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Machine Mending: Clothing Leaflet 5

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Clothing Specialist  

Machine mending is quick, easy and durable. Results are neat and satisfactory for many kinds of clothing and household articles. This circular on machine mending has been prepared as a general guide for common mending problems. There are no hard and fast mending rules. Work out mends of your own, keeping in mind that the main idea is to reproduce the original as nearly as possible.

Mending Pointers

Here are points to think about when you are deciding which darn or patch will be best for that place you have to mend:

**SHAPE** of the place to be mended. A bad snag naturally calls for a different type of mend than a slanting cut or a straight tear.

**MATERIAL** Does it have a nap or is it smooth? Is it light or heavy in weight? Is it washable or must it be dry-cleaned? Does it fray?

**SIZE** of the hole. Some mends are more successfully done on a small scale...others on large.

**WHERE** is the hole? Is it in a spot that will be strained constantly during use? Or is it in an out-of-the-way place? This makes a difference in how strong the mend must be.

Cut a patch on the **STRAIGHT OF GOODS**. Sew it on so the crosswise and lengthwise yarns in the patch match crosswise and lengthwise yarns in the material.

If the material has a design, match each detail perfectly. That helps hide the mend.

If you have something old and faded, try to get a matching patch...perhaps from the hem or facing of a dress...under a cushion or from the valance on a slip cover. Sometimes washing with a bleach will dull color slightly.

Always SHRINK new material before using it to patch anything that has been dry-cleaned or washed...or the patch may shrink and pucker.

**Lapped Patch** - A quick patch and 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. On 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.

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.

When patching heavily napped blankets - cotton or wool - shear some of the fuzz from both the underside of the blanket and the top of the patch where the two overlap, being careful not to clip the yarns of the cloth. This makes a smoother patch.

**Hemmed Patch** - made by hand or machine depending on kind of article being repaired.

Cut the worn parts away, following the threads of the cloth to make a square or rectangle. Cut the patch 1" to 2" larger on all sides. Place the patch under the hole, both right side up as in A to match grain and design.
On the right side clip the corners diagonally 1/4". Turn under raw edges 1/4". Pin and baste. Hem down by vertical hemming stitches if you wish the patch to be inconspicuous. On the wrong side clip across corners diagonally, turn under raw edge 1/4" around patch and hem by hand or machine as in B; or raw edge may be patch-stitched in place.

Inset Patch - also finished by either hand or machine stitching. A good mend for most silks, rayons and lightweight wools that will be dry-cleaned instead of washed. It shows less on these fabrics than hemmed or lapped patches.

Cut around the damaged place with the grain of the goods so that it forms a square or rectangle. Clip the corners as for a hemmed patch, turn the edges under evenly and exactly with the grain of the goods. Press, do not crease with your fingernail, because that stretches soft materials.

Place the patch piece under the hole matching grain and design. Then pin it in place so you can mark the exact size of the insect.

Check the exact size by pushing a pin through the patch at each corner, then turn under between pins, press, and trim off the extra material, leaving only a small seam allowance. More seam allowance is necessary for materials that fray. Check again to make sure that patch fits the hole exactly. Now the patch may be finished by hand or machine stitching.

Hand stitched - From the wrong side, overhand the patch into the hole with tiny stitches caught through the two folded edges (see illustration A). When the patch is done, press it flat with the seams open. Overcast the raw edges so they won't fray in cleaning (see illustration B).

Machine stitched - after matching the patch to the hole use long hemming stitches and contrasting thread to baste the patch in place. Let these stitches catch only in the edge of the fold. They serve as a guide for the inside stitching and will be pulled out later. Now turn to the wrong side and stitch by machine exactly on this line of hand stitching. Trim off extra material - clip off thick corners. Steam-press with the seams open.

Use the machine stitched method for lightweight wool and hide the seamline with a rantering stitch. Pinch the seam line on the right side between thumb and forefinger. Use matching thread and stitch back and forth over the seam as shown in illustration. Be careful to catch only one yarn on each side of the seam. Pull thread up close. Steam press and seam is hardly noticeable.

Turning The Collar On a Man's Shirt

Find the exact center of the collar and neckband by folding them in half, matching edge to edge and point to point. Mark center of each with pin. On wrong side of collar run a basting thread down the center. On inner side of neckband run a colored basting down the center.

