examples: Calm • Cosy • Relaxed • Energising • Sociable • Playful • Colourful • Restful • Luxurious •

Emma’s Tip: Don't worry about naming your interior style yet.
Starting with how you want your room to feel gives you much more freedom than trying to fit your home into a particular trend or style.

Who & What Is The Room For?

A beautiful room also needs to work for the way you live. Think about who uses the space, what happens there and what you need the room to provide.
Design for your life now — not for how you think your home should be used.

Who uses this room?
Think about everyone who regularly uses the space.

What do you use the room for?
Think about everything that happens here — relaxing, entertaining, working, eating, playing, crafting, exercise or spending time together.

What does the room need?

□ Comfortable seating
□ Additional seating
□ Storage
□ Dining space
□ Desk / workspace
□ TV / media area
□ Reading area
□ Play space
□ Display space
□ Other _____

Is there anything else the room needs to do?

Emma's Tip: Don't design for an imaginary version of your life. A successful room should look beautiful, but it also needs to work brilliantly for the people who actually live there.

What Are You Working With?

Before buying anything new, take a look at what you already have.

If you're redesigning a room, think about the furniture, furnishings and features you love and want to keep, as well as the things that no longer work for you. You don't need to keep something just because you already own it. If it has no purpose, doesn't work in the space or you simply don't love it anymore, give yourself permission to let it go.

Some pieces might work perfectly as they are. Others could be moved, repaired, reupholstered or upcycled rather than replaced.

What do you already have that you love or want to keep?
Think about furniture, artwork, rugs, lighting, accessories or anything else you'd like to build your room around.

What isn't working or needs to change?

Could anything be given a new lease of life?

□ Move it somewhere else
□ Repair it
□ Reupholster it
□ Paint or upcycle it
□ Sell or donate it
□ Replace it

Emma's Tip: Keep, reuse and upcycle the things you love — not everything you own.

Core Summary: My Room Brief

You've now thought about how you want your room to feel, how it needs to work and what you already have to work with.

Your Room Brief brings those key decisions together in one place. Keep coming back to it as you move through the process — it will help you stay focused and make choices that are right for you, your home and the way you live.

How do I want my room to feel?
My three words:

What are the most important things my room needs to do?

What key pieces or features do I want to keep and work around?

In one sentence, what am I trying to create?
I want to create a room that...

Emma's Tip: Keep coming back to your Room Brief as your ideas develop. If a choice doesn't support how you want the room to feel, how it needs to work or the things you've chosen to keep, ask yourself whether it really belongs in your room.

Additional Notes

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2.Plan Your Room

Now you're clear on what you want from your room, it's time to look at the practicalities — your budget, the space you have to work with, how the room flows and how lighting affects it.

Taking time to plan these things now will help you make more confident decisions later and avoid expensive mistakes. By the end of this section, you'll have created your Room Plan.

Budget

Before you start buying, think about everything your room needs and how much you realistically have to spend.

List everything you might need to change, buy, repair or update. Think about what you can reuse or upcycle, what you'll need to spend money on and what could wait.

What needs to happen in your room?
List everything you think you might need to change, buy, repair or update.

Now prioritise your list
Go back through your list and add a number next to each item:
1 — FIRST - What needs to happen first?
2 — NEXT - What is important, but doesn't need to happen immediately?
3 — LATER - What could wait until later?

What is your realistic overall budget?
£

Emma's Tip: Your budget doesn't have to cover everything at once. Prioritise the changes that will make the biggest difference, reuse what you can and build your room over time.

Space & Layout

Good space planning is about more than making sure everything fits. Your layout needs to work for how you use the room and how you move around it.

Start with the things you can't easily move, then look at the furniture you need in the room and explore how it could be positioned.

What are the fixed features in your room?

Windows • Doors • Radiators • Fireplaces • Alcoves • Built-in furniture • Sockets • TV points

What furniture needs to fit in the room?

Think about the furniture you're keeping and what you identified earlier that the room needs.

