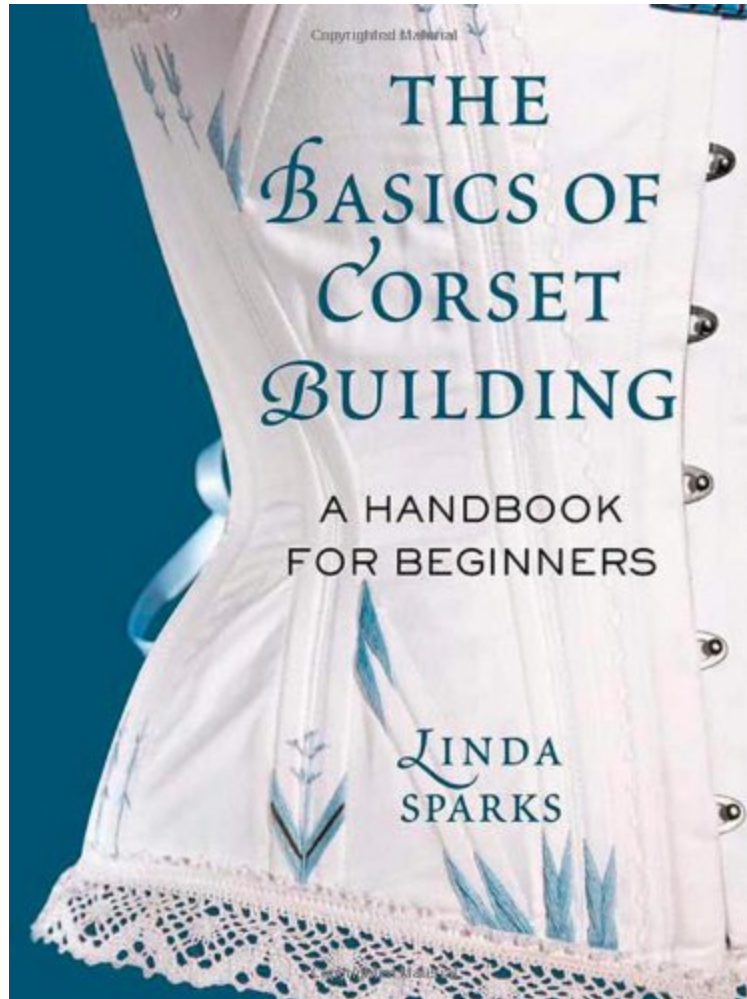


[PDF] The Basics of Corset Building: A Handbook for Beginners

The Basics of Corset Building: A Handbook for Beginners

Linda Sparks

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Linda Sparks : The Basics of Corset Building: A Handbook for Beginners before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Basics of Corset Building: A Handbook for Beginners:

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. More like a pamphletBy Joy D. J.This is another example of getting taken advantage of by online marketing. This book is PAPER THIN!! More like a pamphlet. On top of this it has very little to no info inside teaching you HOW to make corsets, its just a book on the theoretic behind corsets and there makings. Don't expect patterns, or measurements, or even styles. Do expect tool names, and pictures of said tools, and deciphering language on what and how each tool could be used if you ever did learn how to make a corset.9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Good, but you SHOULD know...By TatteredSpinnerI've read about halfway through the book, and it is very informative and easy to read with good, clear illustrations. There are some editorial problems such as typos, but only minimally. BUT, what I didn't realize is that this book contains no patterns.

You need to have a pattern to use the book. As far as I can see, the only thing in the book's description about patterns is in section three in "Altering and fitting." It's a really informative resource, and maybe I should have realized that I'd also need a pattern, but I wish that had been made clearer in the book's description. The author recommends using either Victorian Corsets, Chemise and Drawers Pattern (Sewing Pattern) or Simplicity Sewing Pattern 9769 Misses Costumes, RR (14-16-18-20). I purchased the latter and may edit this review once I have it and can start working on it. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Good for beginners. By suz Good for starters, but has some misleading things.. I bought a lot of equipment I didn't need.. as I found out later following historic methods. What is best is the recommendation to use "German plastic boning" - definitely right and saved me a lot of money.. but it would be nice if it had a section on reed boning methods. A lot of this I didn't need like how to fit, and a lot of it I needed more - like how to sew the boning, which presser feet, and more about the fabrics that I learned by trial and error (a lot of error) I especially felt lost about how to make the casings.. where is the boning inserted - my first attempt had the bones sticking out of too thin lining fabric. Overall well written and a good starter guide. I recommend buying this along with an historic stays pattern and experiment a while. Also note coutail fabric should be used for final product to avoid previously mentioned "poking".

