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EC71-484 Exalted Notions

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EC 71-484

NOTIONS



EXTENSION SERVICE
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE COOPERATING WITH THE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND THE COLLEGE OF HOME ECONOMICS.
E. F. FROLIK, DEAN; J. L. ADAMS, DIRECTOR

EXALTED NOTIONS

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Both the woman who enjoys creating her own clothing and the woman who would rather purchase her garments know that "it is the little things that count." The glint of a snap in the wrong place, a button that does not seem to suit a dress, or a scarf that slides out of place will detract from the pleasing lines of an outfit.

The notions counter can come to the rescue. It is a treasure trove of little things that can be made to count.

BUTTONS

A button can be defined as a small knob or disk secured to an article and used as a fastener by passing it through a buttonhole or loop¹. However, we expect much more of a button than just to hold our clothes together. We want buttons that are attractive, suitable in size and texture to the garment and matching or blending in color. In short, we want both beautiful and functional buttons.

Problems encountered in finding the right button for a certain garment increase as the color range, fabric blends and textures offered to us increase. Often the solution to finding the right button is to let our imaginations roam and create our own buttons.

Covered Buttons

Various kinds of buttons that can be covered at home are easy to find, and the button is simple to make if directions on the package are followed. The difficult part is transforming a plain covered button into an unusual and distinctive item that enhances the garment. Start with the suggested ideas, then let your creativity take over (Fig. 1). In some cases the hand touch may have to be added to the fabric before the button is made.

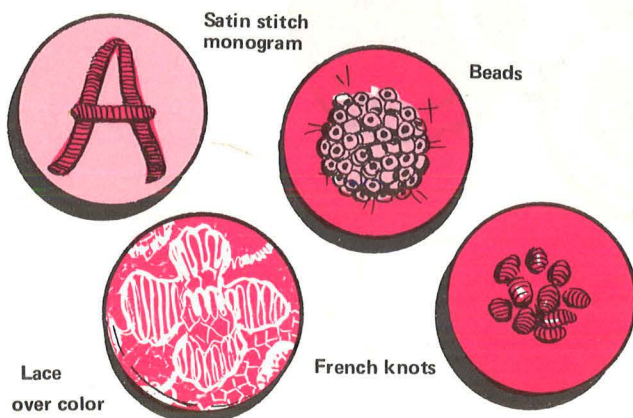


Figure 1. Covered buttons.

¹Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary. Springfield, Mass. G. & C. Merriam Co., 1969.

Ring Buttons

The ring used may be of bone, metal or plastic. Plastic rings, used for shade pulls or tiebacks, can be bought with several in a package. Size selected should be the size you want the finished button to be.

Any fabric may be used. You may want matching fabric, contrasting fabric, even leather or fur. Cut a circle of fabric twice the diameter of the ring. Using a single or double thread, take a gathering stitch by hand around the circle about 1/4 in. from the edge (Fig. 2).

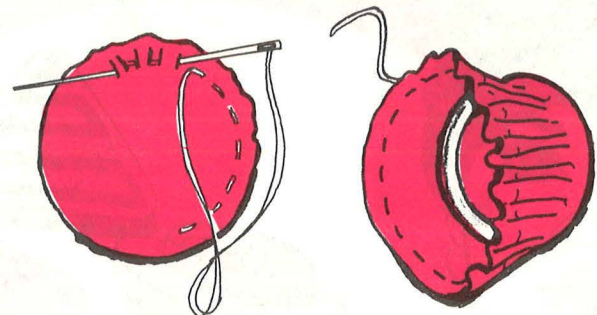
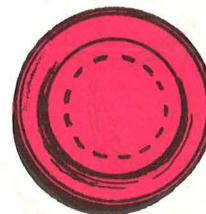


Figure 2. Ring buttons.

Place the ring on the wrong side of the fabric and tightly draw up the gathering string. A shank will be formed in lightweight fabrics. Wind the thread several times around the shank before fastening. Heavier fabrics do not easily form a shank. In this case fold the gathered edges neatly and fasten securely. Take several stitches back and forth in all directions through the shank or the back of the button to strengthen it.

Individual touches are now added to the ring button. A pick stitch taken just inside the ring defines the outer rim of the button. Embroidery floss or buttonhole twist in matching or contrasting colors will add interest (Fig. 3).

Ring inside ring



Pick stitch

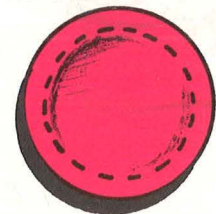
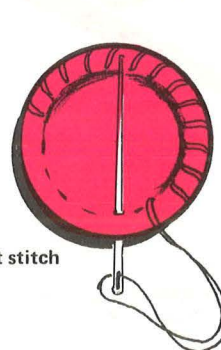
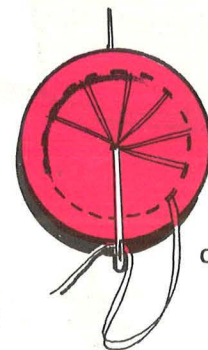


Figure 3. Ring buttons.

Overcast stitch



Cartwheel



To cover the back of the button, measure the inner diameter of the ring and add 1/4 to 3/8 in. Cut a circle of fabric. A lighter weight fabric may be used on the back of the button as long as the color matches. Take a gathering stitch 1/4 in. from the edge of the circle. Draw up the thread, turn the edges under and slip-stitch to the underside of the button (Fig. 4).

