

1971

EC71-478 Restyling Sweater Knits

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Restyling

sweater knits



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Restyling sweater knits

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Many women and girls question their ability to recut a knit garment into new styles because they are afraid the knit will be difficult to handle. But even knits with a tendency to ravel or stretch can be recut if a few extra care procedures are taken during cutting and reassembling. Before dismantling the garment be sure the knit is washed or dry cleaned, depending upon the fiber.

Rip Carefully

Carefully pull out or cut one stitch at a time in the seams to prevent stretching or raveling.

You may need some machine or hand stitching around the edges of the ripped apart pieces when working with a loose, stretchy knit or a hand knit (Fig. 1). If you are unsure of how much the piece might stretch or run, follow these steps once the garment is ripped apart:

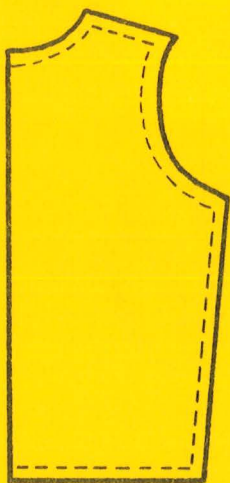


Fig. 1

Use 8-10 stitches per inch for machine stitching or a close running stitch by hand. Gently steam press the pieces from the wrong side with the iron set at the temperature suitable for the fiber.

If the knit has a lengthwise or crosswise rib, it helps to run a long basting stitch in a contrasting color along one rib in each piece to establish the grainline. The pattern grainline can be aligned with the fabric basting line.

A sweater need not always be completely dismantled to be restyled. The underarm, sleeve and body seams need to be ripped. But if the garment will lay flat for a pattern to be laid on it, no further dismantling is needed (Fig. 2). Other garments usually are too bulky to work with unless they are completely dismantled.

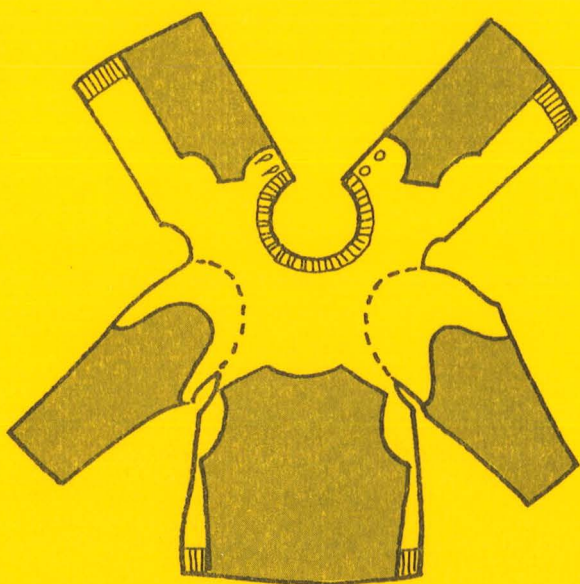


Fig. 2

Pin the pattern pieces on each section. Mark darts or other necessary construction marks with tailor tacks. Before removing the pattern, stitch on the knit around the outside of the paper pattern, to prevent runs and stretching as you work on the new garment (Fig. 3).

