

Clothing Care and Repair

10.120

Page 1



SEW-lutions Guidelines

Your Guide
to
Successful
Sewing

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You spend precious time constructing and perfecting the fit of your sewn garments, so be sure to take care of them once they're done. Proper care will prolong their life and make them look great for the duration.

Hang Ups

Properly storing clothes in your closet will help them keep their shape. Use padded hangers for tailored garments that need shoulder shaping—wimpy wire hangers don't offer enough support.

Hangers come in several sizes, from child size to 21" across, and they're made from many different materials. Wire hangers are fine for lightweight clothing made from woven fabrics. Plastic hangers offer more support, but wooden and soft padded hangers offer the ultimate support for fine garments.

If things have a tendency to slip off the hanger, look for non-slip hanger covers, or sew loops into the garment shoulder seams to keep things in place, especially those items made from slippery fabrics or with wide necklines. Flexible hangers are also available to allow for shaping garments and keeping wily ones in place.

Button garments when you place them on the hanger—it saves wrinkles and pressing later on.

For knit garments, use padded hangers for sturdy knits, but fold delicate or loosely knitted items to prevent stretching. Store folded knits in a dresser drawer, on a shelf, or in a closet storage bin.

Cleaning Capers

When you purchase fabric, read the bolt for proper care instructions and make yourself a note if you're prone to forgetfulness. Pre-wash or dry clean fabrics before you sew them to prevent shrinkage later when

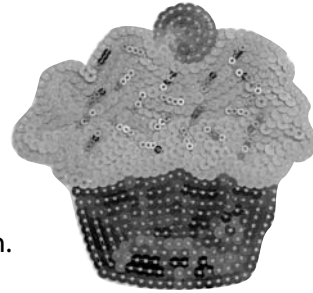


Photo courtesy of Plaid Enterprises: Decorative patches can help hide tears and stains.

it's already been made into a garment.

Hang clothes back in the closet only after they've been inspected and/or cleaned. Any residual stains on a garment become very attractive to moths and other pests. This is particularly important when storing out-of-season clothing.

Check underarm areas carefully, as excessive sweating and some deodorants can actually weaken and discolor fabrics. Protect garments during wearing with dress shields or sleeved camisoles.

Fast Fixes

Before you ever wash a garment or hang it in the closet, check for loose buttons and repair any that need it. Doing this regularly helps prevent having to replace an entire set when loose ones go astray. When you make a garment, take a clue from ready-to-wear and sew an extra matching button inside the side seam so you'll have it when needed.

For more information, see Guideline 14.105 Replacing a Button.

If you have split seams, simply stitch them up before the openings become larger after being subjected to more stress from wearing. If the fabric is actually damaged, back it with lightweight fusible interfacing as an added reinforcement before stitching the seam.

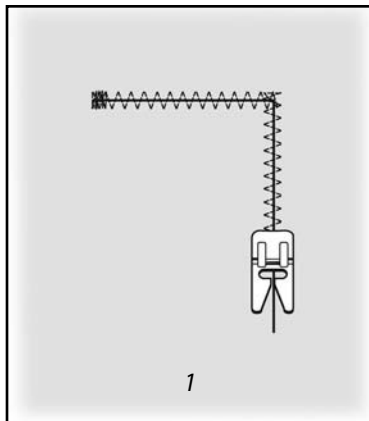
Tear Repair

For tears that aren't within a seam but where fabric is actually torn, use the mending stitch on your sewing machine to repair. Follow these simple steps:

- Trim any frayed edges and back the damaged fabric with fusible tricot

interfacing, pulling together the torn edges. A narrow strip will hold the torn edges together for stitching.

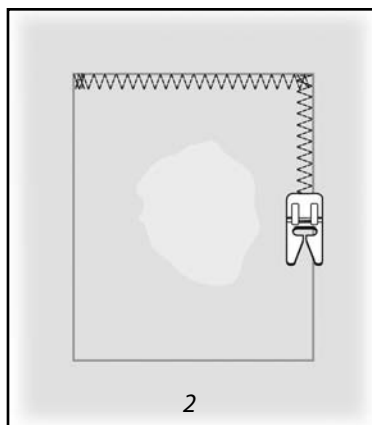
- Set the machine for a mending stitch or triple zigzag—one that goes three or four stitches in each direction forming a multi-zigzag. Adjust the length so it's fairly close together, and the width so it's wide enough to span the torn edges.
- Stitch over the torn edges catching each edge with the bite of the zigzag stitch; turn corners if needed (1). Depending on the fabric and the tear, a second pass of stitches may be needed to secure catch the edges.



Patch Attach

Tears can also be camouflaged with patches placed over (or under) them. Commercial patches are available in standard colors, or you can create your own patch using matching fabric. Some patches are fusible, others require sewing around the edges.

To apply a sturdy patch, fuse the tear layers together as above to prevent further damage, then fuse the patch over the tear. If the patch isn't fusible, make it so by using paper-backed fusible web under a fabric shape. Then zigzag or multi-step zigzag around the patch edges to hold in place (2).



A host of decorative patches are also available that can be used in appropriate places—like torn knees on childrenswear, or a jacket sleeve with a small tear. The construction ranges from machine embroidered to glittery sequined versions like the cupcake shown above. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for applying the patches.

Suede elbow patches are available specifically to cover worn out elbow areas on much loved jackets.

You can also patch clothes with appliqués made from contrasting fabrics and cut into any shape—for children's clothing, let the wearer create the shape!

Help with Hems

It's easy to catch a hem in a heel of a shoe and soon the pant leg is dragging on the ground and wearing out the fabric.

For an immediate fix, tape the hem up in its original position with transparent tape until you can get home to fix it.

For a quick fix, use fusible web to hold up the loose hem allowance. For a more professional finish, restitch it in place using the same type of stitch it was originally sewn with. Anchor the threads well into any sections that are still intact, overlapping the new stitching with the old. For more information, see Guideline 22.140 Hand Stitches. 🖱