Think about your layout

When deciding where your furniture should go, consider:

- Flow — Can you move comfortably through the room?
- Doors — Can doors, cupboards and drawers open properly?
- Function — Is the furniture positioned where it works best for how you use the room?
- Scale — Does the furniture feel right for the size of the room and alongside the other pieces?
- Focal Point — What do you naturally want to draw attention to — a fireplace, view, artwork or TV?

Emma's Tip: Don't assume your furniture has to stay where it is. Moving things around and trying a different layout can completely change how a room looks and works.

Plan Before You Buy

Before buying new furniture, measure your room and the furniture you're keeping. This will help you work out the minimum and maximum sizes that will work in your space.

A piece of furniture might technically fit — but that doesn't mean it will work well in the room.

Before buying, ask yourself:
□ What size will work in the available space?
□ Will there still be enough room to comfortably move around it?
□ Will doors, cupboards and drawers still open?
□ Is it the right scale for the room and the furniture around it?
□ Will I actually be able to get it into the room? Think about doors, hallways, stairs and tight corners.

What furniture do you need?
Use your room measurements to work out the approximate size each piece needs to be, and take these measurements with you when shopping.
List: Furniture | Approx. size

At home
Sketch out different layouts before committing to one. You can do this on paper, or mark out the size and position of furniture directly on the floor.

Emma's Tip: Use masking tape to mark the dimensions of a new sofa, table or other large piece on the floor before you buy it. It's much easier to understand the scale when you can physically see the space it will take up.

Lighting

Lighting can completely change how a room looks, feels and functions. Start by understanding the natural light you already have, then think about the different types of lighting you'll need throughout the day.

Understand your natural light

Think about where your natural light comes from and how it changes during the day.
Windows • Glazed doors • Internal glass doors • Skylights
Ask yourself: *Where does the natural light come from? Are there areas of the room that feel particularly light or dark?*

Layer Your Lighting

A well-lit room usually needs more than one source of light. Think about lighting in three layers:

- AMBIENT LIGHTING: Your general, everyday lighting — ceiling lights, pendants or wall lights.
- TASK LIGHTING: Lighting for a particular activity — reading, working, cooking or getting ready.
- ACCENT LIGHTING: Softer lighting that creates atmosphere or highlights something — table lamps, floor lamps, artwork or architectural features.

What new lighting does your room need — and do you have a power supply for it?

Think about where each light will be positioned and whether you have a power source where you need it. If you're renovating, plan your lighting and sockets before decorating.

Emma's Tip: Don't rely on one ceiling light to do everything. Layering different sources of light at different heights will make your room feel warmer, more inviting and more flexible.

Core Summary: My Room Plan

What is my budget?

£ _____

What are my priorities? Ranked in order

What furniture do I need and what are the key measurements?

What lighting do I need?

Think about ambient, task and accent lighting.

Emma's Tip: Keep this page handy when you start researching and sourcing. Check your budget, priorities and measurements before you buy — it's much easier to make confident decisions when you know exactly what you're looking for.

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3.Develop Your Design Direction

Explore the colours, patterns, textures and ideas you're naturally drawn to and begin bringing them together into a look that feels like you.

By the end of this section, you'll have created your Design Direction.

Finding Your Design Direction

You've already chosen three words to describe how you want your room to feel. Now start thinking about what those words could mean for the look and feel of your room.

There's no need to name a particular interior style. Your design direction can be a combination of different ideas that feel right for you.

My three words are:

What other words describe the look and feel I'm drawn to?
For example: relaxed, colourful, botanical, bold, traditional, contemporary, playful, elegant, natural, industrial.

What do I definitely NOT want my room to feel like?
For example: too formal, cold, cluttered, overly coordinated, too neutral, dark, busy or impersonal.

How would I describe the direction I want to explore?
For example: relaxed and welcoming with plenty of character / calm and natural but not too neutral / colourful and playful with a mix of old and new / simple and contemporary with warmer, softer elements.