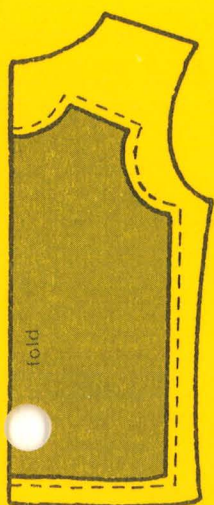


Fig. 3

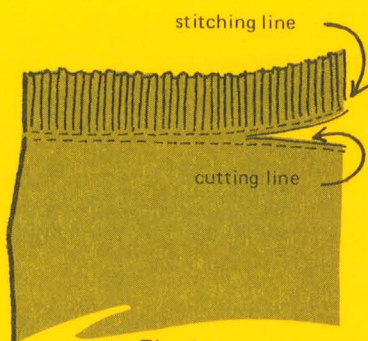


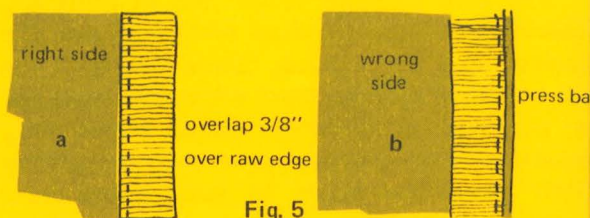
Fig. 4

Threads made especially for stretch fabrics will be the most satisfactory for knits, although any thread that matches is fine. A loosened zig-zag stitch or a straight stitch may be used. Remember that you may have added $\frac{1}{8}$ inch to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch to the seam allowance as you stitched around the pattern piece. Increase your usual $\frac{5}{8}$ inch seam allowance by this amount.

Cut out the garment pieces just outside the stitching line and assemble the new garment by usual sewing methods. Seams are made in the sweater knits just as in woven fabrics. Use a slightly looser tension and a longer machine stitch for the knits.

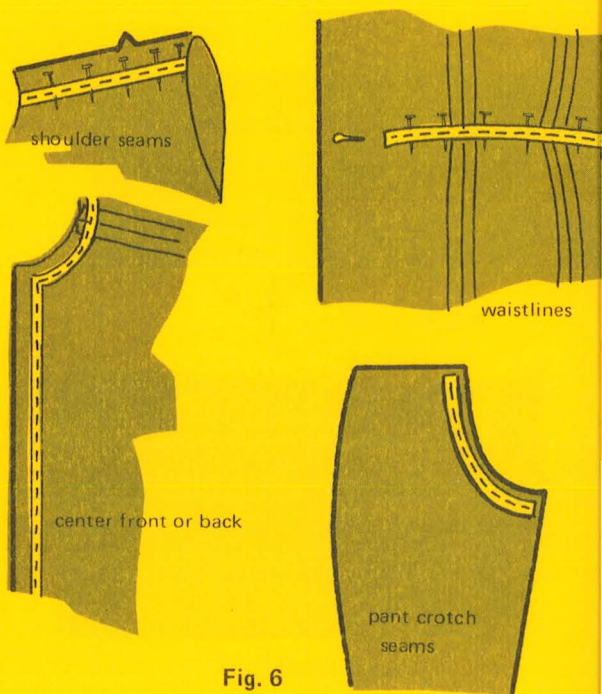
Use ribbing at the neck, wrist and hem edges of garments by laying out the pattern to take advantage of it (Fig. 2). Use center front or back openings by laying out the pattern along the opening.

Ribbing can be cut from a garment without cutting by stitching along the edge where it joins the garment, cutting outside this stitching line, then sewing it back to the new garment (Fig. 4). Run several rows of elastic thread through the ribs by hand if you need to shape them to the new garment.



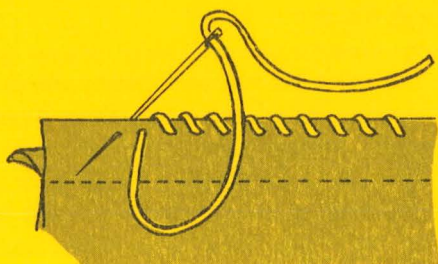
To make an opening with buttons, lay grosgrain ribbon about $\frac{3}{8}$ inch over the raw edge on the right side of the fabric. Stitch close to the edge of the ribbon (Fig. 5a). Press the ribbon to the wrong side (Fig. 5b). It will serve both as a backing for the new buttonholes and as an edge finish.

Long underarm and body seams need to give as the garment moves. Gently stretch these seams as you stitch them together. Areas such as shoulder seams, waistlines, necklines and center front or back should not give or stretch in the finished garment. Narrow twill tape or matching seam tape may be stitched into these seams to keep them permanently firm (Fig. 6).

