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LINCOLN MEMORIAL
South Dakota State College, Brookings, South Dakota

NEW CLOTHES FROM OLD

by

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Extension Clothing Specialist

Regardless of how plentiful materials are, economical homemakers will always have the urge to save the good material from garments no longer useful by restyling or making over.

When renovating or remodeling clothing, check over the clothing on hand carefully. Consider the clothing needs of the whole family. Adult clothing can often be made over for children to better advantage than for another adult.

Ask yourself the question: "Is this garment really worth making over?" Don't spend time and energy on fabrics that have been weakened with age and use and are so badly worn that they will not last a reasonable length of time after they are made into another garment. Test the fabric by holding it up to the light to see if there are thin places; pull it between the hands to see how strong it is and examine it for any spots or stains which cannot be removed or avoided in cutting the new garment.

**AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE
SOUTH DAKOTA STATE COLLEGE
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

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As the Next Step, Ask Yourself:

How much of the old garment material is useable? Can worn spots be avoided in cutting? Or can they be mended so that they won't show? What is the fabric in the old garment best suited for—a jumper, a snow suit, a coat, a skirt?

To answer the last question consider the weight and texture of the cloth. Soft, lightweight materials make good dresses, jumpers, coats or suits for children. The coarser, heavier materials and those with large plaids are generally not appropriate for childrens' clothing since they are "over-powering" in effect and are often too heavy for comfort.

With care in handling and selection of style, many old materials can be made into new and attractive garments.

Since the effectiveness of a made-over garment depends upon how nearly it resembles a new garment, one of the first considerations is to prepare the material carefully. The most satisfactory results come when a garment is large enough or of such a style that it can be ripped apart and cut by a new pattern. Plan carefully what ripping and recutting of the old garment is necessary and avoid doing more ripping than is needed. **Seams made in old seam lines will not wear as well as those made along new seam lines.**

Pulling and breaking threads to rip stitching is satisfactory for some wool and cotton material. Use of a razor blade is a quick way to rip but special care should be taken not to cut the cloth. The threads should be taken from the line of stitching to prevent leaving holes in the material after the material is washed. Special care should be taken not to stretch the material during the ripping process.

Wash or Dry Clean

After the necessary ripping is completed, the fabric should be brushed thoroughly to remove all threads from the ripped seams. Then the material should be washed or dry cleaned and carefully pressed to make it look as new as possible. If care is used, most material can be washed successfully. Avoid the use of explosive solvents in cleaning. They are too dangerous to use.

Dyeing Might Help

Often material to be made over is almost as good as new but is off color or stained. Dyeing is the solution to this problem, for with reasonable care and following directions to the letter, excellent results may be obtained.

The Following Overdyeing Chart May Prove Helpful in Dyeing Old Fabric to Give It a New Look

If your fabric is	These shades will cover successfully
Yellow	scarlet, orange, dark brown, jade green, dark green, navy blue, black
Peach	scarlet, cardinal red, purple, royal blue, dark brown, jade green, dark green, navy blue, black
Orange	scarlet, dark brown, navy blue, black
Light Pink	rose pink, scarlet, purple, royal blue, dark brown, dark green, navy blue, black
Deep Pink	old rose, cardinal red, purple, royal blue, dark brown, dark green, navy blue, black
Bright Red	dark brown, navy blue, black (add green to get a true black)
Wine	purple, black
Orchid	royal blue, cardinal red, dark brown, dark blue, navy blue, black
Purple	black
Light Blue	old rose, cardinal red, royal blue, dark blue, dark brown, jade green, dark green, navy blue, black
Copenhagen Blue	navy blue, black
Navy Blue	black
Light Green	royal blue, dark blue, dark brown, jade green, navy blue, black
Emerald Green	dark brown, dark green, navy blue, black
Dark Green	dark brown, black
Light Gray	scarlet, wine, purple, dark green, dark brown, navy blue, black
Oxford (dark) Gray	dark brown, navy blue, black
Tan	dark green, dark brown, navy blue, black
Brown	black (add navy blue to get true black)

Choose Pattern Carefully

After the material in the old garment has been prepared so that it looks as nearly like new as possible, the next step towards a satisfactory made-over is to choose the pattern carefully. Needless to say the pattern for the new garment should be chosen with the number, size and shape of the pieces of the old garment in mind. Look at the chart on the pattern envelope to see if the pattern you are choosing is likely to fit the pieces of the old garment. You may have to make piecings or change the style slightly but

if you do, here is a chance for you to become creative. Changes should be planned so that they will be in harmony with the rest of the garment. Above all try to avoid that "made-over look" in the new garment.

If two fabrics must be combined in order to have enough material to make the new garment, consider textures and weights of materials which go well together.

The following suggestions for combining materials may prove helpful.

