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Mending the Family's Clothing

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the family’s clothing

Extend the life of your family’s clothing by using correct mending methods. Your mending basket should be equipped with fine needles, different sizes and colors of thread, darning cotton, scraps for patching, bits of net, tape, press-on patches to mend some materials, buttons, hooks, eyes and snaps.

MEND SHOULD FIT THE BREAK

When you are deciding whether to darn or to patch, consider these points:

1. What is the shape of the place to be mended? Snags often call for a different type of mend than a straight tear.
2. Does the material have a nap, or is it smooth? Is it light or heavyweight? Is it washable or must it be dry cleaned? Does it fray?
3. Is the hole large? Some mends are better, done on a small scale; others, on a larger scale.
4. Where is the hole? The sturdiness of the mend depends on whether or not the spot will be subjected to strain.

RULES FOR DARNING

Except for very small holes and worn spots, darns are seldom used on any material except wool or materials with a wool-like texture and, of course, stockings.

Successful darns depend on the following:

1. Use thread that blends with the material. Yarns pulled from a scrap of the same cloth or from straight seams where they may be spared are best. Always use lengthwise threads for darning lengthwise, and crosswise yarns for crosswise darning.
2. If self yarn is not available, dull matching sewing thread that blends with the fabric is next best.
3. Repeat the weave of the fabric as closely as possible.
4. Use a fine needle and short thread. Long thread pulled back and forth across a tear or hole tends to pull and stretch a darn out of shape.

5. Work for flatness. See that the tension on the yarn is neither too tight nor too loose.
6. Run stitches unevenly into the cloth around the edge of the darn so that the line where the darn starts is as invisible as possible.
7. Be sure that all raw edges of the hole or tear are on the underside of the darn.
8. Darn on the right side of the material so as to see that the darn is blending in well with the material.

Hosiery Darns

To darn a hole in a stocking foot, leave the hole in the round shape it took as it developed. Snip away ragged edges. Then, with a darter (a light bulb will do) in the stocking, work with small stitches back and forth across the hole and far enough into the fabric around the hole to strengthen the thin, weak spot there. Darn in one direction, then the other—weaving in and out to make a plain weave.

By Anna D. Walker, Extension Clothing Specialist
Use only as many strands of the darning yarn as you need to match the weight of the stocking. The darn will look better and wear longer if you use yarn of the correct weight.

**Darns for Woven Materials**

These materials may be mended with a plain hand darn or by reweaving. Reweaving is nothing more than a darn done carefully with matched yarn, so that it reproduces the original almost exactly.

**Plain Darn.** To darn small holes, first get matching thread. If you ravel yarns from a piece of self material, use crosswise yarns for crosswise darning, lengthwise yarns for lengthwise stitches.

Leave the hole in its original shape, which usually is round. Trim off the ragged edges. Fill in new lengthwise yarns. Then, keeping the darn flat, work with small stitches back and forth across the hole... and far enough into the fabric to strengthen the thin area around the hole.

**Pattern darn.** For materials having a distinct weave, a pattern darn, which repeats the weave of the cloth, shows less than a plain darn. The simplest pattern darn, illustrated above, shows how the darning produces the diagonal in a twill. To make other pattern darns, first study the weave in the cloth to see how the lengthwise and crosswise yarns are interwoven... then reproduce it as nearly as possible. The pattern darn is suitable for blankets, loosely woven suitings, and damask tablecloths.

**Straight-tear hand darn.** To darn a straight tear in wools, start and finish about one-quarter inch beyond the tear. With matching thread and a fine needle, stitch back and forth across the tear on the right side with tiny stitches. Keep the stitches exactly in line with the yarns in the cloth. The darn will show less if you extend the rows of stitches unevenly into the fabric. As you turn to stitch in the opposite direction, let the thread go in easily—do not pull it tight. To make the mend stronger, darn over a piece of the same cloth or any thin material basted to the underside. If the tear is frayed, weave over and under the loose yarns. Let the ends of broken yarns go to the underside.

To darn a tear in heavy reversible materials, such as blankets, snip off short ravelings, draw torn edges together, matching the design if there is one, and pin to a piece of tough paper. Catch the two edges with a needle and matching sewing thread. Darn across the slit, following lengthwise and crosswise yarns in the material or the pattern in the weave... whichever shows the least. Follow the same method for a three corner hand darn fray—but overlap at the corner.