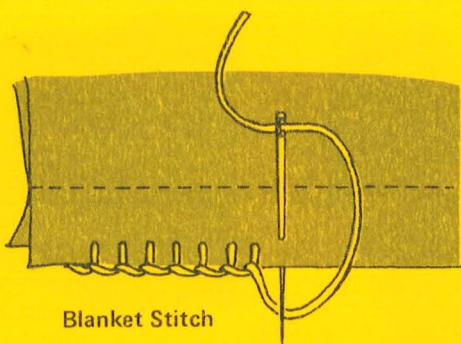


The kind of seam finish used in knits will depend upon your personal preference and the garment you are making. Some sweater knits will not ravel and the seam allowance need not be trimmed or finished. Other seams may require a hand overcast or a machine zig-zag stitch along the edges to keep them from raveling. Often the machine stitch used to outline the pattern pieces before the garment was cut out will serve as a seam finish (Fig. 7). If you prefer a narrow seam allowance, trim edges near the seamline and overcast or zig-zag the two raw edges together.

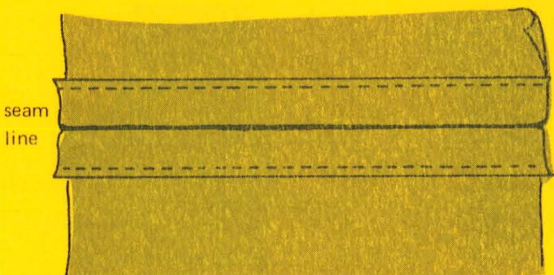
Fig. 7



Overcast Stitch

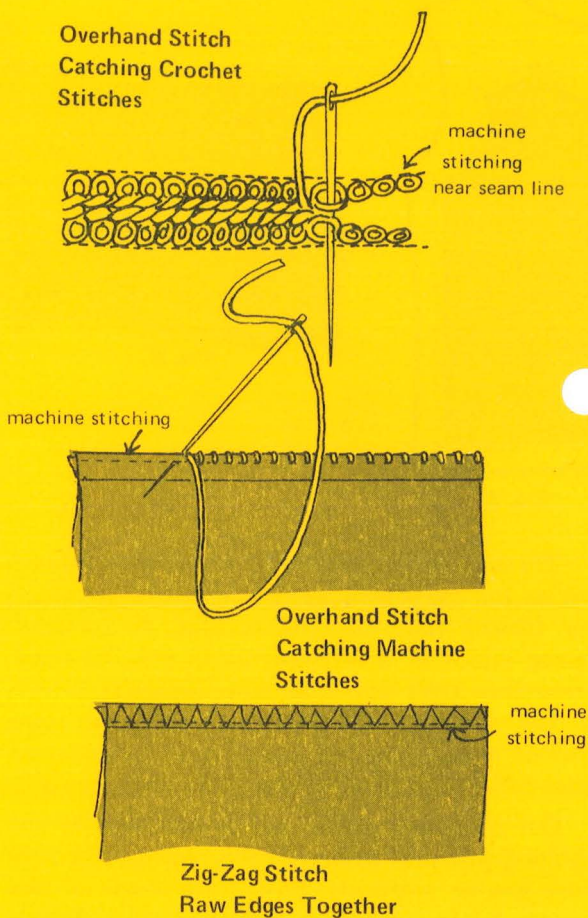


Blanket Stitch



Machine Stitch

Fig. 8



Heavy or loose sweater knits usually need a narrow seam allowance to reduce bulk. An extra line of stitching can be made near the seam line, and the seam allowance trimmed off outside this line. A single row of crochet stitches may be made down the length of each seam and then an overhand stitch taken to join the edges. Another means of finishing this seam is to use an overhand stitch down the length of the seams, catching a stitch of the machine stitching as each overhand stitch is taken. A third way to join the edges is to zig-zag the two raw edges together by machine (Fig. 8).