

A photograph of laundry hanging on a line outdoors. A pink and white striped shirt is the central focus, hanging on a wooden fence. To its right, a white lace-trimmed skirt is also hanging. The background shows green foliage and a wooden shed.

**Project Preloved
Garment Alterations and
Repair**

**By
Sustainable Merton
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Why is it important to give old clothes a new life?

To answer that we need to look at what clothes are made of and how are they made?

Different kinds of fabrics and fibers

Natural fabrics:

- made from threads made from fibers that are naturally-derived; such as animal or plant-based fibers.
- cotton, silk, linen, wool, leather and hemp
- Breathable, keeps you cool in summer and warm in winter
- Biodegradable and compostable

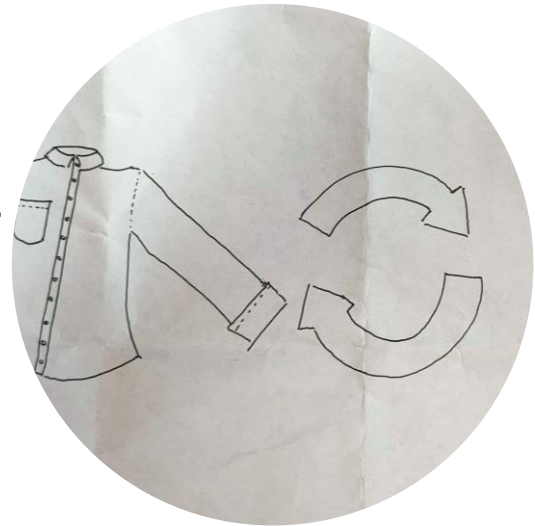
Synthetic fabrics:

- Man made- does not exist naturally on earth
- Usually made from plastic
- Versatile, could be made to mimic any form of natural fiber
- Polyester, nylon, spandex and acrylic
- Can be made to be waterproof, stretchy, fussy, silky, shiny
- Holds pleats and creased very well
- Can be recycled – melted and reshaped into something new, but only up to a point
- Plastic waste and production are a danger to marine life

Synthetic fabrics made from Natural fibers - 'semi synthetics' :

- Made from a naturally derived material, like wood, cotton or Bamboo, but the manufacturing process uses toxic chemicals.
- Acetate, rayon, modal and Tencel, viscose and lyocell.
- Popular in the fashion industry as they hold pleats and creases very well and is easy to shape and have weight to them, so they fall and flow nicely on the body.

Which one is better for the environment?



Synthetic fabrics are made from plastic

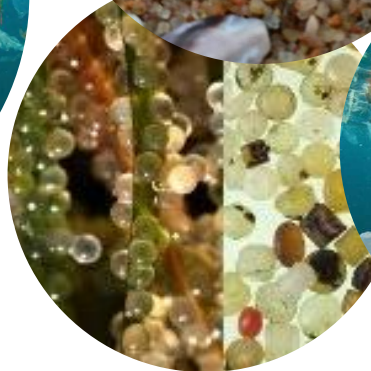
Plastic

- invented at the turn of the century but came into popularity in the 50' and 60's
- Made from crude oil



The problem with plastic and synthetic fabrics in the environment:

- Does not degrade or compost
- Is mistaken for food by birds, fish and other marine life that choke and die off it.
- Synthetic clothes are made from plastic. Before production plastic is shipped in the shape of small nurdles which are easily mistaken by marine life as fish roe
- The nurdles size make them hard to detect and clear from the ocean



Why is it important to give old clothes a new life?

So natural materials are always good for the environment?

Not exactly. The production of cotton for making jeans and household textiles has always been a contentious industry of exploitation.

That is why it is equally important to consider how clothes are made, and who they are made by, as it is to consider what happens to clothes after we are finished with them.

We can make sure we buy clothes from ethical brands by doing the research. One easy way to do this is to use the app 'good on you' to check companies' and brands' ratings

Ethical brand ratings. There's an app for that.

Wear the change you want to see. Download our app to discover ethical brands and see how your favourites measure up.

good on you®



Every new piece of clothing that is being produced drains resources and energy. That doesn't mean we can't ever buy new clothes, but it does mean that we should try to reduce the amount of unnecessary clothes that we buy on a whim.

What can you do?

