



Seamwork

STYLE WORKSHOP

10 Exercises to Focus Your Style

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Style Workshop

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HAVE FUN WITH IT

- Print it out or fill it out digitally
- Use colored markers, pens, or pencils
- Draw in the margins
- Save photos of pages on your phone for reference
- Do it with a friend
- Share your learnings in the community



INTRODUCTION

Focus & Fun

There's a common trait that seems to run through nearly every person who becomes a part of Seamwork: you are *intentional*.

Each time someone new joins the Seamwork community, we ask them to share their goals for the next year. We've heard from thousands of you, and these are the types of things you say:

I want to create a wardrobe that fits me inside and out.

I want to sew a wardrobe that makes me feel confident.

I want to have fun as I develop sewing skills (oh, and also... a new wardrobe).

I want to focus my sewing instead of being distracted by the sea of sewing patterns out there.

All of that sounds pretty intentional. You don't just want to acquire more stuff. You want to make things in a thoughtful way. You want to use sewing as a creative way to explore and express who you are. And in the end, you want a beautiful wardrobe that reflects that.

You might struggle at times with approaching your sewing with thoughtfulness, you might get distracted or frustrated sometimes, but you have a real desire to make sewing meaningful.

And you can get there. If you're willing to put a bit of time and thought into it, you can cut through all the noise. You can make a wardrobe that gives you confidence, because it truly expresses you when you're at your best. Getting dressed can feel like an energizing start to your day, where you begin each morning by expressing who you really are. And because you sew, this is available to you in a way that it's not for most people!

That's why we've put together this workshop—to get you started immediately on your path to a handmade wardrobe. Of course, crafting a handmade wardrobe takes time. But you can do a few quick exercises that will put you on the right track *today*.

3 Steps to a Handmade Wardrobe

This workshop is designed to help you define your style in a way that's meaningful to you. But what comes next?

Here are the 3 steps we recommend for creating a handmade wardrobe you love:

- 1. Define Your Style:** This workshop helps you do exactly that. When you're done, you'll come away with a few keywords that help you do focus your decisions around what you make and wear.
- 2. Design Your Wardrobe:** Use your style words from this workshop to design a seasonal mini-wardrobe. Our program to help you with this is free to all Seamwork members, and you can learn more [here](#).
- 3. Sew Your Wardrobe:** Once you have a plan in place, get accountability and support from the Seamwork community, along with all the resources and patterns you need.



How to Use These Exercises

Each exercise is designed to take between 5 and 20 minutes. Each is labeled with an approximate time, so you can plan accordingly. Of course, the time it takes will vary from person to person, depending on how much you have to think about.

Begin with the starter exercise. This is a very simple exercise that should take between 2 and 5 minutes, and will help you begin the thinking process. Even if you do nothing else, just this one quick thought exercise can help you start to shift your thinking.

THE REMAINING EXERCISES ARE DIVIDED INTO 3 AREAS:

1. **Investigate:** Take a look at the deeper aspects of personal style and who you are.
2. **Examine:** Process your thoughts and feelings about your clothing to better understand what you value.
3. **Define:** Create a core style from what you've learned and define it with words and visuals.

DESCRIPTORS AND FEELINGS

At the bottom of most of the exercises, you'll notice areas to write down descriptors and feelings. After running through the exercise, write down any descriptive or feeling words that came to mind or felt important to you as you went through the process.

Descriptors are words like "classic," "neutrals," or "bright." Feeling words might be something like "serene," "energetic," or "confident." These words will help you build a foundation for the final exercises, in which you'll choose your top style words.



ENJOY THE PROCESS

Starter Exercise

The Precious Few

TIME: 2-5 minutes

MISSION: Connect your clothing to your feelings.

We're going to begin with a very simple, quick exercise that will help you begin to think critically about what you want to add to your life through sewing.

First, ask yourself this question: What are 3 items currently in my wardrobe that make me feel that I'm at my best? These could be everyday items like a good pair of jeans, or they could include something only worn for special occasions. Whatever they are, they show you at your best in some way.

Once you have these 3 items in mind, close your eyes and visualize the last time you wore each of them. How did you feel when you wore them? How did you feel physically? How did you feel about yourself?

In the areas below, write down any descriptive words that come to mind, and any feelings that came up. These could be physical feelings, or emotions. You'll be collecting words like this at the end of each exercise in this workshop.



