

CHAPTER 16

Redesign, Repair, and Recycle

EXAMINETHISISSUE

Taking time. For many busy people, taking time to repair and redesign clothes doesn't seem worthwhile. Even packing up old garments and donating them to a service agency takes valuable time; they feel. On the other hand, many others believe that extending the usefulness of clothing is a good idea. They want to make use of items that would otherwise be discarded.

What do you think?

As you read this chapter, think about these two points of view. When weighing time against the benefits of redesigning, repairing, and recycling, which point of view fits your thinking? Why?

REDESIGNING CLOTHES

To redesign is to change an existing garment to make it suitable for more wear. When redesigning, you can change a garment's style and fit as well as its color and trim. Thus, you may be able to achieve the current fashion look by making only minor changes to an outdated garment.

Redesigning is a practical way to get the most from what you already have. By using your time and skills, you can expand your wardrobe at little or no cost. You also have a chance to be creative. Wearing a one-of-a-kind garment that expresses your individuality can make you feel proud.

Changing the Style

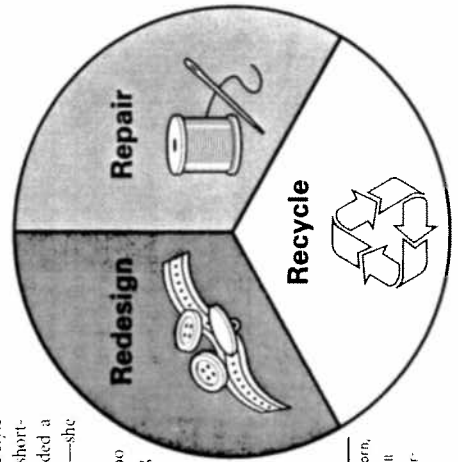
From year to year, fashions change. When the change affects a garment's shape, redesigning can rescue the article from looking dated.

How can you redesign older clothes to update them? You can raise, and sometimes lower, a neckline. An oversized jacket can be taken in to look more fitted. Adding a belt at the waist or hips gives more control to a full-cut dress. Wide pant legs can be straightened and narrowed.

WHEN A CLASSMATE ADMIRER HER new skirt, one teen smiled and thought to herself, "It's not as new as you think."

Actually, a family member gave her the slightly used skirt. The fabric was beautiful—and the style salvageable with a little creativity. The teen shortened the skirt, narrowed the flare, and added a short slit. With a little time—and no expense—she had a "new" skirt worth admiring.

In a society that's known for throwing too much away, extending the use of clothing can make a difference. While redesigning is one way to make clothing last, in this chapter you'll read about how to repair and recycle clothing as well. See Fig. 16-1.



16-1 What happens to clothing that becomes worn, outdated, or simply unwanted? In this chapter you'll learn about three ways to make the most of the garments in your closet.

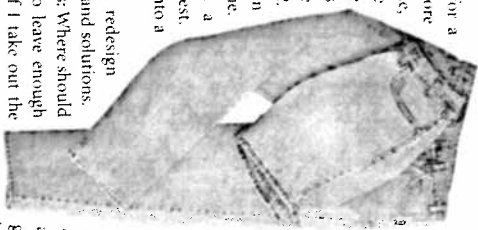
OBJECTIVES

- Update the fashion look of older clothes.
- Adjust garments to improve the fit.
- Make simple clothing repairs.
- Find new uses for clothes and fabrics.

KEY TERMS

appliqué
consignment
shop
patchwork
recycle
redesign
snags

In seeking a new look for a garment, you may want a more significant change. If you like, you can change the entire style. Long pants can be turned into cropped pants or shorts by changing the hemline. See Fig. 16-2. A long-sleeved shirt can become a short-sleeved one. Removing the sleeves on a jacket can create a vest. Shortening a coat turns it into a jacket.



Before you begin any redesign project, work out the steps and solutions. Ask yourself these questions: Where should I cut off these pant legs to leave enough fabric for a hem or cuff? If I take out the sleeves of this jacket, how will I finish the armholes for a new vest? A well-thought-out plan brings better results.

