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Let's Sew: Extension Circular 4-31-2 1961

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Let's Sew

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You have joined a 4-H club and chosen clothing as your project. What fun to use mother's sewing machine! It will be exciting to make something to wear. You will learn many things.

You may carry this project for one or more years. Your leader will help you decide what is best for you. Here is what you have to do:

1. Collect small sewing tools in a suitable box.
2. Learn to use a needle and a thimble.
3. Learn to use the sewing machine.
4. Make either A, B or C.
5. Complete your record book.

Here are other ideas for things you might like to do:

1. Make a felt needle book, wrist pincushion, doll clothes, wash cloth scuffs, or stuffed toys.
2. Make something for someone else.
Before you can begin to sew you will need some tools. Carpenters, farmers, artists, all have special tools for their work. You will need special tools for your sewing. We will tell you about some tools that will make sewing easier and neater.

SEWING BOX

First, you will need a sewing box or basket to hold all of your small tools. A good sewing box can be bought at the store or you may make one. You might use a box of wood, metal or strong cardboard. A doll suitcase could be just the thing you need. Partitions in the sewing box will help hold the tools in place.

CUTTING TOOLS

Scissors

Scissors are 3 to 6 inches long and have two ring handles the same size for thumb and finger. They are for clipping thread, ripping and general use.

Shears

Shears are longer than scissors and have a small ring handle for the thumb and a larger loop handle for several fingers. The best shears have blades that are screwed together instead of riveted. A pair of shears with bent handles makes it easier to cut fabrics as they lie flat on the table. These are sometimes called trimmers.

Your mother may have pinking shears that she will lend you if you need them. These are used for finishing seams, not for cutting out a pattern.

It would be nice for you to have both scissors and shears. Take good care of your cutting tools. Keep them sharp. Do not cut heavy string, paper, cardboard, etc. with them. Use them just for your sewing work.

A drop of sewing machine oil on the inside of the blades and the screws will improve the cutting edges of shears. Be sure to wipe them carefully before you cut your cloth. Be careful not to drop your shears.
MARKING AND MEASURING TOOLS

Tape Measure

A 60-inch tape measure will be most useful. Choose one that is made of good quality fabric (or plastic coated fabric) so it will not tear or stretch easily. Check to see that number one is at one end of the tape measure. Turn the tape over and be sure that number one is at the other end too.

Measuring Gauges

A 6-inch ruler or a small metal measure is a handy tool. You can find these in many stores.

Tailor’s Chalk

You will need something to make marks on the cloth. Tailor’s chalk is good for marking. It makes thin lines and will brush off easily. It comes in colors: red, white and blue.

Pencil

Keep a pencil in your sewing box. You will often find use for it.

SEWING TOOLS

Needles

The needle is a magic wand! With a needle you can change pieces of material into an apron, a dress, or a skirt. There are four kinds of needles:

1. Sharps - medium length, slender with round eyes.
2. Betweens - shorter length, used for fine hand work.
3. Crewels - long eyes, good for darning and embroidering.
4. Darning - longer and have larger eyes than crewels.

Needles come in sizes 1 to 10. Size 1 is very coarse. Size 10 is very fine. You often find them in packages of assorted sizes. Needles should match the thread you are using and kind of sewing you are doing. A number 7 in "sharps" will be a good size for your sewing.
Emery Bag

The emery bag is sometimes made to look like a strawberry. It is used to polish the needle. Push the needles back and forth through the emery bag to make them bright and shiny. Do not leave your needles in the emery bag as they make small holes in the covering and let the emery dust escape. Dampness may also cause the needles to rust if they are left in the emery bag.

Pins

Some day you will be able to make beautiful dresses, so buy pins that are labeled "dressmaker" or "silk" pins. They have sharp points and won't make large holes in the fabric.

Thimble

You will need a thimble to push the needle through the cloth. Be sure it fits your middle finger. Silver, nickel, brass or steel make good thimbles. At first the thimble will seem awkward on your finger. Can you remember when you were learning to write? It was hard to handle your pencil -- but you learned! It will be much easier to learn to use a thimble than to learn to write.

The story is told that the thimble was invented in Holland. They called it a "thumb bell," because it looked like a bell and was worn on the thumb. Finally they changed the name to "thimble" because it was shorter.