DESCRIPTORS

FEELINGS



Investigate

The first three exercises will help you
investigate your own identity and how it
might be reflected through what you wear.
We'll quickly get beyond the surface level
in order to explore what personal style
really means to you, right now, in your life.

Exercise

TIME: 15 minutes

Dig Deep

MISSION: Explore your identity.

Many times, style is seen as a matter of personal preference. But where do those preferences really come from? In this exercise, you'll explore some of the key aspects of who you are. These parts of your identity will give you greater insight into how you might choose to express yourself.

We'll look at 4 key areas: your history, values, culture, and body.

HISTORY:

1. What objects in your life have significance for you? What do they represent?

2. In what ways has your personal history informed the way you dress?

3. At what age did your tastes crystallize? Have they changed since then?

VALUES:

1. What makes a person beautiful to you?

2. What makes a person unattractive to you (think beyond the physical)?

3. What would you like more of in your life?

4. What values that you hold would you like to see reflected back to you each day?

CULTURE:

1. How has your cultural background shaped the way you look?

2. How did the aesthetics and values you grew up with shape your tastes as you got older?

3. How would you describe your friends? What draws you to them?

4. What are your pet peeves in others?

BODY:

1. What do you like best about your body?

2. What clothes make you feel good about inhabiting your body?

3. What physical aspects do you find difficult to dress? Are there types of clothing that make you feel uncomfortable or alienated from your body?

4. What is your favorite form of exercise? How does it make you feel?

DESCRIPTORS
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FEELINGS
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Exercise

My Ideal Self

TIME: 5 minutes

MISSION: Identify the best parts of who you are, so you can express them.

Who are you when you are at your best?

Psychologists describe the “ideal self” as the image in our minds of how we want to be. The “real self”, on the other hand, is the way we actually are. It’s how other people see us, and how we form our self-image. The greater the perceived disconnect between the ideal self and the real self, the more anxiety it creates.

By recognizing the best parts of ourselves, we can bring them forth more often. Of course, clothing and creative acts like sewing are only one small part of how we do this, but why not engage all parts of our lives in bringing our best selves forward?

Think back to a moment when you felt that you were at your best. Perhaps it was when you took a big risk, accomplished something great, overcame an obstacle, or lived by your values. Try to recall how you felt and what qualities you exhibited that made you choose this moment.

Finish by writing down the descriptive and feeling words that came to your mind.

DESCRIPTORS

FEELINGS

Exercise

Get Real

TIME: 5 minutes

MISSION: Explore your lifestyle and context.

Your style should be rooted in the particular reality of your life, the things that make you truly comfortable and that fit the context of your world. This helps to ground your style, so you're not simply projecting a fantasy self that has no relation to your real life.

Clothing should celebrate who you are, right now, as a person.

Today, our questions focus on your lifestyle and who you are at this moment. We're going to explore the things you do and don't wear and what sort of circumstances you need to dress for.

2. Is climate a factor? How do seasons affect the way you dress?

3. In a typical week, what are the main situations you need to dress for? (e.g. work, gym, gardening, etc.)

1. How does the place you live inform the way you dress?

4. How do you relax? Do you dress differently in your free time?

DESCRIPTORS

FEELINGS



Examine

In this part of the workshop, we'll *examine* some of the clothing you wear right now in order to find out what you value the most.

Rather than sorting through your entire wardrobe, we'll get to the heart of it by looking at what you wear most, and what you love.

Exercise

The Staples

TIME: 10 minutes

MISSION: Identify the clothing you wear the most and why, to help uncover what you value.

In this exercise, you'll seek out the items in your wardrobe that you wear the most often. This is best performed when you're at home, so you can go through your actual wardrobe.

Look through your wardrobe and choose the 5-7 items that you believe you wear most often. Write a brief description of each item. Next to each, write why you believe you wear it often. What function does it serve for you?

STAPLE ITEMS	I WEAR THIS OFTEN BECAUSE...

DESCRIPTORS

FEELINGS

Exercise

Beloved

TIME: 10 minutes

MISSION: Identify the clothing you love the most and why, to help uncover what you value.

Now that you've uncovered what you wear most, let's dig into the items that you love the most. What are the 5-7 clothing items you have that you absolutely love to wear? You may want to refer back to the [starter exercise](#) to begin.