Adjusting the Fit

No one likes to wear clothing that's uncomfortable or unflattering. Even a small problem, such as a binding waistband, can leave a garment hanging in the closet, unwanted and unused.

Minor corrections can often be made easily, with just some basic sewing skills. Maybe moving a hook or button on a tight waistband will give the added comfort you need. Major problems, however, are best left to a professional dressmaker or tailor, especially on certain garments. A prom dress, for example, might need the attention of an expert.

Length Adjustments

Most garments can be shortened; fewer can be lengthened. Plain hems are simply measured, refolded, and restitched. Cut-off garments take extra planning and construction steps.

To shorten a hem, mark the new hem length with pins or chalk. Remove the old stitching and fold up the fabric along the new hemline. See Fig. 16-3. You may need to trim the hem allowance.

16-2 If jeans become worn at the knees or below, they could be cut off and hemmed to make shorts.

Most hems should be no wider than 2 to 3 inches (5 to 7.5 cm). A wider hem can add bulk-looking uneven and obvious. If the fabric ravel, finish the edge of the hem allowance with zigzag stitching, pinking, or seam tape. Attach the hem to the garment by hand stitching, machine stitching, or fusing.

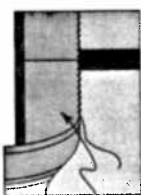
16-3 When you shorten a hem, the crease from the old hem will be hidden inside the garment.

Lengthening a hem is a little more involved. First, check that there is enough fabric to create the added length. If not, you may be able to add wide, hem-facing tape on the inside of the garment edge to complete the hem, as was done in Fig. 16-4. Unfortunately, the crease of the old hemline may be impossible to iron out. Check before you sew. One solution is to hide the original hemline with trim or several rows of machine stitching. This method, however, often looks like a cover-up rather than part of the garment design.

Width Adjustments

Altering the width of a garment is usually more complicated than changing the length. Minor width adjustments can usually be made at the side seams, with equal amounts taken in or let

Lengthening a hem



Hem facing tape

16-4 When you lengthen a hem, the crease from the old hem may show on the outside of the garment. What can you do?

out at each side. Be sure to gradually taper the new seam to meet the old one at an armhole or waistband.

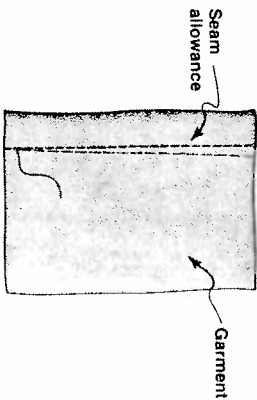
To take in a garment, or make it smaller, you stitch the new seam within the garment itself. See Fig. 16-5. To let out a garment, or make it larger, you stitch the new seam in the seam allowance, outside the original seam line. See Fig. 16-6. Therefore, the seam allowances must be wide enough to allow for a new seam. For instance, the seams on some ready-to-wear garments are trimmed and finished to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch (6 mm). With such a narrow seam allowance, you wouldn't be able to make the garment wider.

Adding Accessories and Trims

If you're bored with an older garment, why not try a new accessory before discarding the item? A new belt, scarf, tie, or jewelry piece can produce a fresh look. Check fashion magazines for the latest trends. If the natural look is in style, a braided rope belt can add new appeal to multiple outfits. For other seasons, a shiny gold belt or a bright red one may be the important look. A gold or silver clasp adds a touch of sophistication to a colorful casual shirt look more formal.

Changing buttons is an easy way to give a garment a new look. Many ready-to-wear outfits have inexpensive buttons that fade or discolor

Making a garment smaller

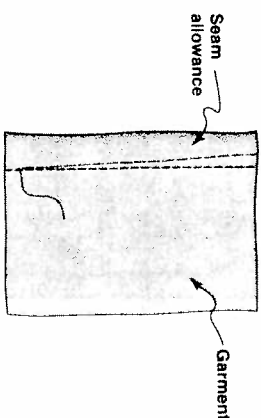


Seam allowance

Garment

16-5 To make a garment smaller, you can sew a new seam within the seam allowance. Then take out the old seam that has been replaced.