Think of a corset as a blank canvas. Linda Sparks' *The Basics of Corset Building: A Handbook for Beginners* is a comprehensive guide to building your first corset, including:
Section One: Tools and Materials for Corset Building Discusses the tools you'll need, plus types of steel, plastic, and textiles.
Section Two: Building a Corset Everything you need to know about working with bones and busks, setting grommets and eyelets, and creating a beautifully finished corset.
Section Three: Construction Techniques Covers all the steps, including making a modesty panel, making a mock-up, and building single layer, double layer, and fashion fabric corsets.
Section Four: Alterations and Fit Discusses commercial corset patterns, as well as how to fit and style a corset for exactly the look you want.

About the Author Linda Sparks was born in Toronto, Ontario and graduated from George Brown College in Fashion. Her career started in the Toronto fashion industry but a move to the country changed her direction and she began costume building for the Stratford Festival Theatre in the late 1980s. After almost ten years in theater, she opened Farthingales in 1997, a company she created to supply architectural products to the theater industry of North America. Farthingales stocks unique products like corset making materials, that can't be found in most fabric stores. In 2006 Linda opened Farthingales L.A. Inc. to better supply the US market. Farthingales L.A. Inc. is a corset shop, selling the raw materials, patterns, books and both ready made corsets and custom corsets. The L.A. location is also where Linda teaches her corset making workshops. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.
Chapter One Tools and Materials for Corset Building
1. Tools Our discussion won't include machines, only hand-held tools. How many tools you have in your sewing kit will depend on what you sew most often. Most of us have thimbles, various hand-sewing needles, measuring tape, tracing wheels, thread snips and scissors the basics. To build a corset you need all of these and a bit more. For those of you who are new to sewing well start with the basic tools listed above, then expand upon them and add a few new ones. Details on exactly how the tools are used will be found in other chapters. This list is to give you an idea of what tools you may need to acquire.
Thimble Everyone knows what one looks like but it's surprising how many people don't know how or when to use one. Why should you use a thimble? Because you can't sew efficiently without one and doing so can be dangerous; particularly when sewing heavy fabric that may be difficult to get a needle through. The thimble protects the middle finger of your sewing hand and gives you more power to push the needle through the fabric. Proper sewing technique requires that you enter the needle into the fabric while holding the needle between forefinger and thumb (A) and then follow through by pushing the needle through the fabric using your middle finger (B). The head of the needle can be very fine and even thicker needles can still puncture your finger before they go through all layers of fabric if you don't use a thimble for protection. Puncturing your finger will be painful, but worse; it will cause you to bleed and that means you'll get blood on the corset. If you do happen to prick your finger and get blood on the garment, there is a very easy solution. Blood is inclined to leave a permanent stain unless you use your saliva to dissolve it. Yes, it's true your saliva will remove the bloodstain but not if you try this after trying any other options. And only your saliva will dissolve your bloodstain so no one can help you with this. Simply spitting on the garment looks a bit vulgar, so take a yard or meter of thread, ball it up and chew it for a moment, let it get saturated, and then dab the stain with the saturated balled-up wad of thread and watch the bloodstain disappear. If you find this hard to believe, try it.
Hand-sewing Needles They aren't what they used to be, which is one reason goggles are now part of many sewing rooms. Today's sewing needles tend to be brittle and can snap. Needles come in many sizes. Some sewing specialists will have clear ideas as to which sewing needle to use for which process. I am inclined to say, Use the needle that feels comfortable to hold. Very large ones aren't practical but a #6 or #7 seems to be reasonable for many purposes. You need hand-sewing needles so that you can finish the top and bottom edges of your corset by hand.
Measuring Tools A measuring tape is for measuring the body and for checking measurements of the corset. A see-through ruler is my preferred tool for working on patterns and corsets because it not only offers a measuring device but a straightedge as well. I find I need both when corset making. Measuring can be more exact