Emma's Tip: Don't worry about finding the perfect name for your style. Your design direction is simply a starting point — you'll develop it as you explore colour, pattern, texture and shape.



Colour

Colour has a huge impact on how a room looks and feels. Think back to the three words you chose for your room and use these to help guide your colour choices. Your colour wheel is a practical tool to help you understand how colours relate to each other and which combinations work well together.

Understanding your colour wheel

- **WARM COLOURS** - Reds, oranges and yellows can make a space feel warmer, cosier and more energising.
- **COOL COLOURS** - Blues, greens and violets can create a cooler, calmer and more restful feeling.

Emma's Tip: There isn't one 'right' way to build a colour scheme. Use your colour wheel to experiment with different combinations and see what you're drawn to.



Creating Colour Combinations

Ways to combine colour:

- **TONAL** - Choose one colour and use different shades of it, from light through to dark. For example, pale sage, mid green and deep forest green. This can create a calm, layered and cohesive scheme.
- **COMPLEMENTARY COLOURS** - Colours opposite each other on the wheel. They create contrast and make each other stand out. Examples: blue + orange • red + green • yellow + violet
- **ANALOGOUS COLOURS** - Colours next to each other on the wheel. They naturally work together and create a more harmonious scheme. Examples: blue + blue-green + green
- **SPLIT COMPLEMENTARY** - Start with one colour, then use the two colours either side of its opposite. This gives you contrast, but can feel softer and easier to use than a complementary scheme.

Build Your Colour Palette

Now it's time to start building a colour palette for your room. Think back to how you want your room to feel, the colours you're naturally drawn to and anything you're already keeping in the room.

What colours are already in the room?
Think about the things you're keeping — flooring, furniture, curtains, artwork, tiles, fireplaces or other existing finishes.

What colours are you naturally drawn to?
Think about colours you already love, wear, live with or repeatedly save for inspiration.

How do these colours connect to the three words you chose for your room?
Think about which colours will help you create the feeling you want.

Emma's Tip: Don't worry about creating the finished palette yet. Start by bringing together what you already have, what you love and how you want the room to feel.

Balance Your Colour Palette

Now bring together the colours you've chosen and think about how much of each colour you want to use in your room.

The 60 / 30 / 10 Guide
A simple way to think about balancing colour across your room:

- 60% — MAIN COLOUR: The colour you'll see most in the room — often walls, flooring or other large areas.
- 30% — SECONDARY COLOUR: A supporting colour that adds depth and interest — perhaps furniture, curtains, rugs or upholstery.
- 10% — ACCENT COLOUR: A smaller amount of colour that adds contrast or personality — artwork, cushions, lamps and accessories.

Use this as a guide rather than an exact formula.

Your Colour Palette — Main / Secondary / Accent Colours
MAIN COLOUR — 60%

SECONDARY COLOUR — 30%

ACCENT COLOUR — 10%

Test Before You Commit
Look at your colours together and in your actual room. Light can dramatically change how a colour appears, so check your samples at different times of day. Pay attention to undertones too — particularly in whites and neutrals — and compare everything alongside the flooring, furniture and finishes you're keeping.

Emma's Tip: Don't choose colours one at a time. Put your paint, fabric, flooring and other samples together — it's how they work as a whole that matters.

Pattern, Texture & Shape

Bring Your Colour Palette to Life

Once you've chosen your colours, think about how pattern, texture and shape can add depth, interest and personality to your room.

PATTERN

Pattern can bring colour, movement and personality into a scheme. Look for opportunities in wallpaper, curtains, blinds, rugs, upholstery, cushions, throws and artwork.

TEXTURE

Texture can be just as important as colour — particularly in a neutral or tonal room. Think about the contrast between soft and hard, smooth and rough, matt and shiny.

You can introduce texture through carpets, rugs, fabrics, curtains, upholstery, throws, cushions, wood, glass, metal and natural materials.