Next to each, write down why you love this piece so much. And, as usual, write any descriptors or feelings that feel important to you below.

BELOVED ITEMS	I LOVE TO WEAR THIS BECAUSE...

DESCRIPTORS

FEELINGS

Exercise

What I Value

TIME: 5 minutes

MISSION: Explore what you truly value in your wardrobe, and what is less important to you.

In the context of your wardrobe, you may believe that you have the same goals everyone else has. You want to look good, be fairly comfortable, feel like yourself, probably not spend too much time getting dressed.

In fact, we all have different needs and requirements when it comes to our clothing. Some of us value having an immaculate self-presentation at work because it makes us feel confident and powerful. Some of us prefer total comfort, no matter what. Some of us put a high value on feeling attractive, and others on looking crisp and smart and capable.

Putting your finger on exactly what's important to you about your own clothing and how these kinds of needs balance for you personally goes a long way toward expressing who you are as an individual.

Fill in the scale below to rate how important each of these dimensions are to you, on a scale from 1 (not at all important) to 7 (extremely important).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
COMFORT								1 - not at all important
								2 - somewhat unimportant
								3 - moderately unimportant
MOBILITY								4 - neither important nor unimportant
								5 - somewhat important
								6 - moderately important
FIT								7 - extremely important
SELF-EXPRESSION								
APPROPRIATENESS								
VARIETY								
OTHER:								

DESCRIPTORS

FEELINGS





Define

The last part of the workshop will help you to *define* your style. We'll process all the words you've collected throughout these exercises and distill it down into something you can use: a small set of style words and a mood board to visualize them that you can add to over time.

Exercise

Style Words

TIME: 15 minutes

MISSION: Sort through all the words you've evoked to define your style.

You've finally arrived at the final act. We're going to collect together all the words you've come up with so far, add to them, and then distill them down to the essentials.

You may have many, many descriptive words and feelings that have come up through these exercises. By simplifying these down to the most important few, you will have a north star for your wardrobe that can guide you in making decisions about what you buy and how you spend your time. And best of all, you will feel a sense of coherence, because your wardrobe is telling a true story about who you are.

Give yourself some time with this exercise. It may be helpful to come back to it after a few hours to give the words a chance to percolate. You can always revise it later as well.

1. On the next page, list out all the words you came up with at the end of each of the previous exercises. You don't need to separate descriptors and feelings; just list them all.
2. Add in any other words that you think represent your answers, if they didn't come up naturally. You can open a thesaurus if you wish, or browse some sample words in the appendix.
3. Choose up to 10 words from this list that feel most important and meaningful to you. Circle these.
4. From these 10 words, are there any that can be condensed together? Is there another word that encompasses a few of them in a way that makes sense to you? Is there a synonym for a word you've used that you like better?
5. Finally, narrow your list to 3-5 words that you feel are most in alignment with you. List your 3-5 words here on page 23.

My Words

[illegible]