when using a ruler you can see through, and this makes the tracing of straight bone casing channels a lot faster. Nothing is better to aid you in marking bias strips on fabric than a see-through ruler! And bias strips are needed to finish a corset. Tracing Wheel The tracing wheel makes the job of marking all the bone casings much easier, although tailors tacks can also be used by those who know how to make them. There are several types of tracing wheels: dressmaking, tailors, and the double-wheel tracing wheel. The double-wheel is the most beneficial in corset making. By using it you cut your time in half for marking the casings, and increase your accuracy as the markings cant help but be perfectly parallel. The double-wheel tracing wheel can also be used to mark your seam allowances. Align one wheel on your cutting line and the other wheel on the stitching line and you can mark the stitching line perfectly parallel with the cutting line. Awl An awl is a tool that you wont likely be able to purchase in your local fabric store but youll find one in almost any hardware store. Its used when you need to apply an opening busk. The unique thing about making a hole with an awl is that the threads of the fabric get separated and pushed apart so they dont get cut or broken, and the integrity of the fabric isnt diminished. If you use a hole punch or scissors to create a hole the threads tend to fray and the hole gets bigger; something you want to avoid. This will create a very difficult mending job that will be costly and time consuming. An awl is very simple to use. Simply work the point of the awl between the threads of the fabric where youve marked the hole placement and continue to push the awl through, spreading the threads further and further apart until you have a hole the size you need. Details of this process can be found in Section 2 Chapter 6. If you cant find an awl, you can use a well-sharpened pencil but be sure the pencil color is a close match to your fabric as the pencil needs to be very sharp and the lead will be exposed and will mark your fabric. A hole punch, rubber mallet, bolt cutters, tin snips, file, and needle-nose pliers are also not likely to be found at your local fabric store, but you may find them in your toolbox. If not, any hardware store should have them. Thread Snips Thread snips and scissors are used for cutting out the pattern pieces and snipping the multitude of threads left at the top and bottom of the corset where the bone casing stitching ends. There are a lot of threads since every bone casing requires two rows of stitching. Some Janome sewing machines offer a thread clipping option, but if you dont have one of these high-end machines youll need to do a lot of clipping by hand. If youre using bone casing ribbon youll also need to be able to cut the ribbon to length. Rotary Cutter A rotary cutter isnt absolutely necessary but can make cutting out your pattern pieces easier and saves stress on your hands if youre cutting a lot. To use a rotary cutter you must have a rotary cutting mat to protect your table. Rotary cutters and mats can be purchased at most fabric shops. Earlier we referred to the importance of using an awl rather than cutting a hole to avoid compromising the strength of the fabric. Some people use an awl to form the holes for the grommets or eyelets as well. However this can be a challenging and time-consuming process as there are far more grommets and eyelets than busk knobs, and they tend to be larger than the busk knobs so grommets are more difficult to force through the awl-made hole. The theory is that by using an awl you wont decrease the strength of the fabric where the grommets/eyelets are set as the threads will remain intact. As a result the grommets will be less inclined to pop out of the fabric. This is true to some extent but using a washer behind the grommet or eyelet increases the security of the grommet or eyelet far more than not cutting a hole would. Hole Punches To make a hole you need a hole punch. Hole punches will come with any grommet or eyelet kit you purchase. Its imperative that the hole you make is the correct size. This will be assured if you use the hole punch that comes with the kit, and then order more grommets or eyelets in the same size as those included in the kit. Rubber Mallet Rubber mallets are useful in setting grommets. Dont use a regular metal hammer, as the metal hammer striking the metal grommet setter is unsafe. If you cant get a rubber mallet try a rawhide or wooden one. Details on setting grommets or eyelets can be found in Section 2 Chapter 7. There are other means of closing the back of your corset so if you decide not to use grommets or eyelets then you wont need a rubber mallet. Decide how youll finish the corset before you buy the tool. See Section 2 Chapter 8 for other options. Bolt Cutters Bolt cutters can sometimes be found at dollar stores, but dont waste your money on them. They tend not to do the job, and if they work at first they dont last until the end of the project. The movement of the jaws of a bolt cutter can make it a better cutting tool than tin snips for some steel. The jaws of a bolt cutter are parallel to one another and clamp down in a way that applies pressure to the whole piece of steel at one time unlike tin snips which function more like scissors. This means that the steel cant slide out from between the jaws. Bolt cutters are a better choice for spiral steel bones and narrower spring steels. Details on how to cut steel can be found in Section 2 Chapters 4 and 5. Tin snips are another tool for cutting steel bones. Some bones cut more easily with bolt cutters and some with tin snips. Like bolt cutters, tin snips shouldnt be purchased at the dollar or discount store. Regardless of brand name the tin snips should have serrated jaws as theyll grip the steel better and dont allow the steel to slide out from between the jaws. Tin snips function in the same way scissors do, so lack of a serrated jaw means the bone will slide out of the jaws as they close. Tin snips are best for spring steel, particularly wider spring steels, and for plastic as well. Details on cutting bones and which tools to use for what type of bone can be found in Section 2 Chapters 4 and 5. File A file may be needed if youre cutting steel bones. You may need to file off the rough or sharp corne...