

Upholster a chair

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Photograph by David George

As I was reading through the proofs of our decorating feature on simple ways to create fresh springtime style (coming up in our April issue), I was inspired to plan some projects for my own home. In particular, I need to repair some of the damage caused by my beloved but occasionally badly behaved cat, who is decidedly keen on pulling up bits of carpet and sharpening his claws on various items of furniture, despite the provision of a scratching post to divert his attention. So I have been toying with the idea of trying my hand at upholstery (I may well be getting rather ahead of my talents here) and was delighted to come across a taster weekend next month at [The School of Stuff](#), which teaches a range of furniture-related crafts.



It seems that I am not alone in wanting to have a go at this traditional skill and there's a growing number of courses on offer around the country. Here are just a few more places where you can learn how to give old pieces a new lease of life...



At [Ball Hill Farm](#) in Somerset you can stay in a gypsy bow-top caravan while learning from expert Nicky Gane, who trained in soft furnishings with [Laura Ashley](#), how to cover a wing chair or make a headboard. Courses at [Crowther & Sons](#) in the small village of Nettleham just outside Lincoln are taught in the same large space where the company's craftsmen work, so you can watch the experts in action as you pin-cushion, deep-button or edge-roll (definitely too complicated for me, though!). [Kent School of Upholstery](#) offers taster days and short courses at Little Caring Farm near Maidstone, while [Stewarts Traditional Upholstery](#) runs workshops in chair caning and rushing alongside other traditional techniques – as long as you take along your own furniture.

Finally, classes at [Colin Johnson Furnishings](#) are held inside a rural Victorian schoolhouse near the beautiful Lake of Menteith in Scotland. The small class numbers mean the tutor has plenty of time to help with hands-on work.