SHAPE

Look at the shapes you're repeating around the room. Mixing straight lines with softer curves can make a space feel more interesting and balanced.

Think furniture, mirrors, lighting, rugs, artwork, accessories and patterns.

Where could you add another layer of interest to your room?

Think about pattern, texture and shape — and how they could work with your colour palette.

Emma's Tip: Don't worry about trends or whether everything 'matches'. Choose what you love and what feels right for you. If you keep coming back to your colour palette and the balance of colours you've chosen, you can confidently mix pattern, texture and shape and still create a room that feels cohesive.

Core Summary: My Design Direction

You've explored how you want your room to feel and started making decisions about the colours, patterns, textures and shapes that could bring that feeling to life.

Bring your key choices together here — this is the direction you'll use when you start researching and building your room scheme.

How would I describe my design direction?
For example: relaxed and welcoming with plenty of character / colourful and playful with a mix of old and new.

What colours do I want to explore?
Main:
Secondary:
Accent:

What patterns, textures and materials am I drawn to?

What do I want to make sure I avoid?

Emma's Tip: This isn't your finished scheme. Think of it as your guide for what comes next — use it to help you research, collect ideas and decide what deserves a place in your room

Additional Notes

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4.Bring Your Scheme Together

Turn your design direction into real choices for your room. Research and explore furniture, finishes, fabrics and other elements, then bring your ideas together to see how they work as a complete scheme.

By the end of this section, you'll have created your Room Scheme.

Research Your Scheme

Now it's time to bring everything you've worked through today together and start researching the individual elements of your room.
Go back to the decisions you've already made about what your room needs, what you're keeping, your budget, layout, lighting and colour palette.

What do you need to research?
Walls & finishes • Flooring • Furniture • Lighting • Window treatments • Rugs • Fabrics & upholstery • Artwork & accessories

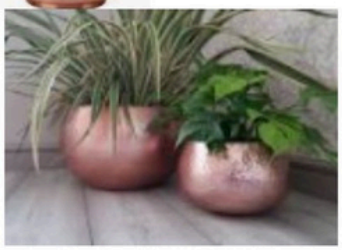
My research list:

As You Research

- **Save it digitally:** Save images, product links, prices and dimensions so you can easily find them again.
- **Collect physical samples:** Where possible, order or collect real samples of paint, wallpaper, fabric, flooring and other finishes.
- **Keep track of the details**: Record where you've found something, how much it costs, its dimensions and any important lead times.
- **Don't decide in isolation:** You don't need to make every decision as you research. Collect your options first. The next step is to bring everything together and see how it works as a complete scheme.

Emma's Tip: You don't need to have all the answers yet. Your research list gives you a clear place to start — and helps stop you getting distracted by things your room doesn't actually need.








Farrow & Ball Estate Emulsion Paint Peignoir - 2.5L
Farrow & Ball Estate Matt Emulsion Paint Calke Green - 2.5
Farrow & Ball Estate Eggshell Paint Sulking Room Pink - 750

Create Your Design Board

Now bring your research together so you can start to see your room as a complete scheme. A digital design board helps you move from inspiration to actual choices and see how the individual elements work together before you buy.

