



# EPIC CLOTH

a 9-month long challenge to create your own slow cloth





# EPIC CLOTH



Welcome! The Epic Cloth Challenge is a very personal challenge that I am going to undertake for myself this year that I warmly invite you to join me on.

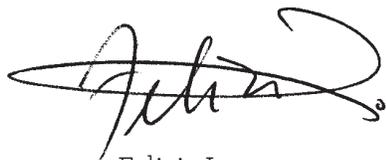
It's inspired by the "Slow Cloth October" or "Slow Fashion October" that happens every October. Every time October rolls around and people are talking about the things that they made which constitute Slow Cloth, I wish I had something to show, since slow cloth is exactly what we are doing here... dyeing fibre, spinning the yarn, knitting or weaving the fabric, all in order to make the final piece. The trouble is that doing all those steps takes significant time. It takes more time than there is in October. So I started to think about how I could start earlier in the year to make something that I could reflect on in October. The goal would not just be the finished object, but also learning that would happen along the way to that finished project.



Now how early do I want to start? Well, right now in January should give us enough time to something epic. It seems like a long time, but hear me out... as makers and creative people, we have lots of big ideas bumping around in our brains. Without applying focus, discipline, and practice to those big ideas, they may never be realized. I know it's easier for me to spend my precious time knitting up small projects here and there — the low-hanging fruit — rather than tackling the big, scary, seemingly impossible dream project in my head.



So this Epic Cloth Challenge is really just about identifying your big learning or making goal, understanding why it's meaningful to you and why you should devote time and energy to it, declaring your intention, and then doing it. Don't worry, you won't be alone. I'll be doing it together with you. And I look forward to celebrating each win and milestone with you along the way.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Felicia Lo'.

Felicia Lo

Founder + Creative Director, SweetGeorgia Yarns

# HERE'S THE PLAN

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1  
DREAM

Discover WHAT you want to do. Let yourself dream about what you'd like to make or do in the coming nine months.

2  
WHY

Uncover and understand WHY you want to dedicate time, energy, and resources to making your project

3  
WHEN

Figure out WHEN you will find or take time out of your existing schedule to make this happen.

4  
HOW

Come up with a strategy for HOW to make the project and figure out if you have the knowledge or need to research or gain more knowledge.

5  
ACT

Act on your plan and do the physical making of your project.

6  
REFLECT

On a regular, scheduled basis, take the time to review and reflect on what you've done or learned so far and what you would do differently.

# 9-MONTHS OF MAKING

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JANUARY	for planning, setting the vision, scheduling, and crafting without chaos
FEBRUARY	designing the project, choosing colour palettes
MARCH	designing the technical structure of your project (fabric, gauge, sett, etc.)
APRIL	choosing suitable yarns, calculating yardage requirements, winding warp
MAY	spinning and/or dyeing the colours you want
JUNE	warping the loom or knitting
JULY	weaving the fabric or knitting
AUGUST	continuing to weave the fabric or knitting
SEPTEMBER	finishing techniques as needed
OCTOBER	celebrate your masterpiece and reflect on what you learned along the way

# STEP 1: DREAM

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This step is all about discovering WHAT you want to do. Set aside a good chunk of uninterrupted time and let yourself dream about what you'd like to make or do in the coming nine months, for the duration of this challenge.

Just grab a blank paper and pen and just start listing out, line-by-line, all the ideas of things that you'd like to make whether they are big things or small things. Just get them all out of your head and onto the page.

Use the following prompts to trigger thoughts and ideas that you can expand on. And then look at The Bucket List for ideas as well. List out everything that you think you'd like to MAKE and jot down everything that you would like to LEARN. Write down everything that's in your head.

## THE PROMPTS

- What is your epic goal? What does “epic” mean to you?
- What do you want to achieve? Is it knitting your first ever sweater? Is it tackling stranded colour work for the first time? Is it trying out weaving a scarf?
- Is it a physical product that you want to see at the end of the day? Or is just just important to you to learn and understand the skill itself?
- What are your priorities and values. What's important to you?
  - something wearable?
  - for yourself, or for someone else?
  - fits well and is flattering?
  - suitable, flattering colour?
  - design or pattern that fits your skill level or engages you for progression?
- What do you need to learn to do, if you don't already know how to do it? What new skill or knowledge do you need?
- Consider the bucket list and see if there is anything on that list that you would like to do?
- What would a successful, EPIC, finished project look like to you?
- How would you feel when it's complete?