IRON AND IRONING BOARD

A good iron and a well-padded ironing board are very important for good sewing. Irons may be dry or steam. Your mother will help you set the temperature of the iron for the kind of cloth you are pressing. If you are using a dry iron, you will need a clean white cloth (such as muslin) to dampen the fabric you are pressing.

Some ironing boards can be raised and lowered. If you have this kind, your mother can lower it to fit your height when you are ready to press.
What fun! You're going to learn to use a sewing machine. First you should know the names of the parts of the machine you will use.

Your machine may not look exactly like the one shown here. Find the instruction book that came with your machine. Compare the picture of your machine with this illustration. Can you name the parts on your machine?

Find the place in your sewing machine instruction book that tells where to oil the machine. A machine should be oiled after 3 - 10 hours of use. If your machine has not been used for a week or more have your mother help you oil it before you begin to sew. Only one drop of oil is needed in each oil hole. Run the machine for a few seconds and the oil will work into the machine parts. Wipe off any oil that is left on the machine.

LEARNING TO RUN THE MACHINE

First, get seated in a chair at the machine. Be sure the height of the chair is right for you. Sit erect and well back in the chair so that you are comfortable. Have your mother remove the thread and needle and lift the presser foot.

Now, place both feet on the treadle, one a little ahead of the other. Turn the balance wheel in the proper direction (on some machines the balance wheel turns forward; on others backward).

Notice how the toe of your right foot goes down as the heel of the left foot goes up, and vice versa. Turn the wheel with your hand until you get the feel of the treadle motion in your feet, then practice treadling until you can keep the hand wheel going smoothly in the right direction. Run the machine slowly and smoothly. This takes skill. Now run it more rapidly. To stop the machine, slow your treadling and place your hand on the balance wheel.

You will do the same thing with an electric machine. Instead of learning to treadle, learn to use the knee or foot control. If you learn to run an electric machine slowly, you will be able to control it more easily.
Warning: Remember there is a lot of power in a machine!

Keep your foot or knee away from the control when your hands are near the needle. Keep your hands at a safe distance from the needle when you are stitching with either an electric or treadle machine. Now practice stitching on paper.

1. Put the needle in the machine as your instruction book tells you.

2. Lower the needle into the paper by turning the balance wheel.

3. Lower the presser foot.

4. Practice following the lines on tablet or note paper.

5. Place your hand on the balance wheel to slow the machine. Stop with the needle in its highest position. (The take-up lever will also be at its highest position.)

6. Now put a seam guide or piece of tape on the machine.

7. Try to keep the edge of the paper next to the seam guide as you stitch.

Can you control the machine and stitch straight? Then you are ready to stitch on cloth.

1. Thread the machine and put the bobbin in place.

2. Bring the bobbin thread through the needle hole. You can do this by taking the thread that comes from the needle in your left hand. With your right hand turn the balance wheel so that the needle goes down and comes back up. Gently pull the needle thread. You will see a loop in between the toes of the presser foot. This is the thread from the bobbin. Pull this thread upward.

3. Hold the bobbin and spool thread back and to the left of the presser foot when you begin to stitch. This will keep them from tangling.

4. Place two strips of fabric on the machine, with one edge on top of the other and next to the seam guide. This is the way you stitch a seam.
5. Lower the needle into the cloth; then lower the presser foot.

6. Guide the fabric under the presser foot with your hand. Do not pull the fabric at the back of the presser foot while stitching.

7. Stitch slowly and smoothly.

8. Place your hand on the balance wheel to stop the machine. Be sure the needle is at its highest point when you stop.

9. Lift the presser foot and gently pull the fabric back and to the left. Notice that the needle thread stays between the toes of the presser foot.

10. Clip the needle and bobbin threads with a scissors.

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Does your machine stitching look like this? [Image]
Then the machine tensions are balanced.

Does it look like this? [Image]
Then the upper tension is tighter than the lower.

Does it look like this? [Image]
Then the lower tension is tighter than the upper. Ask your mother to help you adjust the tension on the machine.