Remove collar from top of neckband by ripping stitching carefully. A razor blade may be helpful but be careful not to cut the fabric. Pull out all thread ends.

Separate the unworn side and the inner lining enough to make it possible to quilt or darn together by machine the worn side and inner lining. This prevents any sagging or fraying ends when the collar is replaced and the stitching will not show on the top side. Press neckband (seams still turned in) and collar section well.
Insert reversed collar in neckband, matching centers carefully. Pin from center out, making same seam allowance as before. Do not stretch band or collar. Ease wherever necessary. Baste both sides of neckband to collar along old stitching line. Stitch by machine from inside around edge using a small stitch and stitching exactly on original line.

Cuffs may be turned in a similar way. Badly frayed edges of cuffs may be bound with bias binding or if the sleeve is long enough, rip the stitching turn in frayed edge and restitch.

Underarm sections of dresses and blouses that have become worn or stained can be patched as shown in the illustrations. Patch material for ready-mades may come from pockets, hems, covering on shoulder pads, bolero or other style details.

If necessary to patch the sleeve as well as the waist use a similar shield-shaped patch or a triangular gusset.

To make a panel patch, cut out the underarm section from the sleeve down to the waist. Using this as a pattern, cut, match, and seam in a new piece. Don't forget to allow the seam allowance twice on edges to be seamed to the waist.

Pulled-out seams When a seam pulls out, the garment usually is already too close-fitting to allow for deeper seams. On a tailored dress with outside stitching you can mend pulled-out seams with an outside-stitched seam. First, reseam the garment even though there is scarcely any seam. Then, on the underside of the seam, lay a piece of narrow matching tape. Stitch on the outside along both sides of the seam line, so the finished effect looks right with the rest of the dress.

If you have extra scraps of material, you sometimes can mend broken seams with small insets. Put the insets in to look as though they were part of the original dress design. Thus you can enlarge the garment at the same time you mend the seams.

Pleats sometimes pull out where they are stitched down. If the shirt is large enough it is possible to set the pleats over about 1/4" to cover the pulled part, then restitch the pleat. If there is not enough material for this, begin at the bottom of the pleat and rip out the stitching for two or three inches. Pin a piece of seam binding on the wrong side under the pulled part. Baste in place then restitch the pleat from the right side. An arrowhead tack may be used for extra strength at the ends of stitching on some pleats.

Machine Darning - This is a quick and satisfactory way to mend undergarments, night clothes, aprons, shirts, sheets, towels, table cloths. Be sure the tensions are correctly adjusted and your machine stitching evenly. Use fine white thread for white fabrics and fine mercerized thread of matching color for colored fabrics. Adjust the length of stitch to suit the weave of the cloth.

Use an embroidery hoop to hold securely the place to be mended and to make it possible to move the fabric back and forth under the needle. A darning attachment may be used, or the screw which controls the pressure on the pressure foot may be released so the fabric may be moved back and forth.

Be sure bobbin thread is up thru the needle hole, then pull both top and bobbin threads back and to the left. Begin stitching back and forth across the hole or worn place following the warp threads. Then put in the crosswise threads by turning and repeating the stitching in the opposite direction.

Stitching should extend several stitches beyond the edge of the place to be mended. A piece of thin or soft matching material may be used under the hole or worn place to give added strength.
Overall Patching- 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 1/2" 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" wider and longer then 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 1/2" 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.

Replacing Elastic Bands- Sometimes elastic bands pull away from the fabric along the waist of panties, pajamas. To restitch the elastic first lay the garment on a surface to which it may be pinned. Then stretch elastic and pin fabric and elastic together. Stitch on machine holding elastic stretched out with the fingers as you stitch.

If the entire elastic band needs to be replaced rip off old material. Cut a new piece about 1" less than waist measure. Seam the ends by over lapping. Divide in fourths and mark. Divide the waistline of garment in fourths, center front, back and sides, and mark with pins. Pin elastic to waistband at these points. Stretch elastic as you stitch to fabric.

Several illustrations in this circular were reproduced from "ABC's of Mending", Farmers' Bulletin 1925, U.S.D.A. The illustrations of overall patching were reproduced from "Repair of Civilian Clothing," H.D. 471, California Agricultural Extension Service.

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