# brainstorm your epic cloth here »

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THIS YEAR, I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE \_\_\_\_\_

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THIS YEAR, I WOULD LIKE TO LEARN \_\_\_\_\_

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# THE BUCKET LIST

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## SPINNING KNOWLEDGE

1. Describe the characteristics and quality of wool
2. Describe the history of sheep, wool and spinning
3. Describe the production and harvesting of wool
4. Describe fineness classification of wool and types of wool
5. Describe the procedures to wash, dry and store wool
6. Describe tools and methods to prepare wool for spinning
7. Identify characteristics of fibres that influence fibre preparation
8. Describe how spinning wheels work
9. Describe the differences between different spinning wheels
10. Describe the principles of spinning
11. Describe vocabulary for spinning and wool
12. Build a spinning library

## ESSENTIAL SPINNING SKILLS

13. Spin on a spinning wheel
14. Spin on a drop spindle
15. Spin on a supported spindle
16. Spin on a charkha
17. Spin using long draw drafting technique
18. Spin “over the fold” drafting technique
19. Spin a woolen yarn
20. Spin a worsted yarn
21. Spin a novelty yarn
22. Spin a plied yarn
23. Spin a Navajo-plied yarn
24. Wind a skein of yarn using a niddy noddy
25. Measure yarn by twist angle, wraps per inch
26. Calculate the amount of fibre needed for a sweater or project

## FIBRE PREPARATION SKILLS

27. Learn to hand card fibres
28. Learn to blend fibres smoothly using a drum carder
29. Learn to make a mixed (crazy) batt
30. Learn to use hand combs
31. Wash and prepare a wool fleece
32. Prepare a fibre blend suitable for sock yarn
33. Prepare a fibre blend suitable for a specific purpose

## SPINNING WITH CONTROL

34. Spin low-twist singles yarn
35. Spin a true worsted yarn
36. Spin a true woolen yarn
37. Learn techniques for controlling the size and texture of handspun
38. Spin gossamer weight yarn
39. Spin a bulky, lofty yarn
40. Reproduce a commercial yarn
41. Spin yarn for a specific end use
42. Spin yarn to suit fibre characteristics
43. Spin yarn specifically for knitting and crocheting
44. Spin yarn specifically for weaving (warp vs weft requirements)
45. Spin yarn with a specific twist per inch

## SPINNING EXPERIENCES

46. Spin from a wool fleece
47. Spin alpaca
48. Spin llama
49. Spin cotton
50. Spin mohair (kid and adult)
51. Spin pure silk (bombyx and tussah)
52. Spin bison fibre
53. Spin camel
54. Spin cashmere
55. Spin hemp

# over 100 ideas to explore in the fibre arts

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- 56. Spin angora
- 57. Spin flax
- 58. Use synthetic fibre in wool blend for spinning

## SPINNING WITH COLOUR

- 59. Spin a 2-ply fractal yarn
- 60. Spin a 3-ply fractal yarn
- 61. Spin a self-striping sock yarn
- 62. Spin a marled/barber pole yarn
- 63. Blend 2 or more colourways using combination drafting
- 64. Blend 2 or more colourways by plying together

## DYEING KNOWLEDGE

- 65. Describe the difference between types of dyes (acid, natural, etc.)
- 66. Identify the source and availability of natural dyes
- 67. Describe the differences between mordants used in natural dyeing
- 68. Describe how indigo dyeing works
- 69. Describe basic colour theory
- 70. Understand the difference between optical vs colour mixing

## ESSENTIAL DYEING SKILLS

- 71. Calculate and mix dye stock solutions
- 72. Calculate dye required for immersion dyeing
- 73. Dye wool/protein yarn and fibre by immersion
- 74. Dye wool/protein yarn and fibre by hand painting
- 75. Dye wool/protein yarn and fibre using natural dyes
- 76. Dye cellulose yarn and fibre by immersion
- 77. Dye cellulose yarn and fibre by hand painting
- 78. Dye cellulose yarn and fibre using natural dyes
- 79. Prepare an indigo vat
- 80. Dye yarn and fibre using indigo

## WEAVING KNOWLEDGE

- 81. Understand and describe the characteristics of suitable weaving yarns
- 82. Understand the differences between loom types and how they are used
- 83. Calculate warp and weft requirements for a weaving project
- 84. Understand basic weave structures (plain weave, twill) and how they are created
- 85. Understand a basic weaving draft, threading, tie-up, treadling, and drawdown
- 86. Understand the effects of sett on fabric
- 87. Understand the effects of grist of yarn
- 88. Understand how warp- and weft-faced fabrics are created