Making a garment larger



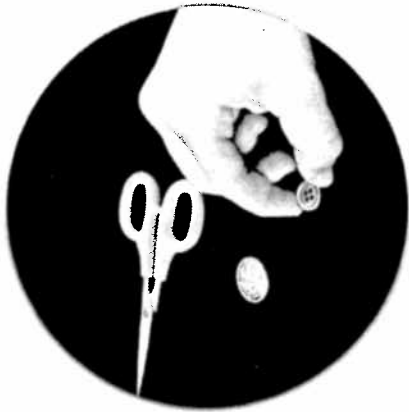
Seam allowance

Garment

16-6 To make a garment larger, you can sew a new seam within the seam allowance. Then take out the old seam that has been replaced.

after repeated washings or cleanings. Replacing these buttons can improve a garment's appearance. To save money, you can even salvage nice buttons from a worn garment to sew on another.

Adding colorful trim is another way to change the look of a garment. For a romantic mood, you



16-7 Replacing the buttons on a garment can create a new look. How would different button styles and colors affect the look of a garment?

could choose delicate lace. Brightly colored rick-rack can create a casual look. Braids and ribbons range from tailored to dressy. **Appliqués**, cutout pieces of fabric applied as a decoration, can be cartoon characters or intricate designs. Embroidery can be added as a simple monogram or as an elegant finish to a wedding gown. Many moods are possible.

Trim can also be rhythmic. You might add two or three rows of trim instead of one, or repeat the trim at the hem of a sleeve or bottom of a skirt. An appliqué on both patch pockets may look better than only on one pocket. Experiment by pinning trim in place before attaching it permanently. Fig. 16-7 shows how to create a different effect on a garment with buttons.

Changing the Color

Suppose you need a green shirt to wear with your team at a fund-raising festival, but you don't have one and don't want to spend money on a new one. Turning an old shirt from white to green might be just the answer.

A color change may serve a practical need, but it can also be planned for other reasons. A change of color can give a garment a fashion update. Faded fabric could become brighter. Even a problem might be covered with the creative use of color.

Dyeing Fabric

You can change the entire color of a garment by dyeing the fabric. See Fig. 16-8. Fabric dyes come in liquid and powder forms.

Before you dye a garment, think carefully about the change you want to make. Check the fiber content of the fabric, since some fibers dye better than others. Consider the trims too. You can go from a light to a dark color easily, but you must first remove the original color before going from a dark to a light color. The garment should be stain-free, as stains will still show after dyeing. Will your fabric shrink? If so, you will need a cold-water dye.

By planning your project carefully, you'll save disappointment. Read the instructions on the package carefully and follow them exactly, step by step. Otherwise the dye may not be permanent, and the color may fade or bleed when you wash the garment.

16-8 When dyeing fabric, wear gloves. You'll also want to protect your clothing and any surrounding surface area from splatters.



Painting Fabric

With fabric paints, you can create colorful designs on clothing and accessories. See Fig. 16-9. A shirt, jacket, jeans, sweatshirt, bag, or child's outfit can become a canvas for your creativity. Even shoes can be decorated.

Some fabric paints come in ready-to-use tubes. Others are applied with a brush or marker. The paints have a wide range of colors, including metallic. Some even create a raised design. Be sure to choose washable paints.

REPAIRING CLOTHES

According to an old saying, "A stitch in time saves nine." In other words, a repair made early prevents a bigger repair job later. By making simple repairs as soon as possible, you can keep your clothes in good shape and always ready to wear.

When several garments need small repairs, why not set aside a little time to fix them all? Good management means using time effectively. As long as you have the tools and notions out, doing several repairs at once makes efficient use of time.

Restitching Seams

When stitches break, seams rip open and the garment may become unwearable. Broken stitches are common, but easily repaired. You can fix a seam with machine or small hand stitches, as

16-9 You can use fabric paints to make colorful designs on clothing, accessories, and gift items.