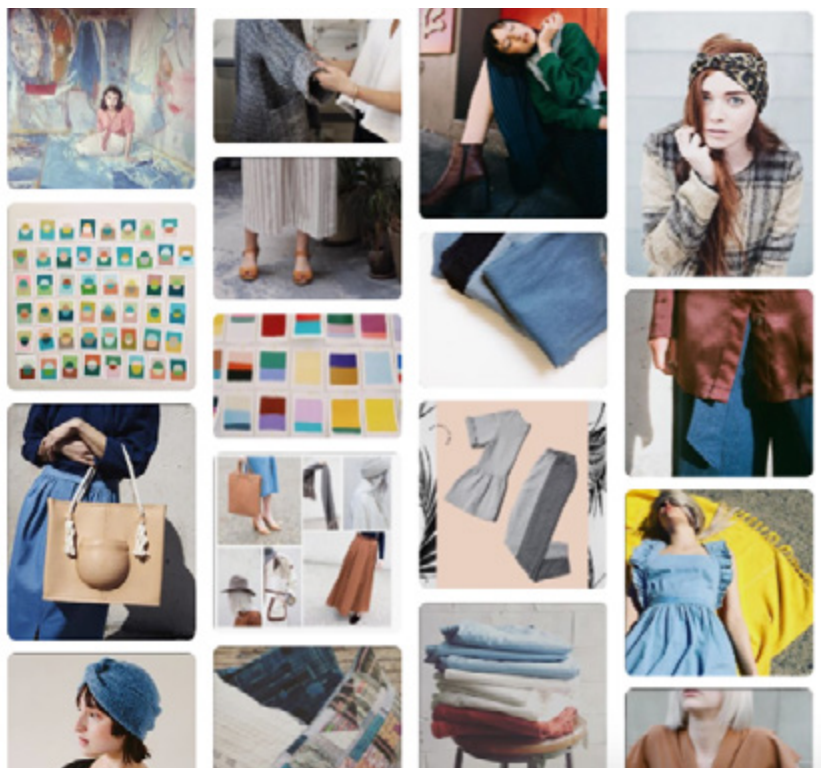
*My Core
Style Words*

Visualize

MISSION: Create a visual representation of your core style that you can add to over time.

Some might prefer to begin with a digital tool like Pinterest, but eventually move into the physical world. There is something about creating a physical mood board that gets your brain thinking in a new way, and helps you to retain ideas better than a digital representation does. After all, you're inundated with digital text and images constantly. Playing with photos and scissors and tape will be novel to your brain and it's a great way to decorate your sewing space too.

1. Collect 20-30 images into a core style mood board that helps define the words you chose. Your images do not need to all be fashion-related. For example, you might choose to add images of textures, colors, artwork such as paintings, photographs of places, or anything else that evokes the style you are trying to shape.
2. Add the words you chose to the mood board. If you're using Pinterest, you could add these in the name of the board, or the description.
3. Continue adding to and evolving this board over time! This will help you keep your core style fresh in your mind, and maybe even show you when your style has evolved.



Exercise

Reflect

TIME: 5 minutes

MISSION: Reflect on your Learnings.

In this last exercise, it's time to reflect. What have you uncovered through these style exercises?

If you're a Seamwork member, share your learnings with us and the rest of the Seamwork community.

1. **What came up in this process that was unexpected?**
2. **What is the main thing you learned through these exercises?**
3. **How do you see yourself using your core style words and board as you move toward creating your handmade wardrobe?**

If you're not a member, [learn more](#) about our community and all the benefits of being a Seamwork member, including access to hundreds of sewing patterns.

**Share with the
Seamwork Community**

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

community.seamwork.com

Your Next Step

If you want to continue your journey towards a personal, meaningful handmade wardrobe, we'd like to invite you to the Design Your Wardrobe program.

Design Your Wardrobe is a step-by-step process that helps you to design a seasonal wardrobe for yourself that you can actually sew. Best of all, it's completely free with your Seamwork membership.

Design Your Wardrobe is available as either a self-guided program you can do any time, or a three-week live course we teach twice a year.

You'll learn the creative process thousands of other sewists have used to design a small collection that can be made in a season, and get the support of your fellow sewists along the way in the private Seamwork community.

LEARN MORE ABOUT DESIGN YOUR WARDROBE



About Seamwork

Seamwork is here to help you create your handmade wardrobe.

As a Seamwork member, you get:

- *Access to over 200 modern sewing patterns, so you can make exactly what you want to wear at any time.*
- *Two new patterns each month, so there's always something to inspire you.*
- *Exclusive bonus variations, so you can take your patterns further.*
- *Dozens of video sewalongs, to help guide you through tricky projects (or just a tricky step).*
- *A vibrant, private community of thousands of other sewists, so you always have a place to turn with questions, challenges, and successes.*
- *Discounts at your favorite indie fabric stores, so you save money on the beautiful fabrics we recommend, from trusted sources.*

Not a member yet? Learn more about all that you get with a membership and become part of our community.



APPENDIX

Sample Style Words

These are some sample words others have come up with when defining their core style. Riff off of these and use them to spark ideas.

Alluring	Crisp	Quirky
Androgynous	Dramatic	Refined
Architectural	Ease	Relaxed
Artistic	Eclectic	Retro
Athletic	Effortless	Romantic
Bohemian / Boho	Elegant	Sexy
Bold	Fresh	Simple
Casual	Fun	Sleek
Chic	Glamorous	Smart
Classic	Laid back	Sophisticated
Clean	Minimal	Sultry
Colorful	Modern	Tailored
Comfortable	Natural	Timeless
Cool	Polished	Trendy
Conservative	Preppy	Understated
Cozy	Professional	Vintage