## ESSENTIAL WEAVING SKILLS

- 89. Wind a warp using a warping board
- 90. Wind a warp using a warping reel
- 91. Warp a loom from back-to-front
- 92. Warp a loom from front-to-back
- 93. Weave balanced plain weave
- 94. Weave a balanced twill fabric
- 95. Weave colour-and-weave fabric

## WEAVING EXPERIENCES

- 96. Weave a doubleweave fabric
- 97. Weave a weft-faced fabric
- 98. Weave Krokbragd
- 99. Weave a warp-faced fabric
- 100. Weave a rep-weave fabric
- 101. Weave overshot
- 102. Weave summer and winter
- 103. Weave handwoven lace
- 104. Weave a rug
- 105. Weave a blanket

## STEP 2: WHY

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Look at your list that you've brainstormed and circle the one thing from each list that most strongly resonates with you. Something that you really feel compelled to begin.

Then ask yourself "why" five times, beginning with the question "why you want to do this project?" each time, digging a little deeper into your response. Each time, aiming to pull out a deeper truth to your intention for this project.

The goal is to uncover the meaning of this project to you. Why is important to you? This will make all the difference in being able to sustain yourself all the way to the finish line. If there is a concrete, purposeful reason for making this epic project, it will drive you to complete it.

If you get to the end of your five whys and you realize that the idea you've picked is not something that you feel completely motivated to complete, then go back to your brainstormed list and see what else interests you.

Your Epic Cloth dream project should feel energizing and exciting to you!

**SHARE WITH US** I'd love for you to post your Epic Cloth goal with us in the community forums! Just start a new thread that's just for yourself where you can post about your goal. Come back throughout the year to add follow-up progress posts about how you're doing! We're also excited to follow any posts that you share on Instagram with **#sweetgeorgiaepiccloth**

# your five whys »

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THIS YEAR, I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE \_\_\_\_\_

BECAUSE #1 \_\_\_\_\_

BECAUSE #2 \_\_\_\_\_

BECAUSE #3 \_\_\_\_\_

BECAUSE #4 \_\_\_\_\_

BECAUSE #5 \_\_\_\_\_

THIS YEAR, I WOULD LIKE TO LEARN \_\_\_\_\_

BECAUSE #1 \_\_\_\_\_

BECAUSE #2 \_\_\_\_\_

BECAUSE #3 \_\_\_\_\_

BECAUSE #4 \_\_\_\_\_

BECAUSE #5 \_\_\_\_\_

# STEP 3: WHEN

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How do we find the time to make our Epic Cloth? This has been something I've spent a ton of time thinking about and talking about on the Taking Back Friday vlog. Over time, I've come to realize that the most important things in life get done when you make them a priority, and despite having a full life with my family and friends, my business, and creative projects, it is possible to find time to make things.

There are two big ideas of finding creative time that I have found:

**1) PATCHWORK TIME:** For me, as a working mother to two young kids I've found that I can cobble together tiny slices of time throughout the day, in-between family activities and errands.

Surprisingly, the minutes (and stitches) add up and this works incredibly well for portable projects like knitting or crochet. I've knit in the grocery line, at soccer practice, at swimming lessons, and ... you get the picture.

For less portable crafts like weaving or spinning, if you put your equipment in a more accessible, well-trafficked area, like in the corner of the kitchen or in the kids play area, then you can sneak in a bit of spinning or do a bit of weaving while your kids play or while dinner cooks.

Here are a few ways to claim a few minutes here and there throughout the day.

1. Break a large project down into tiny chunks that can be completed in small sprints.

2. Set aside twenty minutes a night to your craft, before doing other things (e.g. Netflix).
3. Knit (or whichever craft) for ten minutes in the morning, while you're having breakfast.
4. Knit for fifteen minutes during a lunch break.
5. Knit while your kids do their activities or play.
6. Set a daily or weekly quota of stitches or inches for yourself to work towards.
7. Read ahead in your pattern so that you don't make mistakes and waste time back tracking
8. Multitask with your craft: knit in the grocery line, knit and listen to audiobooks or podcasts, or watch tv at the same time.
9. Wake up extra early to get more time for your craft, especially if it's one that requires calm.
10. Do it with others. Multitask by knitting with friends at a knit night or at coffee.