16-10 A hem that is falling out needs repair before it becomes worse. What tips would you suggest, so that the repair work doesn't show?

shown on page 288. For seams in areas that receive extra stress, such as the underarm of a shirt or the crotch seam of pants, sew a double row of stitching $\frac{1}{8}$ inch (3 mm) apart for added reinforcement. ■ **See p 519**

Restitching Hems

A hem will sag if the stitches come loose or catch on an object. See Fig. 16-10. Many ready-to-wear garments have hems sewn with a chain stitch that can easily pull out around the entire garment if a stitch is broken. It only takes a few minutes to restitch an opened hem, as shown on page 288. ■ **See p 517**

Sometimes the hem in a new garment puckers or pulls, creating a rumpled look. To smooth the area, remove the old stitches and restitch the hem.

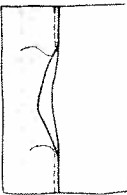
Replacing Fasteners

Many homes have a button jar like the one in Fig. 16-11 on page 289 for saving extra buttons that come with ready-to-wear garments. It makes replacing a lost button easier. If an identical button is not available, you may have to replace it with one that's similar. If possible, attach the mis-

HOW TO MAKE SIMPLE REPAIRS

Repairing a Hem

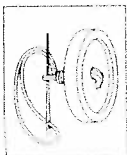
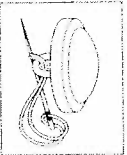
Pin the loose hem in place. Using a single thread, stitch along the upper edge with a hemming stitch, blindstitch, or catchstitch. See page 539 for specific directions. Extend the new stitching so it overlaps with the old. Keep the stitches slightly loose so the fabric doesn't pucker. Be sure the stitches don't show on the outside of the garment.



Reattaching a Button

A loose or missing button can be reattached with a few simple stitches. Use a double strand of thread and tie a small knot at the end.

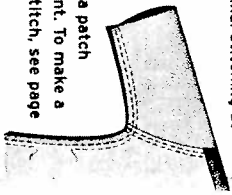
- Shank button. Make four or five small stitches through the shank and the fabric. Fasten the thread securely under the button with tiny stitches or a knot.
- Sew-through button. Place a toothpick, match, or heavy pin on top of the button. Stitch up through one hole, over the object, and down through the second hole; repeat four or five times. Remove the object and pull the button to the top of the thread loops. Wind the thread tightly around the stitches under the button and secure.



Restitching a Seam

To restitch a seam, turn the garment inside out, align the two sides of the seam, and pin. If possible, knot the ends of the broken seam so more stitches won't pull out. Using a double strand of thread for extra strength, make short backstitches along the original seam line. Extend the new stitches beyond the actual opening so they overlap the original stitching at both ends.

If you are unable to repair the seam from the inside, use a slip stitch to attach one folded edge, such as a patch pocket, to the garment. To make a backstitch and slip stitch, see page 507.



Exploring Repairs

Look through your clothes to find garments that need simple repairs. Make two different types of repairs. Ask family members for something you might repair if you need additional items.

matched button where it will be less noticeable, as on the bottom of a shirt. If a button is already there, you can move it to the more visible location. When a match is essential, you may have to buy a new set of buttons for the garment.

Sometimes, buttons, snaps, and hooks and eyes on ready-to-wear clothes are loosely attached. A quick restitching by hand holds them fast. See page 288. You can also add these fasteners at a neckline, front closing, or waistband to help hold the fabric together more securely or smoothly.

See page 539

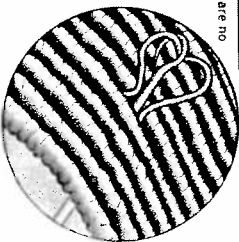
Fixing Snags

Knitted or loosely woven fabrics often get snags, loops of fabric that pull out. If ignored, a hole can form and grow. Use a small crochet hook, snag fixer, or needle threader to repair the snag. Insert the hook through the fabric directly under the snag. Grasp the snag with the hook and pull it to the underside of the fabric. See Fig. 16-12. Smooth any puckers by gently stretching the fabric in the direction of the pulled thread.

Mending Tears

When a small tear or rip occurs in fabric, a quick repair can prevent it from becoming larger. Try to repair the tear before the garment is laundered to prevent more tearing. A straight tear can

16-12 Most snags are no longer visible when carefully pulled to the inside of the garment.