1. Plaid wool might be used with plain color wool or corduroy.

2. Velvet, velveteen or satin sections on a light weight wool dress might be interesting.

3. Machine-knitted material from sweaters for cuffs, yokes, etc. on wool dresses.

4. Velveteens and wool jerseys or corduroy and wool jersey.

Cut With The Grain

The straight of the material is easily determined in a new piece of fabric because of the selvage. Since there is no selvage to serve as a guide in placing the pattern pieces on old material, it is a good idea to study each piece of material in a good light to locate the lengthwise and crosswise threads.

If necessary, mark the grain line in all pieces with chalk or a basting thread.

It may be necessary to rearrange the pattern pieces until you find the best layout for the fabric you have.

When you are laying out the pattern, try to arrange it so that the piecings and repairs fall in a part of the garment where they show the least—such as in hems, facing and underarm of waist and sleeve. Piecings also might be worked into the design. For example, if the old garment pieces are too short for the new waist pattern, a yoke might be devised to take the place of the necessary piecing. If the garment pieces are too narrow for a one-piece coat back, the pattern might be changed to make it a two or a three piece back.

It is nearly impossible to hide piecing seams in a hard weave wool fabrics; but in soft woolens, piecing seams can be easily hidden.

If the wool material has a pattern, skillful matching, good stitching, and careful steam pressing will make necessary piecing hard to find.

Thick coating fabrics that do not fray can be pieced by pulling the cut edges together with close over-hand stitches. These seams should be steam pressed and then brushed to raise the nap on the right side. To strengthen such a piecing sew a strip of thin ribbon tape over the stitching on the wrong side.

Hints for Knit Wear Make Overs

Old knits are easy to handle and remake into new garments. Many won't ravel and so can be cut as easily as woven fabrics. Those that do ravel, can be cut after each piece has been edge stitched by machine.

The best way to separate knitted material if a straight edge crosswise is needed, is to pull a thread instead of cutting. This pulled thread separates the material neatly, leaving edges with loops that can easily be overhanded together. A single edge may be finished with a single crochet.

The kind of seam to use will depend upon the knit and the garment. If the knit is too heavy for seaming, first machine-stitch the cut edges and cover them with single crochet. Then join the edges by simply overhanding or crochet them together.

Plain seams may be used on light weight knits if they are finished securely. To keep the raw edges from fraying or curling, they may be held together and covered with blanket stitching or single crochet stitch.

A strong flat tailored finish for light weight and medium weight knits is made by pressing a plain seam open and then machine stitching on the right side about 1/16 inch on each side of the seam line.

Knitted garments may often be re-knit to good advantage. If the garment is out of style and not worn it may be ripped and made into a similar size garment, or if there are worn places, perhaps enough yarn could be salvaged to make a smaller garment.

As the yarn is ripped, wrap it loosely in a skein on a cardboard or piece of board. The yarn thus wrapped should then be dipped in lukewarm water and dried before it is wound loosely into balls. This will take the kinks out of the yarn and as a result the new garment will be more accurate in size. If the kinks are left in the yarn the garment will be too large when blocked.

Working With Fur

Odds and ends of fur or the good parts of old fur pieces can be turned into interesting small accessories or made into a collar for a coat. It requires some skill to cut and seam fur. Follow these directions:

To cut fur, place the piece on a sheet of glass or a hard wood cutting board with the fur side down. Mark the cutting lines with a sharp soft pencil. Cut along these lines with a razor blade, being careful to cut only through the skin. Separate the cut section from the rest of the skin by gently pulling apart along the cut line.

To make the seams, whipstitch the edges together on the wrong side, making small, evenly spaced stitches with a short

fine needle. (Between-No.7) Use quilting thread or heavy duty mercerized sewing thread in a color to match the fur. Many workers wax the thread to strengthen it. Push the fur out of the way when sewing so that none is caught in the seam. Any number of small scraps can be patched together in this way to make a larger section. The seams will be entirely invisible if the nap of the fur lies in the same direction on all pieces.

Old fur may be strengthened with a backing of soft cambric or cheese cloth, placed over the back of the skin, and sewn down with stitches that barely go through the skin but do not catch the fur down on the right side. The stitches may be long or short on the wrong side according to how much the skin needs strengthening at the point where you are sewing.

The outside edges of fur must be taped with straight tape whipped to the edge of the skin. The tape should match the color of the skin. Fur must be padded to give it richness and texture. Coats are padded with a layer of outing flannel. Collars and cuffs have a layer of cotton wadding between the skin and the flannel. When these are in place, the taped edge is pulled over the padding, and caught down to the flannel.

Joining Collar to Coat

Tack the coat lining around the neck of the coat before the fur collar is added; then sew the collar in place, sewing through the tape, by hand. When this is done, slip-stitch the collar lining in place after pinning it carefully. Catch the lining down to the collar along the roll at the back of the neck.

Earmarks of A Good Made-Over

In conclusion let us consider some of the earmarks of a successful made-over garment.

1. A good made-over garment should look as much like a new garment as possible. Time spent in making a new garment from old fabric pays off only if the garment looks good and can be worn with pride.

2. The garment should look like it belonged to the wearer. The fabric should not look to "old" for a child. Large prints, heavy bulky materials and drab colors can give a made-over garment a "hand me down" look.

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