**2) FLOW TIME:** This kind of time is the nirvana. It's large, uninterrupted, beautiful chunks of time where you are free to get into a creative "flow" state and feel "in the zone". To get this kind of time, I suggest you schedule it into your week and protect it fiercely. It's sacred creative, making time. Try to block out a whole chunk of several hours for your creative time. Use the "Ideal Week" template here to plan your obligations AND creative time.

# your ideal week »

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	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
6 AM							
7 AM							
8 AM							
9 AM							
10 AM							
11 AM							
12 PM							
1 PM							
2 PM							
3 PM							
4 PM							
5 PM							
6 PM							
7 PM							
8 PM							
9 PM							
10 PM							
11 PM							

# STEP 4: HOW

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## BREAKING DOWN THE BHAG (BIG, HAIRY, AUDACIOUS GOAL)

Think about the entirety of your Epic Cloth project – what steps you need to take on a day-by-day, week-by-week, or month-by-month basis to ensure that you complete your project? Your project might take only three months, or six months, or maybe it’s something that will take the entire year. How do you break down your project into smaller sprints that you can complete?

In my case, I’m going to weave something as my Epic Cloth goal and I have roughly broken down my project into monthly sprints on page 5 of this workbook. One month will be devoted to choosing colour palettes, and another month will be devoted to calculating yardage requirements and winding the warps. By breaking down a project into smaller chunks, it becomes much more doable and each sprint brings you closer to finishing the project.

Use the “9-months of making” template here to roughly break down your project into monthly goals. For example, if you’re knitting a sweater, maybe it might take you one month to knit a sleeve and another month to knit the second sleeve. Of course, maybe you’re a much faster knitter and it only takes you two days to knit a sleeve. This breakdown is entirely up to you!

## OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

By embarking upon a new project that is specifically designed to be epic and big and super challenging, we are inviting the possibility of things going wrong.

What do you think your challenges or obstacles might be as we get started?

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What strategy could you put in place to avoid or overcome that obstacle?

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# your 9-months of making »

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JANUARY

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FEBRUARY

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MARCH

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APRIL

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MAY

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JUNE

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JULY

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AUGUST

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SEPTEMBER

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**OCTOBER**

celebrate your masterpiece and reflect on what you learned along the way

# STEP 5 + 6: ACT + REFLECT

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Now that you know what you're going to make, why you are dedicating time, energy, and resources to making it, and you've figured out (and scheduled) when you will be doing the actual work and how to break down that big project into smaller, easier to complete chunks... now I encourage you to go do it and regularly pause to reflect on your journey so far.

Cycling through the process of making and reflection is essential to learning. It's one thing to plow through the making process to get that finished object, but if we never take time to stop and look back at what we made and how it went, we miss out on the incredible opportunity of learning from our work.

Ideally, schedule in some time on a weekly or bi-weekly or even monthly basis to pause and look at what you've done so far.

- Have you made the progress you wanted to make?
- Have you finished your monthly sprint or goal?
- How is the project shaping up? Is it what you envisioned?
- Is there anything you would do differently next time? Anything you want to note for yourself for future projects?
- How about time? Is your Ideal Week schedule working out for you? Or do you need to make changes to the schedule?

This is all about course correction and making sure that you're still on your way to completing your goal. It takes perseverance to continue a creative project over so many months, and so, I hope you'll be encouraged by your progress each time you sit down to review and reflect on how far you've come.

**SHARE WITH US** Come back to your own personal Epic Cloth thread and write your weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly progress notes. This is a great place to share your thoughts about how the project is going for you. We're also excited to follow any posts that you share on Instagram with **#sweetgeorgiaepiccloth**

# RESOURCES

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Disclosure: some of the links here are affiliate links, meaning, at no additional cost to you, we may earn a commission if you click through and make a purchase.

Here are some of my favourite resources for dreaming of big goals, breaking down projects, and getting things done. I'd love for you to share your own favourite resources with us in the community forums too!

**GETTING THINGS DONE:** This is one of a series of books by productivity writer, David Allen. I discovered this book almost 15 years ago and have adopted the "GTD" practice in my entire life. It's something that I regularly share with my friends and my team. The ideas of doing brain dumps to declutter your mind, keeping a single trusted system of things you need to do, using an inbox to collect ideas, and doing the essential weekly review have all become engrained in how I do my daily work.

**MAKING IDEAS HAPPEN:** Book by Scott Belsky, founder of Behance.com, a portfolio platform for creatives. This book serves a clear framework for organizing your creative ideas in order to execute effectively. It also presents the idea of using an idea "backburner" similar to the GTD idea of a "someday/maybe" list. Both ideas are great in that they help you capture all your creative ideas in order to clear your mind to focus on the one thing you need to do (as opposed to the 50 million things you want to make in your Ravelry queue).