16-13 Where can so many buttons come from?

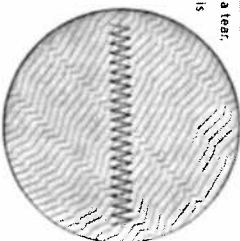


be mended with machine zigzag stitching to hold the torn edges together. See Fig. 16-13. Begin and end the stitches about 1/4 inch (6 mm) beyond the tear. Because the stitching shows on the outside of the garment, this method is suitable only for casual or work clothes. For a more hidden repair, use a patch underneath the torn fabric.

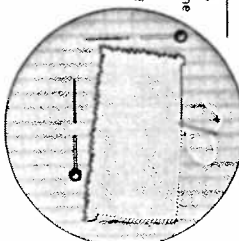
Patching Holes

A patch can be applied with hand or machine stitching, as shown in Fig. 16-14. Trim away any frayed threads from around the hole. Cut a patch of fabric slightly larger than the hole, and pin to the inside of the garment. Fold in the edges of the patch and stitch in place. On the outside of the garment, turn the edges of the hole under and slip-stitch to the patch. For added strength, top-

16-13 When repairing a tear, a machine zigzag stitch is lighter and more even than one done by hand.



16-14 When patching, you may need to trim the hole to give it a better shape and edge—even if this enlarges the hole just a little.



stitch around the patch on the outside of the garment.

Fusing is another method of patching a hole. Cut a patch of fabric the exact size of the hole. Position the garment wrong side up on an ironing board. Place the patch, wrong side up, over the hole. Cover the area with a piece of fusible web and then a piece of firmly woven fabric. Press from the wrong side to fuse the patch in place.

Iron-on patches or mending tape may also be used. Press the patch to the fabric according to package directions.

Covering Worn Areas

Sometimes just one area of a garment becomes worn, while the rest stays in good condition. You've probably seen this happen on the elbows of a sweater, jacket, or heavy shirt. Oval patches are attractive coverings for these areas. See Fig. 16-15. Topstitch or fuse the patch, using such contrasting fabric as leather, suede, corduroy, or flannel.

On sleeves and pant legs, the edges are also subject to extra wear. To hide frayed spots, apply a row of trim, fold-over braid, or bias binding to the worn edge. Patches, pressed or stitched to the

16-15 A patch can match the fabric of the garment or be in contrast. You can prolong the usefulness of a garment by applying patches to worn areas.



inside or outside of a pant leg, can reinforce knees or cover a hole. Stubborn stains that resist removal can be hidden under an applique or trim.

Making Emergency Repairs

If you're away from home when you discover a needed repair, double-face tape or safety pins can come to your rescue. Just be sure to make the repair as soon as possible—before it becomes a major one.

RECYCLING CLOTHES

To recycle means to reclaim items for another use. Just as people recycle aluminum, glass, and plastic items, clothing can be recycled too. When you recycle clothing, you find continued use for garments you no longer want. Whether aluminum cans or clothing, recycling can be a family project.

Recycling saves money. A family member's wardrobe expands at no cost when garments are passed to others who can use them. One teen, who managed her own clothing budget, was happy to inherit a nice sweater from her sister. After buying a skirt, she had a new two-piece outfit for the cost of only one item.

On a larger scale, recycling shows concern for the environment. First, it helps preserve natural resources. Fabrics are made from either natural or manufactured fibers. Recycling helps conserve the sources of these fibers as well as the energy used at every step of the manufacturing process. It also reduces waste by extending the life of a garment or fabric. The longer you keep a garment in use, the longer you keep it out of a landfill.

In what ways can you recycle clothing? You might be surprised by the possibilities.

Passing It On

Sometimes a garment that you no longer need is just what someone else is looking for. Offer your unwanted clothing at garage or tag sales, bazaars, flea markets, and consignment shops. A consignment shop pays the seller a percentage of the selling price after the item is sold. These shops typically want clothing that's in good condition.