- Do you need it?
- Try out your local charity shop
- Opt for eco friendly and biodegradable materials over synthetic when you can
- Do your research - Look for certification
- Choose quality
- Make it last



Invisible mend, using thread of the same fabric to darn a hole



Embroidery taking inspiration from the t-shirt's design to cover up a tear



Darning socks with bold colourful thread



Take inspiration from the clothing you are mending or upcycling



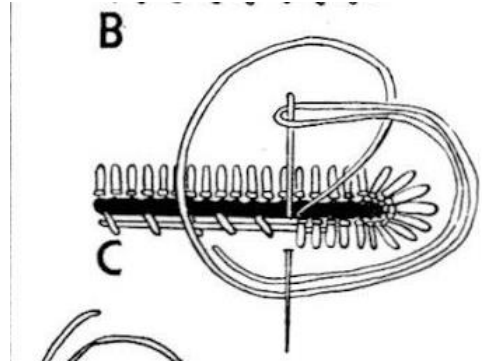
Use fabric the same thickness and material to stitch on as backing



'Draw' with thread, using simple stitching

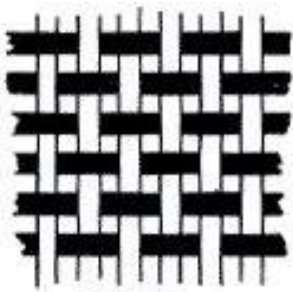


Button hole stitch – helpful to close in a jagged edge of fabric or used as decoration

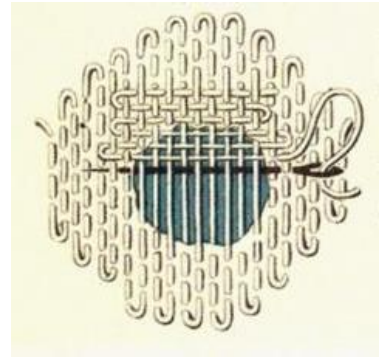
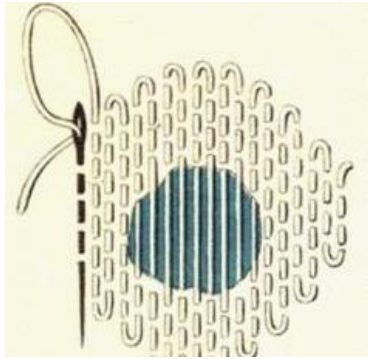


Mending techniques

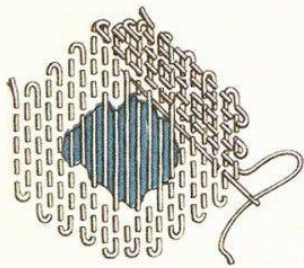
- Embroidery to cover up tears and holes
- Darning – plain weave (cotton, linen)



Plain Weave



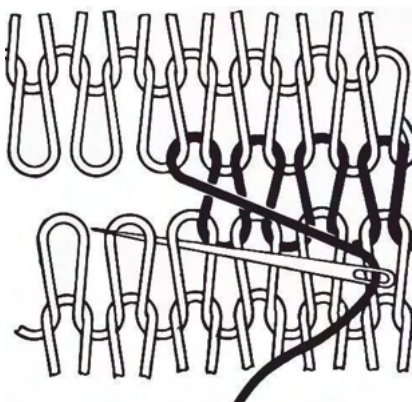
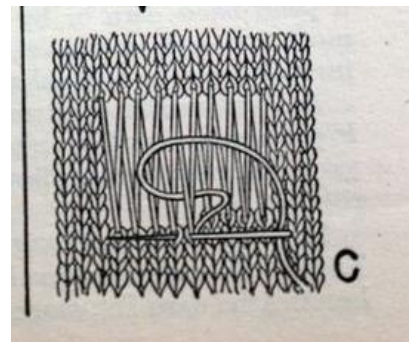
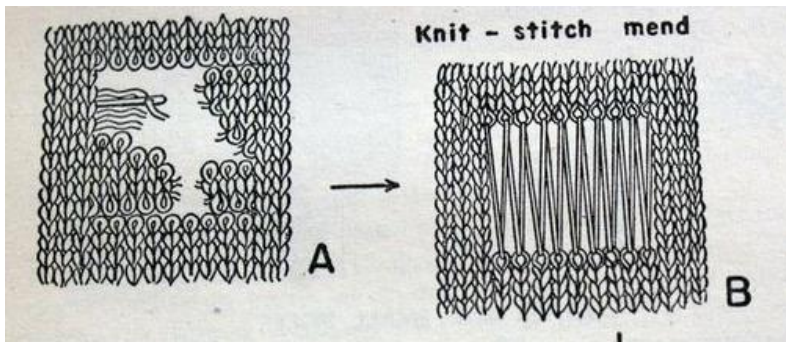
DARNING ON KNITTED FABRICS



The first stage in darning on knitted fabrics is the same as an ordinary darn, but the direction of the second set of stitches is diagonal.