The presser foot is a good guide for stitching along folded edges. It can also be used in making even spaces between rows of stitching. Practice making rows of stitching using the presser foot as a guide. As you make each new row, let the edge of the presser foot ride along the last row of stitching. Practice until you are quite sure you know how to stitch and can stitch straight. Then you are ready to make something on the machine.

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Sew With Clean Hands

Let's look at your hands. Do they need some extra care? Try this:

1. Wash with soap and water and dry them carefully.

2. Brush the nails with a nail brush until they are clean.

3. Push back the nail cuticle until your finger nail "half moons" can be seen. This may be done with an orange stick or the thumb nail of the other hand and a soft towel.

4. Shape your nails to an oval with an emery board. Shape toward the center of the nail and keep them all the same length.

5. Keep your hands soft and smooth by using a good lotion. You will need to use a lotion more often in the winter. Put some on your elbows too.
THREADING A NEEDLE

1. Pull a piece of thread about the length of your arm (from finger tip to elbow) from your spool.

2. Cut it off diagonally with your scissors.

3. Hold the needle so you can see through the eye.

4. Slip the thread through the eye. Pull the thread down.

MAKING A KNOT

1. Hold the end that is cut from the spool between thumb and first finger of one hand.

2. Wrap the end of the thread around the first finger once.

3. Roll the thread from the finger, pushing with the thumb.

4. Release the first finger as the middle finger takes its place to hold the thread in position.

5. Pull on the long end of the thread with the other hand to tighten the knot.

USING A NEEDLE AND THIMBLE

1. Place the thimble on the middle finger of the hand that you use for sewing.

2. Hold the needle between thumb and forefinger so that the needle eye is near the thimble finger and the point is in the direction of your work.

3. Brace the needle against the side of the thimble, about in the position of the fingernail.
BASTING

Basting holds edges of fabric together for stitching, pressing or fitting. It is not always necessary to baste, but you will often save time and have more accurate stitching if you learn to baste carefully.

Sit so that you have good light on your work. Lay your material flat on a table in front of you. This will help keep the material from stretching as you work on it.

1. Put pins in the cloth at right angles to the edges.
2. Use a single thread of a contrasting color.
3. Baste beside the line where you will stitch.
4. Practice basting together two strips of cloth. When you begin fasten your thread by taking three or four small stitches at the end.

The Sewer's Pledge!

You have learned about sewing tools and the sewing machine. Are you ready to take the "Sewer's Pledge"?

SEWER'S PLEDGE

I pledge myself:

To sew with clean hands.

To wear a thimble when I do hand sewing.

To maintain good posture by sitting well back in a comfortable chair.

To keep my work on a table instead of in my lap.

To protect my eyes by sitting where good light comes over my left shoulder (left shoulder for right-handed people, and right shoulder for left-handed).

To keep my work neat and to put my scraps in a paper sack or waste basket.

To protect my teeth by using a scissors to cut thread instead of biting it.

To accept advice but to do all my work myself.

I pledge myself to do these things because I wish to become a skillful sewer.
**2 things to make for your Sewing Box....**

**NEEDLE BOOK**

There are many patterns for needle books or needle cases. Make the one for your needles that you like the best.

Here is one that is easy to make.

**You Will Need**

1. Felt or wool that does not ravel.

**How to Make the Needle Book**

1. Cut three rectangles from the felt or wool. Sizes 5 1/2 by 3 1/2 inches -- 4 1/2 by 3 inches -- 4 by 2 1/2 inches.

2. Pink the edges with a pinking shears.

3. Stitch the rectangles at the center or tie them together like a booklet.

**PINCUSHION**

A pincushion will help you keep your pins where you need them. A good pincushion is one that you can stick pins into easily. You should also be able to see the pins easily. Would you like to have a wrist pincushion like many experienced sewers use?

**You Will Need**

1. A 4 1/2 inch square of a plain, dark colored, closely woven wool or velveteen fabric.

2. Wool, hair, yarn or tiny wool scraps for stuffing.

3. Elastic 1/4 or 3/8 inches wide, and long enough to go around your wrist.

**How to Make Pincushion**

1. Cut a piece of fabric 4 1/2 inches square.

2. Fold the cloth in a triangle with right sides together. Pin.

3. Stitch 1/2 inch from the edge, leaving a 1 1/2 inch opening on the side.

4. Turn right side out. Pull out the points.

5. Stuff tightly so it will stand up in a peak.


7. Sew one end of the elastic firmly to the cushion. Make the elastic fit the wrist smoothly. Sew the other end of elastic in place.
A Kitchen Outfit!