Fashion

PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

recycle clothing and other materials out of respect for the environment. Protecting natural resources is a major concern of some clothing makers as well. These companies strive to produce garments in an environmentally responsible way at each step of manufacture. They use only natural fibers that are organically grown—that is, without pesticides, herbicides, or synthetic fertilizers. Designs are printed with nontoxic, water-based inks.

You can also buy clothing at these outlets for much less than you would pay for new clothing.

Selling is just one way to find a new owner for underused clothing. Suppose a friend has always admired a sweater that you seldom wear anymore. You might exchange it for a jacket that your friend no longer wears. You've each added to your wardrobe without spending anything.

Outgrown, wearable items may be passed along to a younger brother, sister, cousin, or neighbor. Be sensitive to feelings when you do this. Younger siblings sometimes resent having to accept used garments, especially when older siblings get the new ones. See Fig. 16-16.

Unwanted but usable clothing can also be donated, through charitable groups, to someone in greater need. Learn what religious groups or service agencies in your area accept used clothing. Your clothing contribution could bring comfort to a family that has lost its belongings in a fire, flood, or other disaster.

Finding Other Uses

Even when a garment can't be worn in its current form, its useful life may not be over. Give it a second start with a new purpose, ranging from accessories, to dress-up clothes, to cleaning cloths.



16-16 Passing garments along to a younger sister or brother is an easy way to recycle clothing that you no longer wear. How would you make this a positive experience for a younger sibling?

Accessories

Be imaginative. What accessories could you make from an old pair of jeans? How about a sturdy belt pack made from one of the legs, and a clutch purse from the other? Don't forget non-clothing accessories, such as a throw pillow for your bed or a shoe bag to hang on your closet door.

Turn your creative eye to other fabrics in your home as well. A badly stained tablecloth might be cut and finished as a set of placemats. Transform a colorful old beach towel into a beach carryall.

Children's Clothes

Many garments that are in good condition can be "downsized" to make children's clothes. In fact, children often like the feel of used fabrics, which are often softer and more comfortable than new clothes. It's the same reason that some people pay

Trends in TECHNOLOGY

>>FROM PLASTIC BOTTLES TO PARKAS

Could a garment you wear have once been a plastic bottle? It's possible. Discarded items that once crowded landfills are now being converted into fashion apparel. For example, 27 recycled water bottles can make enough fabric for a new sweater.

• **EcoSpun®.** When plastic bottles are recycled, they can be turned into the fiber EcoSpun. First, the bottles are crushed in a process called densifying. Then they are ground, washed, and melted into a gooey substance. The polyfibers extracted from this substance can be woven into fabrics resembling everything from wool to cotton, to fleece. The fibers can also be blended with other natural or manufactured fibers.

• **Reused Denim®.** This is the trade name for fabric made from 50 percent new cotton fibers and 50 percent reclaimed cotton denim. The reclaimed denim comes from scraps remaining after new denim fabric is made into jeans and other apparel.

• **Recycled wool.** Wool fibers from wool products can be shredded back into a fibrous state for recycling. A wool product containing the used fibers must be labeled as recycled wool. A fabric of 100 percent recycled wool can be as strong and soft as a comparable product of 100 percent virgin wool. The use of recycled wool is relatively small because the wide use of wool blends makes it difficult to separate the wool from the nylon or polyester fibers.

• **Boots and shoes.** Some manufacturers make sturdy hiking boots and canvas shoes from 17 to 75 percent recycled materials. Such materials as tires, plastic bottles, coffee filters, polystyrene cups, and diapers may be used in the process.

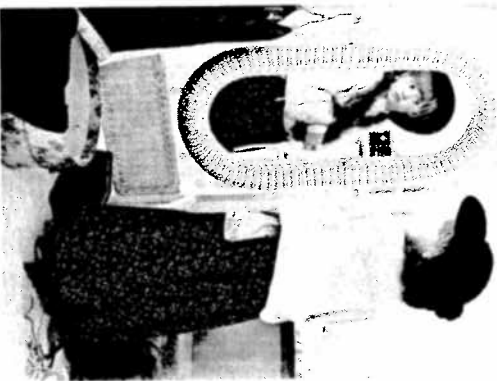
INVESTIGATION ACTIVITY

On the internet find more information about EcoSpun. What garments are made from this fiber? What qualities do they have?



a premium price for prewashed jeans. A corduroy skirt may have enough material for a child's jumper. You can fashion a small quilted robe from pieces of a larger one.