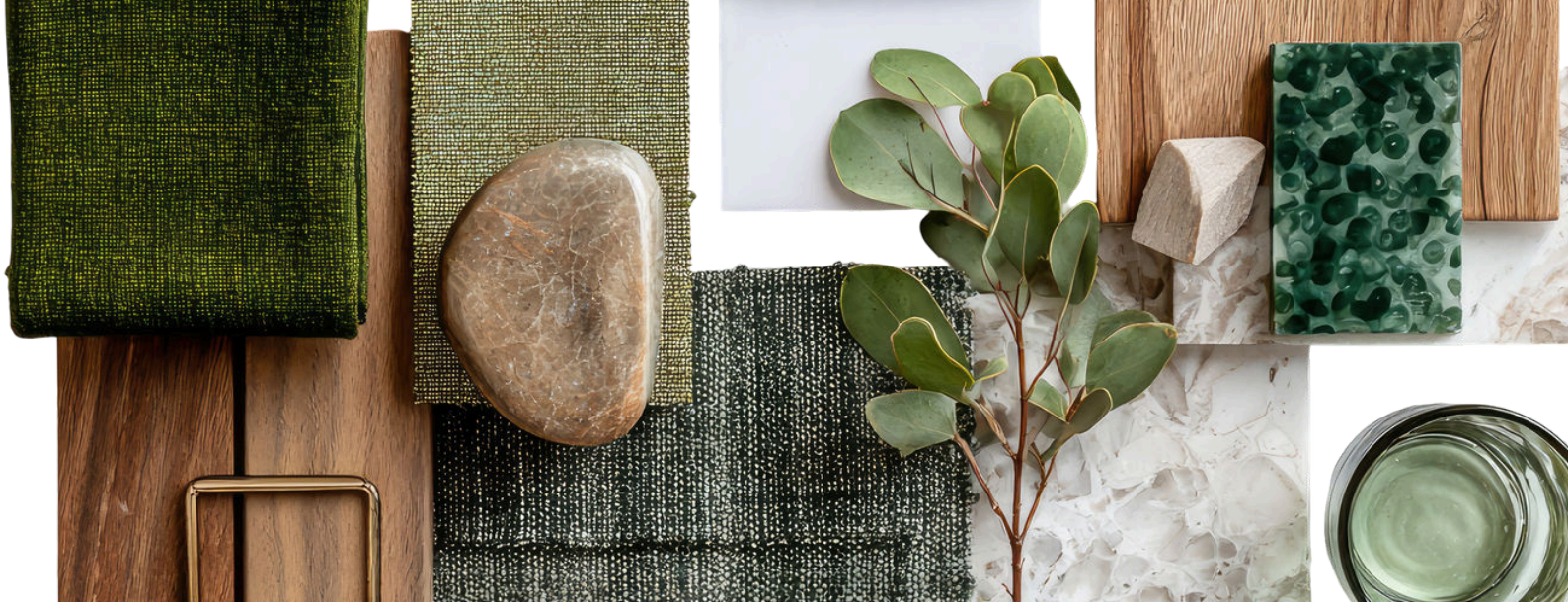
Bring Your Ideas Together

Use a simple free tool such as Canva to collect images of the things you're considering for your room:

Furniture • Lighting • Flooring • Window treatments • Rugs • Fabrics • Artwork • Accessories • Paint & wallpaper

Include the things you're already keeping too — they are part of your scheme.

Emma's Tip: Your design board is a working tool, not a finished piece of artwork. Move things around, try different options and keep refining until the whole scheme feels cohesive



Bring Your Scheme to Life

Digital images are brilliant for seeing your overall scheme, but they can't show you exactly how colours and materials will look and feel in real life.

Collect Samples

Wherever possible, collect real samples of the materials you're considering:
Paint • Wallpaper • Fabric • Flooring • Wood • Tiles • Trims & finishes

Include samples of anything you're keeping in the room where you can.

Look at Everything Together

Lay your samples side by side and ask yourself:

- Do the colours work together?
- How do the patterns, textures and materials sit alongside each other?
- Is there enough contrast and interest?
- Does everything connect back to how I want my room to feel?
- Is there anything that doesn't quite work?

Emma's Tip: Always look at your samples together, not one at a time. A paint colour, fabric or flooring might look beautiful on its own — it's how everything works together that creates a cohesive room.

View your samples in the actual room, at different times of day and in both natural and artificial light — you may be surprised by how much they change.

Use Visualisation Tools

One of the hardest parts of designing a room is imagining what your ideas will actually look like in your own space. Visualisation tools can help you see how different choices might look in your own room before you commit.

What Can You Visualise?