- Darning for knitted fabrics: jumpers, socks, stretchy fabrics –knit-stitch mend



Clothing and textile care

- **Only wash if you have too**
- **Air or freeze clothes to rid them of bad smells**
- **De- bobbling or depile your knitted jumpers with a pilling comb**

Pilling comb:

https://www.woolovers.com/accessories/wool-wash-and-care/woolovers-pilling-comb-13656?gclid=Cj0KCQiAu62QBhC7ARIsALXijXRF1hB2BrF6ZeWNVFM3mwU_s9uF3w2VocnLSqWKlyeJ5dKM_mPMceMaArbREALw_wcB&gclsrc=aw.ds

sustainability statement:

<https://www.woolovers.com/microplastics>

- **Brushing**
Clothes brush

<https://www.ebay.co.uk/itm/403474620765?hash=item5df0f6215d:g:SZ8AAOSwbZRhm1QI&var=673467000014>

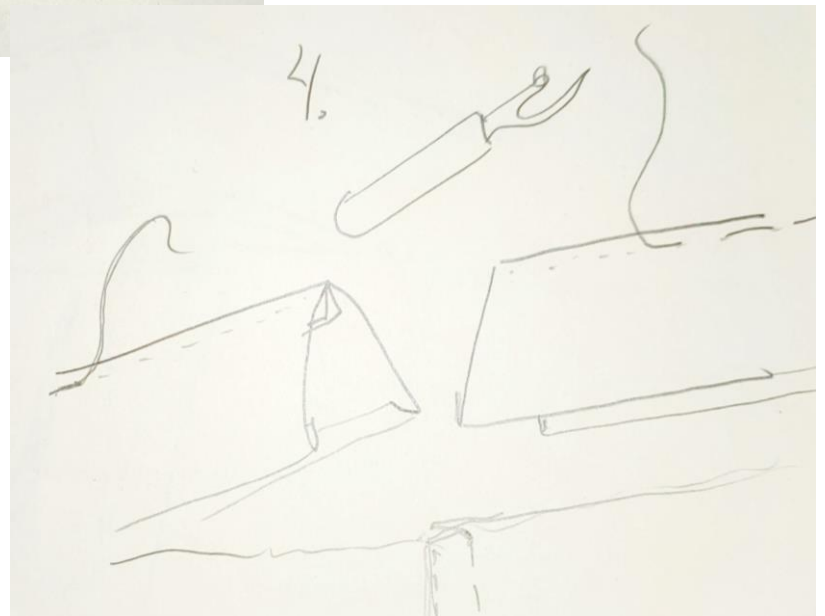
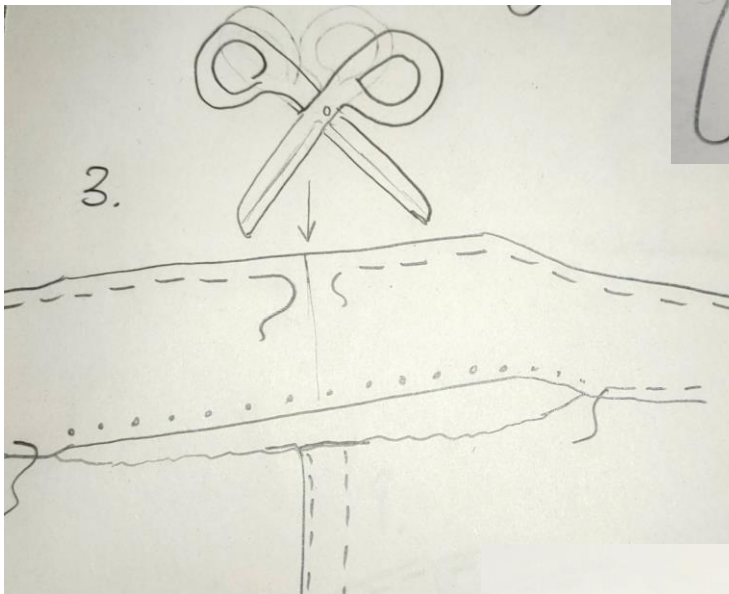
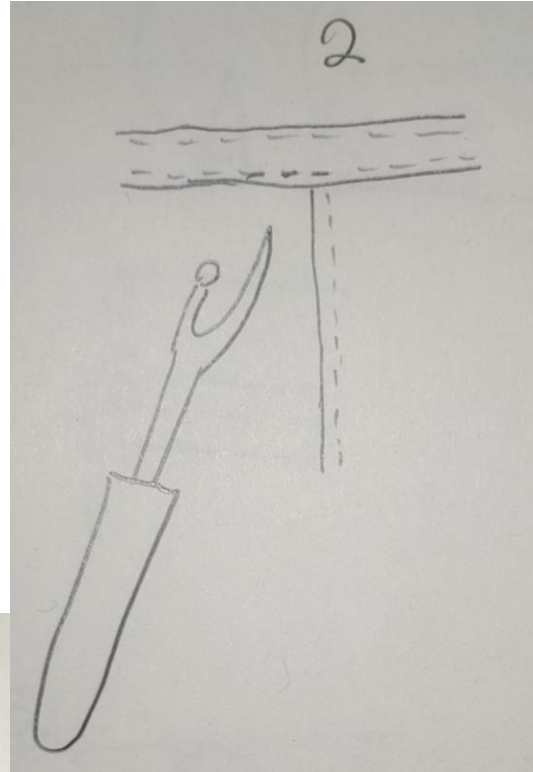
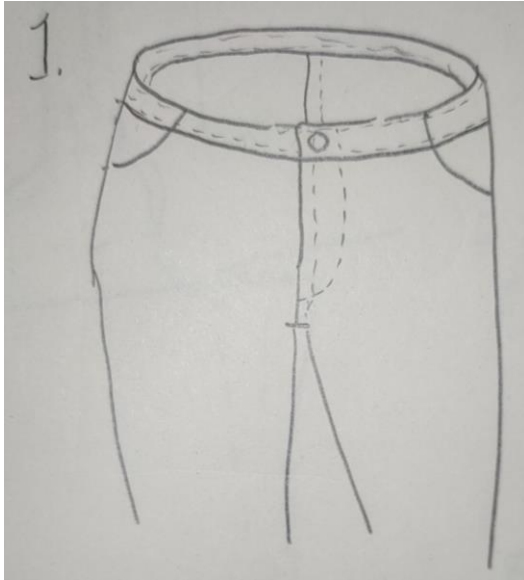
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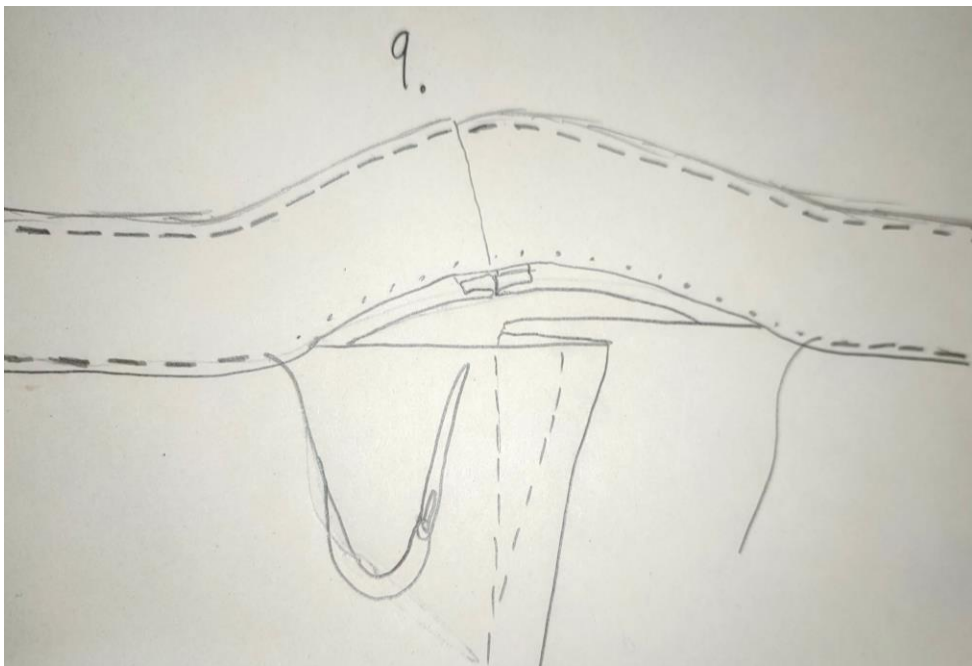
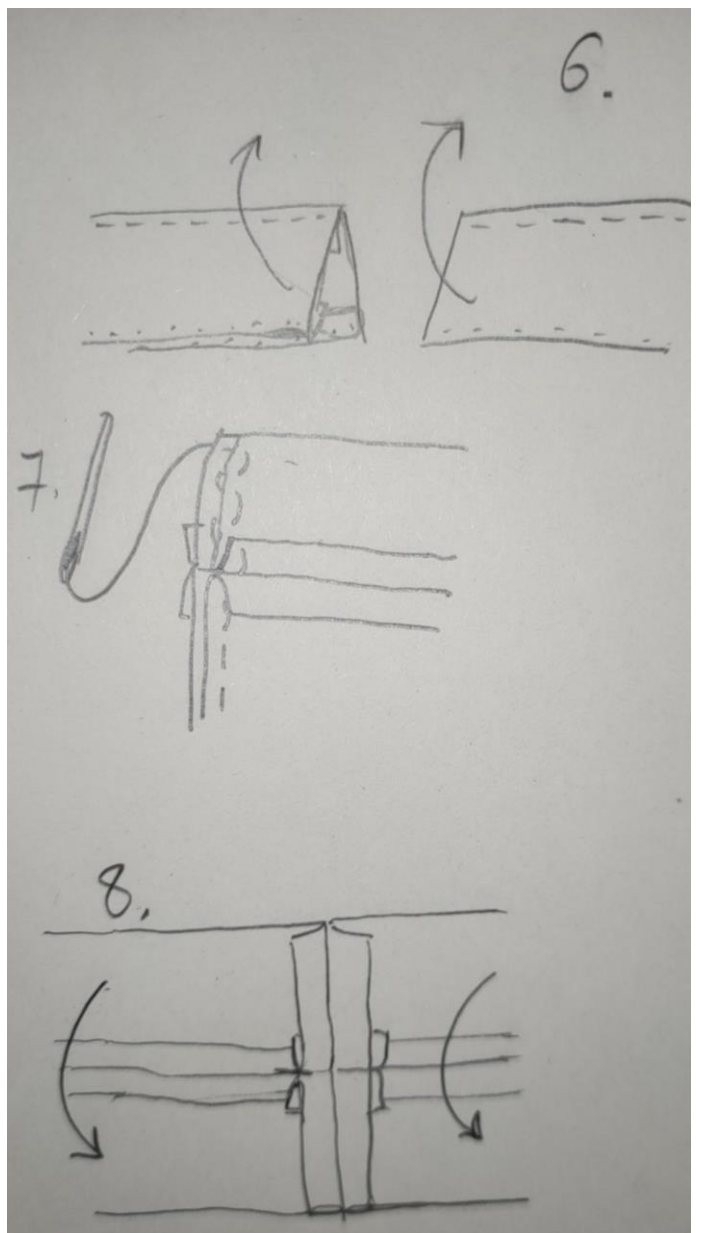
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- **Cedar wood in your wardrobe – keeps moths away**
- **Lavender oil – antibacterial and helps keep moths away, rose oil also helps**
- **Wash in lower temperatures to keep clothes lasting longer**
- **Let clothes hang dry instead of tumble drying, Tumble-drying shortens your clothes' lifespan.**



How to take in trousers at the waist





Questions for discussion:

- **Which of the techniques you have heard about do you think you could incorporate into your lifestyle?**
- **Is there something that you find is less accessible or achievable? Why is that? How does it clash with your lifestyle?**
- **What parts of your wardrobe or your family's wardrobe requires more frequent updates (underwear, shoes, t-shirts, school uniforms) and what parts of your wardrobe are more constant that you could invest in and care for to keep longer? (A pair of boots? A woollen winter coat? A good quality blazer? A pair of leather shoes that could be resoled and re-heeled at the cobblers?)**