

Replacing a Button

14.105

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SEW-lutions Guidelines

Your Guide
to
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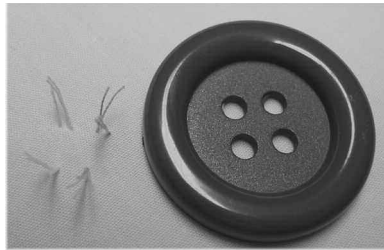
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Perhaps no single alteration is done as frequently as replacing buttons. Why? Likely they were never sewn on securely to begin with, or there was additional strain (one too many desserts) that caused the button to pop off, break or loosen. Sometimes repeated washings and drying damage buttons with heat and agitation.

Occasionally a metal button shank will wear through the thread holding it in place.

When a button comes off it generally leaves a telltale thread marking at the exact location it needs a new one (1). These thread ends should be the center of the button.



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Stress busters

If too much stress caused the button to fly off the garment, consider moving it over slightly to add additional girth. Most buttons can be moved 1/4" without distorting the garment fit.

Or, sew the new button on with elastic thread to give the wearer some flexibility (literally).

If a small hole is apparent where the missing button was, it's advisable to mend that before replacing the button. A tiny matching iron-on patch will reinforce the base area for the new button.

Metal Buttons

If a metal button shank has worn through the anchoring threads, consider using dental floss, carpet-weight thread or beeswax to reinforce the repair button connection.

A light coating of clear fingernail polish on the metal shank can smooth out any rough areas and prevent further thread wear.

Selecting a Button

If you have the missing button and intend to replace it on the garment, check it over first for rough spots or any cracks. If it's in good shape, use it again, as chances are it matches the closure needs.

If the button is long gone, check your button jar for something similar and the same size as the missing one. Most button jars are full of single leftover buttons waiting for a home.

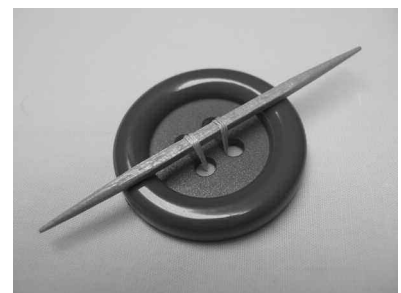
The last resort is to purchase a new button.

Audition the perspective button through the buttonhole to be sure it fits properly. There should be no strain pushing the button through the hole, nor should it fit too loosely or it won't stay buttoned.

Button Sewing

To attach a sew-through button, use a double strand of thread and knot the end. Bring the needle through from the fabric wrong side and into one button hole. Center the button over the location mark and insert the needle back into another button hole. Pull the thread through.

To make a shank on a flat button, place a toothpick or large needle between the button holes and stitch over it as you attach the button (2). Stitch through each hole



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pair at least twice, and more if rugged wear is expected. When the application is complete, remove the spacer and wind the thread around the excess thread length under the button before knotting it.

To sew on a shank button, bring the needle from the fabric wrong side to the fabric right side, then through the shank and back into the fabric. Repeat several times and knot the thread on the wrong side.

Backer Button

Reinforcing or backer buttons should be added at points of stress and on garments made of heavy fabrics to help keep the button from tearing the base material.

Choose a small clear or matching color button with the same number of holes as the fashion button for the backer.

Line up the hole placement and stitch through both buttons when sewing, adding extra shank length if needed.

Machine Sewing

Replacing a sew-through button by machine is a quick, easy and durable option to hand sewing. Follow these steps to success:

- Check to see if your machine has a button-sewing or open-toe foot for best visibility.
- Lower or cover the feed dogs and position the button on the garment at the previous location.
- Adjust the stitch width to match the button hole span and double check by turning the hand wheel before stepping on the machine foot pedal.
- Stitch back and forth in the button holes several times, then adjust the width to 0 and stitch in one place to anchor the threads before clipping.
- If a thread shank is needed, insert a needle between the holes before sewing, then remove it when stitching is complete. ■

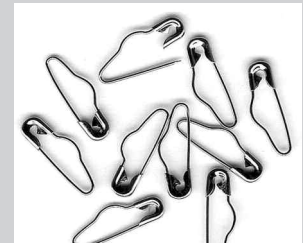
Quick Fix

If you lose a button while traveling or don't have time to replace one, use a button pin to attach a shank button. A button pin looks like a curved safety pin (3) with a bump in it where the shank rests—just insert it through the fabric from the back side, through the button shank, back through to the fabric wrong side and latch (4).

Keep in mind this shouldn't be a permanent fix, though it does make buttons removable for cleaning and interchangeable if desired—the perfect answer to adding holiday buttons to an everyday garment without stitching.



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