Sometime you will want to enroll in a 4-H foods or home living project. Wouldn't it be nice to have an outfit to wear as you work in the kitchen or clean your room? You can easily make one since you have learned to use the sewing machine. For your work in the kitchen you will need an apron to protect your dress. A pot holder will be handy when you take pans of golden brown cookies from the oven. A hand towel will be useful for drying your hands at the kitchen sink.

YOUR KITCHEN HAND TOWEL

For your kitchen hand towel choose a fabric that is absorbent, washable, durable and will crease for a hem. Linen crash or huck toweling may be used. There may be other suitable kinds of toweling in your stores. Do not choose turkish toweling (terry cloth) because it is hard to hem.

Look closely at the fabric. Notice how it is woven.

It has a selvedge or "self edge" on two sides so it does not ravel. Look at the ends. Was the piece of material torn from the bolt? If it was, then it is straight. If it does not have torn ends, pull out one of the crosswise threads. This will be straight. Cut along this line.

Sometimes material is stretched when it is rolled on the bolt. Lay your piece of material on a table with one selvedge exactly on the edge of the table. Does the torn end of your piece of material lay square with the other side of the table? If it is not straight, you may be able to straighten the material by pulling it or by dipping the piece of material in water and smoothing it out to dry. Press the material. A smooth material is much easier to sew.

You Will Need

1. Toweling 27 to 36 inches long.
2. Thread No. 50 will be about right.
How to Make the Towel

1. First set your measuring gauge at 1/4 inch or make a gauge out of cardboard.

2. Use this gauge to measure a 1/4 inch turn on each end of the towel. Press with an iron.

3. Make a second turn 1/2 to 1 inch wide, depending on the size of the towel. Crease this with an iron or with your finger.

4. Place pins at right angles to the edge of your hem.

5. Baste the hem in place.

6. Stitch near the edge of the hem; turn the corner to close the ends.

7. Stitching threads should be-fastened securely. The top thread may be pulled to the wrong side. Then both threads may be tied and the ends clipped.

When the towel is finished, press it carefully. Fold it in thirds lengthwise, then crosswise through the center. If the towel is soiled, wash and iron it before you use it.

YOUR KITCHEN APRON

Choosing Fabric for an Apron

Choose a fabric that is:

1. Heavy enough to protect your dress.

2. Easily laundered and pressed.

3. Colorfast.

4. Printed straight with the fabric grain and has a small design (if a print is chosen).

5. Becoming to you and will look nice when worn over your dresses.

A cotton material will probably be the best. The names of some materials that make nice aprons are: percale, broadcloth, gingham, chambray.

Aprons look prettier when they are shorter than the dress. Have someone measure from your waist to the place on your skirt where you want the apron to end.
The apron will fit better if it is not more than 36 inches wide.

The apron with pockets will be nice to wear when you clean your room because you can carry a dust cloth and other things in the pockets.

When you plan this outfit choose colors that go well together.

What You Will Need to Make a Flat Apron

   - Length of apron skirt ___ inches
   - Plus heading ___ inches
   - Plus hem ___ inches
   - Total ___ inches
   (If you want pockets add 4 inches more)

2. Matching thread No. 50 or No. 60.

3. Apron clamp if you do not wish to make drawstrings.

4. Hem top of apron. Width of finished hem 1 1/2 to 1 3/4 inches.

5. Make another row of stitching about 1/4 to 1/2 inch from top of apron to form a heading.


How to Make Apron With Pockets

1. Straighten the fabric.

2. Measure and cut off the ties (unless you are using a clamp).

3. If there is no difference on the right and wrong side of the fabric, such as chambray or gingham, measure 7 inches for pockets. Turn it up on the right side. If there is a difference, such as printed percale, cut off 7 inches. (3" + 4" on lay-out)