**Diagonal hand darn.** To darn a diagonal cut, first baste a piece of the same material or net on the underside to keep the cut from stretching. Then with fine needle and matching thread or yarns, work from the right side and weave back and forth across the cut, following the yarns in the cloth as for a straight tear. In some twilled materials the darn shows less if stitches follow the diagonal pattern in the weave rather than yarns of the cloth.

On heavy, reversible materials such as blankets, pin a piece of tough paper to the underside to hold a diagonal cut in shape while you darn.

**RULES FOR PATCHING**

The secret of a successful patch may be found in the following rules:

1. Cut the patch on the "straight" of the material. Be sure that crosswise and lengthwise threads are in line with those of the material.
2. If the material has a pattern, match each detail perfectly to make the mend inconspicuous.
3. If the garment to be mended is old and faded, try to get a matching patch from a hem or some spot where a piece of old material can be spared.
4. Always shrink new patch material to be used to mend a wash garment.
Darned-in patch. If the cloth does not fray, use a darned-in patch where a plain darn or patch might not look right. It is a fairly sturdy mend... not so bulky and easily noticed on thick wool as a hemmed patch. Trim the hole so it is either square or rectangular. Cut the patch to fit the hole exactly, also to match the pattern and grain of the cloth. Baste the patch to net, fit the hole down over the patch, then baste to hold all together while you work. Use dull matching thread and darn each of the four sides of the patch as you would straight tears. Overlap the darns at the corners to strengthen them.

Hemmed patch. This is a sturdy mend done by hand. To make it, first cut the smallest possible square or rectangle that will remove the snag, hole, cut, or tear. Cut along crosswise and lengthwise yarns. Then clip this hole diagonally at each corner—about one-fourth of an inch. Turn under slightly beyond the ends of these clips. Crease sharply or press but be careful not to stretch the material.

Slide a piece of matching material under the hole until the design matches exactly. Cut a patch about 1 inch larger all around than the hole. Baste the patch in place... then from the right side hem with very fine stitches, especially at the corners. Let these stitches catch in the very edge of the crease.

Now turn to the wrong side. If the material is a lightweight washable, turn the patch piece under about one-fourth inch. Snip off the corners to avoid thick lumps. Baste and hem with stitches so small they will not be noticeable on the right side. This patch is good for washables such as house dresses, play and work clothes.

Lapped Patch. This mend is suitable when sturdiness is more important than appearance. First cut away all ragged edges and make a round hole. Lay a matched piece of cloth underneath and baste it in place. Then on the right side, stitch back and forth over the cut edge until it is firm and secure with no rough ends. Cut away extra material on the underside, not caught in the stitching. Or if the fabric around the hole is weak, leave on this extra goods and fasten it with tailor’s tacks. They hold the material flat and do not show on the right side.

Stitch a lapped patch by machine if you are mending shirts, children’s play clothes, overalls, sheets, or dish towels... by hand, on thick materials, as blankets or bath towels, where there is less strain. Hand darning makes the mend less stiff.

Three Cornered Tears

The best mend for a three cornered tear depends upon the material and the size of the tear.

For all materials except wool, patch as you would a straight tear, trimming to form a square of a rectangle. Then make a hemmed patch. For larger three cornered tears, a hemmed right angle patch may be used. (Illus.) This patch may also be used on smaller three cornered tears where patching material is scarce.
Except for its shape, this patch is made the same as a plain hemmed patch. For neat corners, clip them as shown in illustration.

Inset Patch

Most silks and rayons and similar materials which are to be dry cleaned are best mended with an inset patch. To make this patch:

1. Trim damaged place to form a square or rectangle.
2. Clip the corners, turn the edges under evenly and exactly with the grain of the material all around. Press, do not crease with fingernail because soft material might stretch.
3. Place the patch in place so that threads and designs match. Pin in place.

To finish this patch, the first way is as follows:

1. Check the exact size patch that fits the hole. Then turn and press. Trim all extra fabric and leave a small seam allowance. If material frays readily, leave more seam.
2. Check again to make sure the patch fits the hole exactly.
3. From the wrong side, overhand the patch into the hole with tiny stitches, caught through the two folded edges. When finished, press flat and press seams open.
4. Overcast raw edges to keep from fraying.

