ACTIVITY: REPAIRING A HOLE IN CLOTHING

There are several different ways to repair a hole in your clothing depending on what material it is made from, where the hole is and whether you want the repair to be visible or invisible. Below are a few different ways you can do it.

Materials and Equipment:
- Torn item of clothing
- Tape measure, scissors, needle, thread, patch

Techniques:
- Cover the hole with a patch on the Outside
- Cover the hole with a patch on the Inside
- Make a feature of the hole - Visible Mending Technique
- Repair a hole in knitted fabric – Invisible Mending Technique
- Repair a hole in knitted fabric – Darning

Technique: Cover the hole with a patch on the Outside

1. Firstly, you will need to prepare your patch. Measure the hole you are covering and make your patch a few centimetres bigger to ensure you are covering all of the hole

2. Choose a fabric to make your patch from

3. Decide what method you are going to use to finish the raw edges of your patch, here are some options: press (iron) your raw edges under, use a blanket stitch to finish the raw edges, go with a frayed look for your edges - this will work very well with a denim patch

4. If you are repairing a hole in a pair of trousers you may need to open the inside seam of your trouser leg to be able to reach the area you are trying to repair, especially if you are using a sewing machine

5. Another useful tip can be to put a piece of card inside your garment in between the two layers. This will help you avoid stitching the two layers together
6. Place your patch on your garment, making sure you are covering the hole and pin in place. You can baste it into place as the pins can get in the way when you are trying to sew. Basting is the term used for a rough hand stitch using a running stitch to hold your fabric in place, a basting stitch is usually removed once you are finished.

7. Sew your patch into place using a sewing machine or by hand, remember these stitches will be visible so you may want to take your time and get them looking as neat as possible – or not! One of the great things about doing your own repairs is that you can make them look just how you like them.

8. Take your basting stitches out and marvel at your amazing mending skills!

Technique: Cover the hole with a patch on the Inside

1. Measure the hole you are repairing. Cut a patch a few cms bigger. Patch can be whatever shape you like as long as it is covering the hole. Since the fabric around the hole can be worn thin, it can be a good idea to reinforce this part of your garment with your patch

2. If you want to make your repair as invisible as possible, choose a fabric and thread that are as close as possible in colour to the garment

3. Position your patch on the inside of your garment and pin into place

4. It can be a good idea to baste your patch into place as the pins can get in the way when you are trying to sew. Basting is the term used for a rough hand stitch using a running stitch to hold your fabric in place, a basting stitch is usually removed once you are finished

5. If you are repairing a hole in a pair of trousers you may need to open the inside seam of your trouser leg to be able to reach the area you are trying to repair, especially if you are using a sewing machine

6. Another useful tip can be to put a piece of card inside your garment in between the two layers, helping avoid stitching the two layers together

7. Using a straight stitch on your sewing machine or a small running stitch if you are hand stitching, stitch a series of lines across your patch from left to right, and then turning your garment stitch a series of lines from top to bottom creating a grid with your stitch lines. Stitching in this way will hold your patch in place and will reinforce the area around the hole
Technique: Make a feature hole by using some Visible Mending techniques

This can be really fun and is a growing movement and trend. The idea is that you honour the wear and tear of your clothing by making a feature of any repairs you might need to do on them, you can use a variety of hand stitches and embroidery stitches, the Japanese Sashiko technique is used a lot as a visible mending technique. You can really let your imagination and creativity run wild with these kinds of repairs!

Technique: Repair a hole in knitted fabric (Invisible Mending Technique)

1. Pull the fibres together to close up the hole. If it is a small hole you can repair it by pulling the fibres surrounding the hole together to close up the hole. This needs to be done gently to avoid any lumpy puckering to make the repair as invisible as possible. Choosing a matching colour thread will help make the repair unnoticeable

2. Turn your garment inside out

3. Choose your thread (I have used a contrasting thread to make my stitches visible)

4. It can help to put a book or piece of card under the hole you want to repair, this will help you see the hole and will also help you avoid stitching two layers of your garment together

5. Make sure to include a small distance around our hole with our stitches, not just the hole itself, this will help ease the fibres together gently and avoid any lumpy puckering

6. Secure your thread a small distance from the hole by doing 3 small stitches over each other in the same place. Make sure you are not stitching the whole way through to the other side of your garment

7. Following the line of the knit of your garment, stitch a series of vertical lines up and down the area around the hole, again be careful that your stitches don’t go the whole way through to the other side of your garment you can pull the thread softly to pull the fibres together
8. Do the same stitching horizontally, gently pulling the fibres of your garment together to close up the hole, all the time being careful that your stitches don’t go the whole way through to the other side of your garment.