**THE BULLET JOURNAL METHOD:** This is a new book by Ryder Carroll, the founder of the Bullet Journal notebook and productivity technique. Interestingly, this book begins with the technical workings of the bullet journal system, but the

second half of the book is brilliant and all about intentional goal setting and ways of uncovering the meaning of your life and the things you do. It's all about using analog methods and tools to reflect on your life so that you can make more meaningful decisions about what to do in the future.

**LEUCHTTERM 1917:** If bullet journaling appeals to you and you like the idea of using a beautiful pen to make notes about your creative practice in a beautiful notebook, then my favourite "BuJo" notebook is the Leuchtterm 1917 A5 Dotted notebook. It's the perfect size for tucking your bag and gives enough space to jot down tasks and thoughts of the day. Some people have one for work and one for creative projects, but I just have one that I put everything into.

**ATOMIC HABITS:** Listening to the audio version of this book by James Clear made me tear up at the 5-minute mark. Learning how the author overcame career-ending trauma to become successful using the practice of tiny habits was incredibly powerful and compelling. One idea I'm using from this book is "Law #1 of making a habit: make it obvious" meaning that I put my spinning wheel or loom in a more accessible, visible location so that I'm more inclined to remember to sit down for a few minutes to spin or weave.

**DEEP WORK:** This book by Cal Newport was recommended to me by Liz Gipson at Yarnworker and has been immensely helpful. It's about blocking out distractions (hello Instagram) in order to create states of creative flow.

# COMMUNITY

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## JOIN OUR SWEETGEORGIA COMMUNITY

There's nothing like having a community of fellow fibre artists and friends to encourage and inspire you during the learning journey. Whether you love knitting, spinning, dyeing, weaving, crochet, or quilting, we'd love to connect with you about colour inspirations and ideas. You can find our communities here:

### INSTAGRAM:

[instagram.com/schoolofsweetgeorgia](https://www.instagram.com/schoolofsweetgeorgia)

Instagram is an app designed for sharing photos and videos, making it ideal for sharing our love for the fibre arts. Post your photos and tag us with the hashtag #schoolofsweetgeorgia so we can see what you've been making. Follow our posts @schoolofsweetgeorgia to see what we're cooking up too!



### FACEBOOK:

[facebook.com/groups/schoolofsweetgeorgia/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/schoolofsweetgeorgia/)

Facebook Groups are a great way to stay connected and share photos of your dyed yarns and fibres. Conversations are centered around posts which makes it easy to track and participate.



### EXCLUSIVE COMMUNITY FORUMS:

[www.schoolofsweetgeorgia.com](http://www.schoolofsweetgeorgia.com)

Exclusive for All-Access members of our online School is a separate space where we can chat and discuss the details of learning about colour and craft.

# SCHOOL OF SWEETGEORGIA

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SweetGeorgia is building a library of online video-based workshops for knitters, crocheters, spinners, weavers, and dyers and it's called The School of SweetGeorgia.



## COLOUR PLAY WORKSHOP

Learn the very basics of colour theory and the fundamentals of creating colour combinations.



## COLOUR MASTERY

We explore more colour theory essentials as well as the psychology of colour and designing colour stories.



## YARNOGRAPHY

Photography for textiles. Learn how to use your DSLR or mobile phone camera to take photographs of your yarn and fibre arts work.



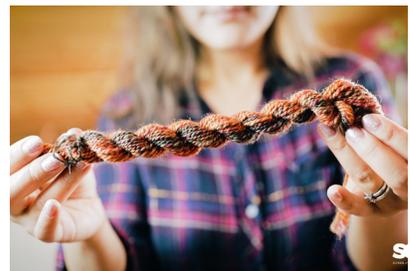
## DYEING INTENTIONAL COLOUR

Learning the fundamentals of solid-shade immersion dyeing with intention. Understand the variables that affect acid dyeing and set up your own dye space.



## DYEING COMPLEX COLOUR

Manipulate the variables of acid dyeing to get multicoloured yarns and fibres with depth and interest. Explore low-water immersion, handpainting, self-striping yarns and more.



## SPINNING FROM SCRATCH

Spin your first skein of yarn on a wheel or spindle. For fibre-curious folk who have never touched a wheel before, we start at the beginning to learn to spin.



# sweetgeorgia

SweetGeorgia Yarns Inc. | passionate + relentless + unapologetic colour  
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