4. Hem the top of the pocket - finished hem about 1 inch.

5. Place wrong side of pocket and wrong side of apron together at bottom. Stitch to make a seam. Press pocket upward.


7. Hem sides, including the edge of the pocket in the hem.

8. Finish top of apron like the one without pockets. (See No. 4 and No. 5)

How to Make Apron Without Pockets

1. Straighten the fabric (just as you did for your towel).

2. Measure and cut off the drawstrings (unless you are using a clamp).

3. Hem the sides. Do this the same way that you hemmed your towel. Measure - press - measure second turn - press - pin - baste - stitch (12 to 14 stitches per inch). Width of finished hem 1/4 to 1/2 inch.
How to Make Drawstrings or Ties

1. Seam the two strips together.
2. Press the seam open.
3. Fold the two pieces together with the right side of the fabric turned inward.
4. Stitch about 1/4 inch from the edge as shown. At corners (A) take one machine stitch across the point instead of making a sharp turn with the machine. Leave an opening as shown (B) so the drawstring belt can be turned.
5. Trim the material at the corners as shown (C).
6. Turn the belt right side out.
7. Turn the edges of the opening to the inside and baste.
8. Press the belt for a more finished look.
9. Stitch with the machine 1/16 to 1/8 inch from the edge around all sides of the belt.
10. Use a large safety pin to run the drawstring in apron heading.
11. Stitch drawstring in place at center of apron to keep it from pulling out.
12. Press your apron carefully with the grain of the material. It may be necessary to use moisture to press it well.

PEASANT APRON

You might enjoy making an apron that is more difficult. Why not make a peasant style apron? You might like to add some trim such as rick-rack or bias tape or to combine a print fabric with a plain colored one.

You Will Need

   Length of apron skirt ______ inches
   Plus fabric for hem ______ inches
   Plus fabric for two ties ______ inches
   Total ______ inches
   (If fabric is 42 to 45 inches wide buy only the length of apron skirt plus 3 inches for a hem)

2. Matching thread. (Trim such as rick-rack, bias tape, contrasting materials if you wish)

How to Make the Apron

1. Measure and cut the pieces for your apron as shown in the diagram.
   a. Make the hems on the side 1/4 to 1/2 inch wide.
   b. Make the hem on the bottom of the apron about 3 inches wide.
3. Make two rows of gathering stitches at the top in this way:
   a. Lengthen machine stitch to 6 to 8 stitches per inch.
b. Make one line of stitching about 1/2 inch from the edge.
c. Make the second line the width of the narrow toe of the presser foot or about 1/8 inch from the other row.

4. Fold the top of the apron to find the center. Mark with a pin. Fold again and place pins to mark each fourth.

5. Divide the waist band into fourths in the same way after allowing 1/2 inch at either end.

6. Join the waist band to the apron skirt.
   a. Pin right side of waist band and wrong side of apron skirt together matching center and fourths.
   b. Gently pull the two bottom threads (bobbin threads) to gather the fabric until the top of the skirt is the same size as the waistband.
   c. Baste carefully between the two rows of machine gathering.
   d. Machine stitch (12 to 14 stitches per inch) on the bottom row of gathers.
   e. Press waistband upward from skirt.

7. Press 1/4 to 1/2 inch turn on the other side of the band and turn the ends so they are even with the sides.

8. Hem ties and sew to apron skirt in this way:
   a. Stitch 1/4 to 1/2 inch hems on apron ties.
   b. Gather end that is not hemmed.
   c. Place gathered end of ties on waistband and pin in place.
   d. Fold waistband over ends of ties and skirt gathers.
   e. Pin carefully and baste. Press.
   f. Machine stitch near the edge of the four sides of the waistband.
How to Make Pockets for the Peasant Apron

1. A piece of fabric 5 by 7 inches is a good size for each pocket. Round the two bottom corners of each pocket.

2. Turn 1/4 to 1/2 inch at top of pocket to wrong side and stitch.

3. Then fold the top of pocket about 1 inch to the right side. Pin.

4. Stitch across this fold down the side, across the bottom and up the other side. Stitch about 5/8 inch from the edge and lengthen machine stitch around the curves.

5. Trim seams at the corners of fold and cut out some notches on the curved part as shown.

6. Turn the pocket top to the right side and turn back along the machine stitching. Slip a pin under the machine stitching at the curves and lift the threads to make it gather slightly as you turn it under.