9. Before finishing your stitching, check the other side of your garment to see if there is anywhere that needs the fibres pulled together. If there is you can repeat the process gently pulling the fibres together.

10. When you are happy that the hole has been closed up, secure your stitches by doing 3 small stitches over each other in the same place.

11. Turn your garment around and try to find the hole, if you can!

**Technique: Repair a hole in knitted fabric (Darning)**

If the hole in your knitted garment is bigger, you can fill it in using the following darning technique:

1. You will need thread, a darning needle and a darning egg or darning mushroom to put under the hole - you can also use an orange if you don’t have either of these!

2. If you want to make your repair as unnoticeable as possible, you should choose a thread similar in colour and weight (thickness) to your garment. Wool threads or embroidery threads can be a good option. If you want to do a visible repair, you could go for a contrasting colour and experiment with a different thickness to your garment.

3. Place the darning egg under the hole and pull the rest of the garment gently under it making sure it is held nicely in place but is not too tightly stretched.

4. Thread your needle and starting roughly 1cm from the bottom of the hole and roughly 1cm from the side of the hole, use a running stitch to stitch a vertical line following the line of the knit in your garment.

5. When you have stitched this line to roughly the same distance from the top of the hole, turn and stitch a parallel line in the opposite direction.

6. Continue stitching vertical lines up and down across the hole and until you create a square shape with your stitch lines that is roughly 1cm bigger than the hole on all sides.

7. Repeat the process with horizontal stitch lines, weaving the thread through the vertical lines to cover the hole.

8. To finish, weave the thread through the jumper.
ALTERATION: TAKING UP A HEM

Alterations are a great way to extend the lifespan of your clothing, here is one example – taking up a hem.

1. Try on your garment and pin where you would like it to be taken up to

2. Mark the new finishing line at the fold with a safety pin

3. Unpin your garment and measure the distance from the bottom of your garment up to your safety pin. In the example in the photo, this measurement is 21cm

4. Usually when you are taking up a hem, you will want to replicate the hem that already exists on your garment, so you will want to create your new hem using the same method. To do this, look at the existing hem of your garment and measure how much seam allowance has been left to create the hem. In some garments the bottom hem is folded twice to hide the raw edge. In the example in the photo it is 3cm

5. We will need to minus the seam allowance measurement from the measurement from the bottom of your garment to the safety pin marker. In the example in the photo the measurement from the bottom of the garment to the safety pin marker is 21cm and the required seam allowance measurement for the hem is 3cm. This means in the example we will need to cut our garment at 18cm from the bottom to take it up the required amount

6. Measuring up from the bottom of your garment mark all the way round your garment at the required measurement and cut

7. Press your seam allowance up at the required measurement and pin in place. If you are creating a double folded hem only pin it in place after you have pressed both folds. NB You should never press your garment after you have pinned, as this will leave a permanent mark

8. Stitch your hem into place replicating the style of stitching on the original hem
ACTIVITY: T-SHIRT UPCYCLES

Activities:

- T-shirt Tote Bag
- T-shirt Stencilling
- T-shirt Yarn
- Macramé Plant Holder

Activity: T-shirt Tote Bag

1. You will need a T-shirt and a pair of scissors to complete this easy upcycling project

2. We are going to cut off the sleeves and alter the neckline to create the straps and opening of the bag. To do this, turn your T-shirt inside out and with the front of the T-shirt facing you, fold it in half lengthways so that you can see the front neckline. Line up the shoulder seams and the sides seams and lay it flat on the table

3. Cut off your sleeves just inside the seam line on the body of the T-shirt, following the shape of the seam line. NB It is easier to cut fabric and get the shape you want if you keep it laying flat on the table

4. Cut off the neck of your T-shirt bringing your cutting line down to roughly the same line as the bottom of where you cut off your sleeve to create your strap and the opening of your bag. A good idea to keep your straps roughly 6cm wide or more for strength

5. Open your T-shirt out and lay it flat on the table - It should look a bit like a vest now!

6. Cut off the bottom hem - you can keep this for another project

7. Cut the bottom of your T-shirt into vertical strips roughly 3cm wide and 10cm long. You can use the width of two fingers and the length from the top of your middle finger to just below your knuckle to get your measurement if you don’t have a ruler as the measurement doesn’t need to be exact