The second method of finishing an inset patch. After matching the patch to the hole, proceed as follows:

1. Baste the patch to the garment with small stitches in contrasting thread. Stitch on the very edge of the fold.
2. Turn the garment inside out and on the line of basting stitches, stitch by machine, thus seaming the patch in.
3. In woolen materials the seam may be hidden using the rantering stitch as follows: on the right side, pinch the seam line between the thumb and forefinger. Then stitch back and forth over the seam, pulling the thread up closer. When steam pressed, this patch is very inconspicuous.

Stayed-in Patch

Darned-in patches, sometimes called stayed-in patches, may be used where a plain darn or patch might not look right. It is quite inconspicuous on thick wool.

To make this patch:

1. Trim the hole so that it is either a square or rectangle.
2. Cut the patch so that it fits the hole exactly and also matches the pattern and grain of the cloth.
3. Baste the patch to a piece of net or rayon material large enough to extend past the hole at least ½ inch on all sides. Fit the hole down over the patch and baste. This will hold the patch in place while the work is being done and reinforce it.
4. Use dull matching thread and darn each of the four sides of the patch, letting the darns overlap at the corners.

**For Corduroys and Velveteens**

For dresses and coats of pile materials, a stayed-in darned patch is satisfactory. In this case, work the darn from the wrong side of the material instead of the right. Then brush well on the right side to lift the nap when the patch is finished.

**Re-Weave Patch**

An excellent method to use in repairing a hole in a good wool garment will be found in the re-weave patch. This patch is used where a hole or group of holes are too hard to darn. It is more easily done in coarsely woven materials, but can also be done in finer materials with the use of a reading glass.

To make this darn:

1. Mark with four pins a square or rectangle the size of the patch you wish to make. (See A.) Clip one yarn from pin to pin and pull out.

2. Cut a matching patch, one inch larger all around. Ravel threads on the patch on all sides until the patch is the exact fit. (B.) Pin in place. Push a small crochet hook through where the yarns were pulled out of the garment and pull the ravelled yarn of the patch through to the inside. (C.) When all the yarns are pulled through, press flat. If necessary, hem by hand on the wrong side along the lines where the threads were pulled through.

**Overall Patching**

This machine stitched patch can be made without ripping the leg.

- Patch both knees with the same size patch, placed in the same position.
- Remove worn part by cutting along a thread or by tearing carefully. Measure ½ inch from each corner and cut and miter to this point as shown in A.
- Prepare the patch by tearing or cutting on the thread of the material, making patch 2 inches wider and longer than the opening.
- Turn overall wrong side out, pin upper part of the patch to the overall as in B.
- Stitch on the machine beginning at the edge of the patch, stitching toward corner caused by miter on the pants side ½ inch deep and across other mitered corner to the end of the patch. Turn and do the same at each side.
- To finish, turn back corner, and stitch across each corner taking in a slight amount at the mitered corner to make the patch strong. Trim off ravelings. A second row of stitching may be put around the entire edge of the patch if a better finish is needed. No stitching shows on the right side.
MENDS FOR KNITS

It is important to mend breaks in knits while they still are small because in knit materials, snags or breaks stretch. Matching yarn is the first consideration. A pocket or some part of the garment which is not actually needed may be ravelled, or a matching skein may be bought.

If the knit is plain, the stitch may be copied with a knit stitch. This is the most desirable mend as it will stretch as the rest of the garment.

To make a knit stitch mend, proceed as follows:
1. Cut the material vertically a little above and below the center of the hole. Make two horizontal cuts, one above and one below the hole.
2. Ravel the knit to the ends of the cuts. Thread each loose end and run it back through the fabric on the underside.

A hole in a knit may also be mended with a blanket stitch mend. It is an easier method, but it shows more and does not stretch.

1. First ravel out a square hole as in the knit stitch mend.

2. Then pull in a crosswise yarn and work back over it with loose blanket stitches, one for each knitting stitch.

3. Pull another yarn crosswise. Work back over it and continue until the hole is filled.