As Fig. 16-17 shows, old clothing can be a treasure for children who like to play dress-up. A child's imagination takes flight when inspired by grown-up clothes and props. Old clothes are also an excellent source of creative costumes for parties and class plays at school.

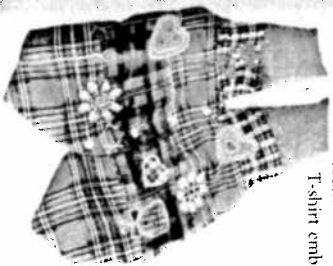


16-17 Young children love to dress up in old clothes, hats, jewelry, and shoes. When kept in a large box or trunk, they are readily available for creative play.

Patchwork Projects

Have you ever admired a century-old quilt, meticulously pieced together by hand? That craft is known as **patchwork**, sewing together small fabric shapes to create a new, decorative piece of fabric. See Fig. 16-18.

Patchwork quilts are still made today, although many other uses for the technique have been found. A wall hanging could display T-shirt emblems from high school



16-18 Patchwork is a technique you can use in many creative ways.

sports competitions. You can also make patchwork pillows, placemats, tote bags, and stuffed toys.

Garments and accessories can be created from patchwork designs. Craft books and magazines suggest ideas for planning such clothing projects as vests, jackets, belts, and aprons. You can preserve an item with sentimental attachment or make an item with special meaning. For example, imagine a vest made from old neckties or a grandmother's apron made with fabrics donated by each grandchild.

Combining available fabrics in a patchwork design offers a challenge in creativity and resourcefulness. What kind of pattern could you devise with colors and prints that blend or contrast? A few restrictions do limit your creativity. Since the pieces of fabric will be stitched together, select fabrics that are firmly woven and require similar care. Blue denim and a delicate silk print might look striking in a jacket, but how would the fabrics wear and launder?

Household Cleaning

Clothing that has exhausted every other use may have one final destination: the bag of cleaning cloths. Every household needs fabric pieces for dusting and wiping. Larger pieces—old towels, sheets, and tablecloths—can cover the floor when painting, sanding, or staining. Flannel is good for polishing silver and brass.

For cleaning, save absorbent fabrics, such as 100 percent cotton or cotton blends. Be sure to remove all buttons and other fasteners, which could scratch surfaces as you clean. Save these to use on future sewing projects. You may want to cut off trims, pockets, and bulky seams to make the cleaning cloth easier to handle.

Finally, fibers can be recycled for use in padding and paper. Some organizations collect old clothing and fabrics for this purpose. Who knows? This very book may contain traces of what was once a cotton shirt. As you can see, recycling can send the garments you once wore to useful, and sometimes surprising, destinations.

Review

CHAPTER SUMMARY

- You can redesign an outfit in a number of ways.
- Redesigning a garment takes some time but extends the life of the garment.
- Simple repairs can make a garment last longer.
- It takes only a few minutes to restitch hems and seams, change buttons, add snaps or hooks and eyes, and mend small holes.
- Recycling reclaims items for other purposes.
- Just as people recycle cans and bottles, they can recycle clothing too.
- You can recycle clothing when it's wearable and when it's not.

USING KEY TERMS

One of the Key Terms in this chapter is "patchwork." Pioneer women created patchwork designs for quilts that are famous as a uniquely American craft. Research the history of various patchwork designs, such as Log Cabin, Lone Star, and Dresden Plate. Report your findings to the class.



and Activities

THINKING CRITICALLY

- Do you think attitudes toward wearing used clothing are changing? If so, how are they changing and why?
- Explain the points of view a parent, older sibling, and younger sibling might have when clothes are handed down.
- According to an old saying, "You can't get something for nothing." Explain whether this chapter supports that comment.