7. Press

8. Stitch pocket top in place or stitch trim on it.

9. Have someone help you pin the pockets at the proper place on your apron.


11. Top stitch and reinforce the corner as shown.

12. Bring both machine threads to the wrong side and tie.

POT HOLDER

You Will Need

1. Fabric (like your apron or one that matches) for a cover. 7 inches by 13 inches is a nice size, but you may make it larger or smaller if you wish.

2. Flannel or a piece of an old blanket for padding. One or two thicknesses one inch smaller in both length and width than the cover.

3. A plastic ring, if you don't want to make a loop.
How to Make the Holder

1. Pin the layers of padding and the cover together, keeping them as smooth as possible. Baste.

2. Turn the corner of the cover over the padding. Fold the cover over the edges to make a mitered corner as shown. Press.

3. Make a loop for your holder in this way:
   a. Cut a strip of fabric 1 1/2 inches wide and 3 inches long. Fold the edges together and stitch 1/4 inch from the edge (as you did with the apron drawstrings).
   b. Turn to the right side and press.
   c. Stitch close to the edge on both sides.

4. Fold the loop as shown and baste to the center of one side of your holder.

5. Fold the pot holder together across the center so that all edges meet evenly. Pin, then baste together.

6. Press. Machine stitch 1/8 and 1/4 inch from the edge. Be sure to catch both sides in the stitching. You will probably need to set your machine for a longer stitch.

7. Stitch a design on your hot pad. Tie your threads each time you stop stitching.

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The Quick-Trick Skirt

Would you like to make a skirt for yourself - one that you can make in a very short time?

Why not make a head scarf to go with your skirt? Or a tie? Or a belt?

We will tell you how to make the skirt. Choose your own pattern for the other articles.
What You Will Need for the Skirt

1. Fabric - similar to apron fabric. Measure the length of your skirt from waistline to the bottom of the hem.

   **Length of skirt _____ inches**

   Plus about _____ inches for hems. Multiply this by 2 (for front and back) to find the number of inches you will need.

   Divide this number by 36 to find the number of yards.

   You will need more fabric if you are planning to make a head scarf or a tie.

2. Elastic 1/2 to 1 inch in width.

   **Measure around your waist.**

   **Waist measure _____ inches**

   Plus _____ inch for a lap

   **Equals _____ inches of elastic you will need.**


How to Make Your Quick-Trick Skirt

1. Cut or tear your piece of fabric into two equal pieces.

2. Stitch the two pieces together with a 5/8 inch seam on each side.

3. Snip the selvedge every 3 or 4 inches (some fabrics may not need this).

4. Press the seams open. The seams will form the sides of your skirt.

5. Fold and mark center front and back.

6. The width of the hem at the top of the skirt will depend on the width of elastic. Your mother will help you measure this. Leave an opening of 1 to 2 inches in the hem. You may like to stitch about 1/4 inch from the top to make a heading like you did on the apron. **A**

7. Draw the elastic through the casing with a safety pin. **B**

8. Lap the ends of the elastic and sew the two together with an overhand stitch. **C**


10. Put skirt on and check length.

11. Hem the bottom of the skirt like you did your apron.

12. Distribute the fullness evenly at the top of the skirt. Put a pin through the elastic at each side seam and at center front and back. Stitch through the elastic at these points to keep it in place. **D**

13. You will need belt loops if you want to wear a purchased belt with this skirt. **E**

   Make the belt loop like the loop for the holder (see step 3 under Pot Holder).

   You may need 2 or 4 loops to keep your belt in place.

   Your leader will help you decide how many loops you will need, how long to make them, and how to fasten them for your particular skirt.
You have lovely, clean hands. Are they also useful hands?

Use them to make a gift for or to help someone else. When you give a gift that you have made, you give more than a gift. You give your time, your skill and most of all your thoughtfulness in planning something for another person. Here are some ideas:

You could help mother by:

- Hemming hand towels or dish towels.
- Making an apron for her.
- Stitching some of the seams on clothes that she is making.

A gift for grandmother:

- She would be proud to have pot holders or an apron that her granddaughter had made.

Something for smaller boys and girls such as:

- Bean bags
- Stuffed toys

And just for fun:

- Make some other things for yourself, such as wash cloth slippers or mittens.

Write about the things you made in your record book.