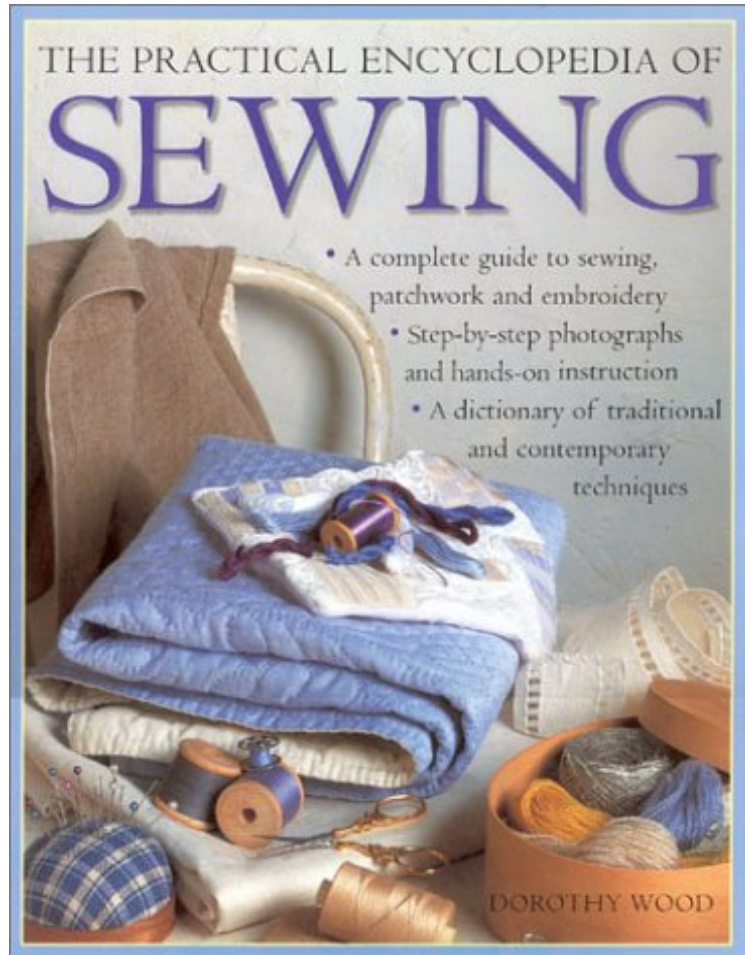


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Dorothy Wood : The Practical Encyclopedia of Sewing before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Practical Encyclopedia of Sewing:

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This technical reference is the authoritative sourcebook of tried and tested sewing, patchwork and embroidery techniques that will help you achieve professional and accurate results every time.

.com Perhaps *The Practical Encyclopedia of Needlework* would be a more appropriate title for this hefty volume of crisply presented sewing, patchwork, and embroidery how-tos. Indeed, the sewing section is in some ways the weakest; there is good general instruction on many of the apparel-sewing basics (equipment, an excellent fabric guide, cutting, various machine seams, pleats and darts, buttonholes, zippers, and so on), but nothing about actual garment construction or altering store-bought patterns to improve fit. The very brief home-decor section gives an overview of cushion and curtain making. The patchwork section, though fairly comprehensive for a survey approach, seems somewhat misplaced as part of a sewing guide, since there are so many terrific books devoted only to quilting. The strongest section is the one on embroidery, with very good photos and diagrams of nearly 200 stitches for hand embroidery as well as instructions on machine embroidery. Once again, however, no follow-up is included; in other words, once you've studied the basics, you're on your own in planning and executing a complete project. A more thorough table of contents would also have been an improvement, to see at a glance just what stitches and which patchwork styles are explained, without having to pore through the index or page through the whole book. If you're interested in all three fields, this is a decent introduction to them; if you're seeking a great book focused solely on sewing, opt for Singer's *The Complete Photo Guide to Sewing* for much more in-depth coverage. --Amy Handy

About the Author Dorothy Wood is a creative embroiderer who trained to teach dressmaking and design technology before specializing in textiles and embroidery at Goldsmith's College, London. Dorothy works as a features writer and technical consultant for a number of craft and needlework magazines. She is also the author of *Make Your Own Soft Furnishings*, *Creative Cross Stitch*, and *Victorian Needlecraft*.