APPLYING KNOWLEDGE

- Redesign project.** Choose one item from your wardrobe to redesign for yourself or for another family member. Explain what steps or techniques you would use.
- Creative designing.** Create a new look for an old-but-nice T-shirt by tie-dyeing the fabric, using fabric paints, or adding decorative trims.
- Simple repairs.** Practice making the following simple repairs on fabric: restitch a seam; sew a button; repair a hem; sew snaps; mend a small tear; sew a hook and eye; and patch a hole.
- Management process.** Utilize the management process described on page 54 to carry out a clothing repair project. To plan the project, first locate personal or family apparel in need of repairs. Gather the garments and organize them by sorting according to the repairs needed. Plan a schedule for completing the repair tasks at home. Evaluate the success of your plan and your workmanship.

- Recycling programs.** Contact charitable groups in your areas to learn whether they recycle clothing. Ask their policies for collecting and distributing the clothing. Share your findings with the class.
- Clothing collection.** Collect old clothing, accessories, and jewelry for a dress-up box. Donate it to a child-care center, nursery school, or preschool program.
- New uses.** Find an old garment that could be recycled into something usable. Could an old sweater become a pillow? Could you dress a doll for a child, using old fabrics? Carry out your project.

CREATIVE SOLUTIONS

While looking through an old trunk, one teen found a dozen samples of crocheting that her great-aunt made years ago. The pieces ranged in size from about four to six inches. Some were round and some square, and all had been well preserved. Individually they weren't very useful, but the teen wanted to show off the fine handiwork.

Think Creatively

How might the crocheted pieces be put to use?

Fashion Services

However, there are busy people, services are welcomed, limited time for baking and cooking sends people to bakeries and restaurants. When people can't get the lawn mowed or the leaves raked, someone can supply those services. Service providers can clean the house, paint the kitchen, and even walk the dog.

The fashion industry is no exception when it comes to offering services. In the clothing care area, businesses launder and dry-clean clothing. The person who doesn't have the time or skills needed to shorten a pair of pants or take in a skirt can find people who will make the alterations. Such services have become routinely used over the years.

People who are particularly concerned about image in the business world turn to services that can help them. Wearing the "right" suit can make the difference between impressing clients and losing them. Some people make it their job to give advice on choosing clothes and even do the shopping as part of their service.

Work in the service field is varied. Opportunities are greater in some specialties than in others. Depending on the service provided, income potential varies. If you're looking for something a little different, however, you might find it here.

Some tailors are self-employed. Others work for stores that sell garments and alter them for customers.



IS THIS FIELD FOR YOU?

As with any service career, personality affects success in the fashion services area. Training and skills vary, but you have an advantage if you fit these personal traits.

- I'm self-motivated.
- I'm a good listener.
- I genuinely enjoy helping people.
- I'm sensitive to people's needs and circumstances.
- I have confidence in my own judgment.
- My reputation is very important to me.

Education and Training

Jobs in fashion services are many and varied, so the education and training needed is too. Preparation may come on the job, through a combination of work experience and technical training, or from another field entirely.

A solid grounding in fabrics or fashion is recommended. Such knowledge might be gained through formal education or through independent study.

Depending on the job, a person may choose an education that stresses either the technical or "artistic" aspect of clothing. College degrees are not required for many of the positions, but education positions people to explore different fields in the future.

Possible Career Paths

As with other fields, training and experience are keys to traveling a career path in fashion services. For some jobs, the way is less defined than in production or merchandising. A college degree is not required to be a personal shopper. You don't start as an assistant and work your way up. In this type of career, your talents and interests determine your success and satisfaction.

Many service jobs lend themselves to self-employment. A large percentage of dry-cleaning businesses, for example, are family or individually owned. For that reason, the field appeals to people who want to be their own boss. Running your own business also requires qualities that have more to do with personality than with formal education.

A color consultant offers expert advice and information about color choices. The consultant might help a client find colors that exactly match his or her favorite colors or predict what colors might be in during an upcoming season.

THE SKILLS YOU NEED

If you're thinking about a fashion service career, check the following list of useful skills:

- Communication
- Organization
- Management
- Self-discipline
- Knowledge of fibers and fabrics
- Sewing skills
- Fashion sense