You can find tools to help you explore:

- Paint colours
- Wallpaper
- Flooring & rugs
- Furniture & layout
- Curtains & blinds
- Tiles & finishes
- Lighting

How to Find a Tool

A simple Google search will often find free visualisation tools from retailers and manufacturers. Try searching:

- “Free paint colour room visualiser”
- “Free flooring visualiser upload my room”

Many tools allow you to upload a photograph of your own room, so you can test different options in your actual space.

Using AI

Upload a photo of your room and describe what you want to keep and what you want to change. For example:
Keep the existing flooring, fireplace and sofa. Change the walls to a warm muted green and add natural linen curtains.

Tip: Change one thing at a time to compare different options.

Emma’s Tip: Visualisation is a tool for exploring your ideas, not an exact picture of the finished room. Use it alongside your design board, real samples and measurements before making your final decisions.

Core Summary: My Room Scheme

You've researched, tested and brought your ideas together. Now capture the final choices that make up your room scheme.

Element	My Final Choice

Need more space to plan and keep track of your budget?

Use your Room Scheme & Budget Tracker to list everything you need, research products and prices, save website links and keep track of your final choices.

Emma's Tip: Your room scheme will be unique to you. Use this page for an at-a-glance view of your final choices and the digital tracker for the detail — products, prices, links and budget.

Additional notes

Element	My Choices / Ideas

Turn Your Plan Into Your Room

You've worked through your room, made your plan and created a clear direction. Now it's time to start bringing it to life.

1. Finalise & Prepare
Review your room scheme, confirm any final choices, order what you need and plan the order in which the work needs to happen.

2. Declutter & Clear the Space
Remove what you no longer want or need. Decide what you're keeping, moving, selling, donating or upcycling.

3. Prepare & Decorate
Make any repairs, prepare the space and tackle the bigger changes — painting, wallpapering, flooring or whatever your room needs.

4. Bring Back the Furniture
Position your furniture using the layout you've planned, adding any new, second-hand or upcycled pieces you've chosen.

5. Add the Layers
Bring in lighting, window treatments, rugs, fabrics and soft furnishings, referring back to your colour palette and design board.

6. Finish & Style
Add artwork, plants, accessories and personal pieces. You don't need to fill every space — let the room evolve over time.

Emma's Tip: Your room doesn't have to be transformed in one big burst of time or energy. Treat it as a process and keep the momentum going, one decision and one job at a time. Keep coming back to your plan and enjoy watching the room gradually come together.



A Final Thought from Emma

I hope today has helped you see that creating a beautiful home isn't about following trends, having an unlimited budget or getting every decision right the first time.

It's about understanding what you love, how you want your home to feel and learning how to bring those ideas together in a way that works for you.

You've now got the foundations to start making more confident choices about your space, from planning your layout and choosing colours to combining fabrics, textures and furnishings.

Remember, you don't have to transform your room overnight. Take your time, experiment with your ideas and enjoy the process of creating a home that feels like you.

Most importantly, trust yourself. You've already taken the first step!

I can't wait to see what you create.

Emma x

Continue Your Creative Journey

Your interior design journey doesn't have to end here!

Whether you'd love to learn practical skills, transform a piece of furniture or continue developing your room, there are lots of ways to keep creating with us.

Introduction to Upholstery
Learn the foundations of upholstery while creating your own stool, footstool or bench to take home. Perfect for complete beginners.

Upholstery Skills Workshops
Build your confidence and develop new techniques, including piping, pleating and buttoning.

Bring Your Own Project
Ready to tackle a piece of furniture you already own? Join us for a supported workshop where you can put your skills into practice with guidance along the way.

Open Studio - Rent Your Workspace
For those who have already developed their skills, our Open Studio offers space and equipment to work independently on your own projects.

Design & Transform Your Room Programme
Looking for more than a single workshop? Our programme brings together interior design, upholstery and furniture transformation, with ongoing learning, guidance and support to help you bring your ideas to life.

Explore our workshops and upcoming dates:
https://shupholstery.co.uk/craft-workshops-cheshire/

We'd love to welcome you back!
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