8. At both sides we will need to cut the strips in half to create two layers, if your T-shirt has a side seam cut this off along the stitch line. This will avoid creating a hole at the side
9. Leave your T-shirt lying flat until you have completed all the following steps

10. Going from left to right, tie the bottom layer of one strip to the top layer of the next strip with a single knot pulled tight

11. As you tie your knots, keep the ends of your strips organised with the top strip on the T-shirt and the bottom strip off the T-shirt, this will help with your next line of knots. Because we are tying in a diagonal, the top layer of the first strip will not be included in this line of knots. The bottom layer of the last strip will not be included either

12. Using the same method, tie a second row of knots going from left to right and tying the bottom of the first one to the top of the next one. This will close over the holes between the first row of knots. It is easy to get lost in the knots so try and keep them organised as you go.

13. Again the first top strip and the last bottom strip will not be included in the line of knots. You can tie these to the other strips that were not included in the first line of knots to close over the holes at each side

14. Turn your bag the right way round. The knots will be hidden on the inside. You can choose to make a feature of the knots and of the tassels by tying the knots on the right side of your T-shirt. You can experiment by cutting the tassels thinner and longer and stretching them out after you have tied the knots

15. If you have two T-shirts you can cut the same shaped straps and use a stencilling technique to create a design on the outside T-shirt - be careful not to cut any big hole on your T-shirt as they will stretch out and will lose their shape

**Activity: T-shirt Stencilling**

This is a nice way to upcycle and customise an old T-shirt. You can wear different colours underneath it to create different looks. T-shirt fabric is easy to work with as it doesn't fray, however, be careful to keep the holes you are cutting small as they will stretch out of shape if they are too big

1. Turn your T-shirt inside out

2. Draw your stencilling design onto your T-shirt using tailor’s chalk or a colouring pencil.

3. Cut out your stencil making sure none of the holes are too big. To start your cutting line for each hole, you will need to fold the T-shirt to make a snip. This can take some time so make sure you have brought your patience with you.
4. Turn your T-shirt the right way round and try it on with a different colour T-shirt behind it to get the full effect

5. It can be fun to create some fringing at the bottom by cutting the bottom hem off and cutting the bottom into thin strips, if you stretch the strips out they will curl in giving a nice fringing effect

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**Activity: T-shirt Yarn**

Creating a ball of T-shirt yarn from your old T-shirts is a great way to reuse your old T-shirts. Once you have created the yarn you can use it in a multitude of ways for macrame, knitting, weaving, and crochet projects.

1. Lay your T-shirt sideways on the table and fold your T-shirt so that the side seams are roughly 5cm apart

2. Cut the whole way across the T-shirt just under the sleeve seam and cut the bottom hem off

3. Cut the T-shirt into strips roughly 2cm in width stopping just after the first fold. You can make the strips wider depending on project

4. Open the T-shirt, making sure the uncut spine is laying flat on table

5. Cut the spine in a series of diagonal lines going from the bottom of one strip to the top of the opposite strip

6. Stretch your strip of T-shirt by pulling it with two hands, this will make it curl into a yarn like cylindrical shape

7. Roll up your ball of T-shirt yarn

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You can also make T-shirt Yarn by joining shorter strips together

1. Cut a vertical slit at both ends of the strips
2. Pass one end of one strip through the slit of the other
3. Pass the end of the first strip through the slit at the other end and pull tight
4. Pass the end of the first strip through the slit at the other end of the same strip and pull tight.
5. Continue to create a long strip of T-shirt yarn
Activity: Macramé Plant Holder

1. You will need T-shirt yarn and a curtain ring

2. Cut your T-shirt Yarn into 4 x 2 metre long strands

3. Thread your T-shirt yarn strands through your curtain ring so that your curtain ring is at the middle point of your yarn strands and you have eight equal sized strands hanging down. You can tie the bottom hem of your T-shirt into a small circle if you don’t have a curtain ring, just make sure it is tied nice and tight

4. Tie the 8 strands in a knot around the curtain ring

5. Laying the strands flat on the table, separate them into 4 pairs.

6. Measure down to where you want the top of your plant pot to be and tie a knot in each of the pairs of yarn at this point

7. Create another layer of knots by tying the right yarn of one pair to the left yarn of the next pair

8. Repeat this step creating another layer of knots by tying the right yarn of one pair to the left yarn of the next pair

9. Finish off by tying the 8 strands together in one knot

10. Insert your pot plant and choose a place to hang it
ACTIVITY: JUMPER UPCYCLES

Activities:

- Headband/Earwarmer
- Hooded Scarf

Activity: Headband/Earwarmer

1. You will need an old jumper, scissors, a measuring tape, ruler, some tailors chalk and a colouring pencil, some pins and a needle and thread

2. Measure your head and use this measurement as the length measure in the next step

3. Using the line of the knit in your jumper as the straight edge, cut a rectangle from your jumper measuring 9 inches or 23cm wide and your head measurement long

4. Fold the rectangle in half lengthways with the right sides facing, lining up the raw edge. Pin in place

5. Sew a line of stitching leaving a 1cm seam allowance. You can sew this line by hand, using a running stitch or a back stitch, or with a sewing machine

6. Turn the right way round and position the seam at one edge of the head band

7. Bring the two ends together and stitch in place, front and back, using a ladder stitch to hold the two ends together without overlapping them. We are using this method to join the two ends as the jumpers can be quite thick and we want to avoid creating too much bulk. This stitching won’t be seen so don’t worry about doing it perfectly

8. To create the gathered feature, make sure you have a threaded needle ready to sew and fold the headband in half towards the back at this join
9. Fold each side of the headband towards the front to meet the first fold and stitch in place. Again these stitches will be hidden so don’t worry too much about how they look as long as they hold the fold in place.

10. Cut a strip roughly 3cm wide from your jumper and use this to cover the fold.

11. Hand stitch in place at the back.

12. Admire your handiwork!!

Activity: Hooded Scarf

This is another really easy upcycling project with great results! All you will need is an old jumper, a scissors, a measuring tape or ruler, some tailors chalk or a colouring pencil to mark your cutting line on the jumper, some pins and a needle and thread.

1. Turn your jumper inside out and measure down 30cm along the side seam from under the sleeve and mark this point. This will be the depth of your hood, including a 1.5cm seam allowance. You can adjust this length if you want but it is always better to cut bigger and be able to make it smaller than to cut smaller and not be able to use it at all.

2. Measure up from the bottom of your jumper to this point. Use this measurement to measure up from the bottom of your jumper and mark all the way round your jumper.

3. Cut your jumper along this marked line.

4. Bring the two side seams of your jumper together, line them up and pin them together.

5. With your sides seams lined up and pinned together, lay your jumper flat and making sure the raw edges are lined up, pin the top and bottom layers together.

6. Stitch top and bottom layers together with 1.5cm seam allowance. You can stitch this line on a sewing machine or by hand using a small running stitch or a back stitch if you would like it to be more secure.

7. Take out your pins and turn your jumper the right way round and insert one corner of the line you just stitched into the other to create your hood.

8. Try it on and be warm and cosy!
ACTIVITY: UPCYCLING JEANS

Old jeans often get holes or are worn out beyond repair. Here are some great ways you can upcycling an old pair of jeans. You will need an old pair of jeans, a sewing machine, scissors, needle and thread.

Method: Denim Skirt

1. Measure down from the waistband at the side seam the length that you want your skirt to be, adding 3cm for the hem

2. Draw a line across both legs at this point at a right angle to the side seam

3. Cut both jeans legs along this line, cutting front and back together

4. Open the inside seam of each leg by cutting as close to the seam as possible

5. Using the same method, cutting as close to the seam as possible, open the front and back crotch seams to where the curve stops - this is usually between 5cm and 7cm - so that the cut edges lay flat when they are overlapped

6. Pin the overlapping raw edges in place

7. Depending on the length of your skirt you may have a triangular gap at the front and at the back between the two legs of your jeans. You can use the bottom pieces of the jeans legs you cut off to fill this

8. Open the outside seam of one of the bottom leg pieces, cutting as close to the outside seam as possible

9. Open the leg piece out and position under your skirt front to fill in the gap, trimming it to roughly the right size

10. Fold any raw edges underneath and pin in place.
11. Trim any extra fabric from the leg piece and if there is enough use this to fill in the gap at the back of the skirt using the same method.

12. If there is not enough fabric you can repeat the process using the other leg piece, folding any raw edges under and trimming any extra fabric.

13. Stitch the overlapping crotch seam and the leg pieces in place.

14. Turn your skirt inside out and trim any extra fabric from the inserts, keep your cut off pieces for future projects.

15. You may choose to leave a raw edge at the bottom of the skirt but if you would like to create a finished hem, press the bottom of the skirt up 1cm all the way round.

16. Repeat this process folding the bottom of your skirt up another 2cm all the way round, pinning in place as you go.

17. Stitch your hem in place from the right side of the skirt, this will help you make sure your stitch line is as straight as possible as it will be visible on your finished skirt.