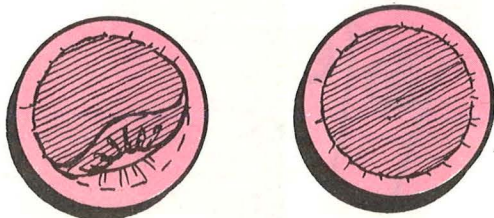


Figure 4. Back of ring button.

Button on a Button

The family button box is often an untapped source of unusual buttons. Try combinations of small buttons used with large buttons. The buttons may be the same color and match the garment. One button may match the garment and the other might circle it with a clear or metal button to increase its size and importance. Innumerable combinations can be made. A bit of experimentation may produce that unique button the garment needs (Fig. 5). The only precaution is to be sure the holes of the buttons correspond, as they will both be sewed on the garment at the same time.

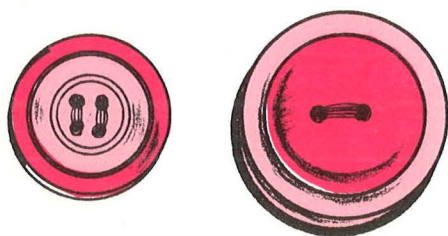


Figure 5. Button on button.

SCARF OR ASCOT TACKS

The popularity of scarves, ascots and large ties has brought about the need for a pin or tack to hold them in place. Finding the right tack, compatible with the garment in color and style, sometimes presents a problem. Creating your own can be enjoyable and creative.

An old tie or lapel tack discarded by a male member of the family can be used. Another possibility is the collar tack purchased at notion counters. Either one will serve as a base for as simple or as ornate a tack as you want. Be sure the base is clean and flat. Use transparent glue to hold your decoration on the base.

Search in your old jewelry, button box or trip mementoes. Try a seashell, an old earring or an old-fashioned button. A fabric circle could be beaded or embroidered as for a ring button and used to cover the base.

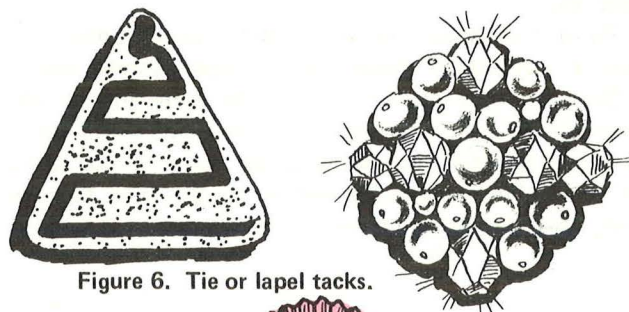


Figure 6. Tie or lapel tacks.



SNAPS

Covered Snaps

Heavy snaps are occasionally needed as garment fastenings, along with buttons, to hold a coat neckline or facing in its proper position. Sometimes snaps are substituted when buttons would detract from the garment design. Snaps are also used in place of zippers or hooks and eyes.

A covered snap blends into the background of the garment and becomes both functional and decorative. A size 3 or 4 snap is the usual size for the covered snap. Lightweight, matching fabric is necessary. If underlining or lining has been used in the garment, their weight would be ideal.

Cut two circles twice the diameter of the snap. Run a row of gathering stitches around the edge of each circle (Fig. 6). If the fabric is firmly woven, use a sharp point to make an opening in the center of one circle for the ball half of the snap to go through. No opening need be made for the socket half.

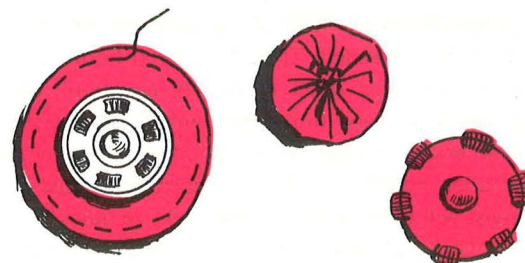


Figure 7. Covered snaps.

Place each half face down on the wrong side of the fabric circle. Poke the ball through the opening made for it. The fabric should fit snugly around the ball. Pull the thread up tightly to enclose each half and fasten securely on the underside.

Position the snaps and sew on in the usual manner. Try using a buttonhole stitch and a single thread for a neat-looking, but strong, stitch. Be sure the needle penetrates the regular sewing holes in the snap and not just the fabric. Snapping the ball into the socket several times will provide the needed depression for the snap to hold firmly when the garment is worn.

Swinging Snaps

Swinging snaps, sometimes called hanging, floating or extended snaps, give a neat closure in areas where two edges meet and where there is little strain. The snap is sometimes used on a collar opening at center front or back in place of a hook and eye.

Any size snap can be used. Sew one of the halves, usually the socket, on the edge of the underlap (Fig. 7a). Take several stitches through one or two of the holes. Position the other half in place and sew it in place in the usual manner.

The snap can be extended by means of chain or French tack for use as a lingerie snap, scarf holder or holding the lower edge of a vent in a dress or vest (Fig. 7b). Sew the socket half in place. Fasten the thread securely through one hole of the ball half. Make the tack the desired length and fasten to the wrong side of the fabric on the other edge.

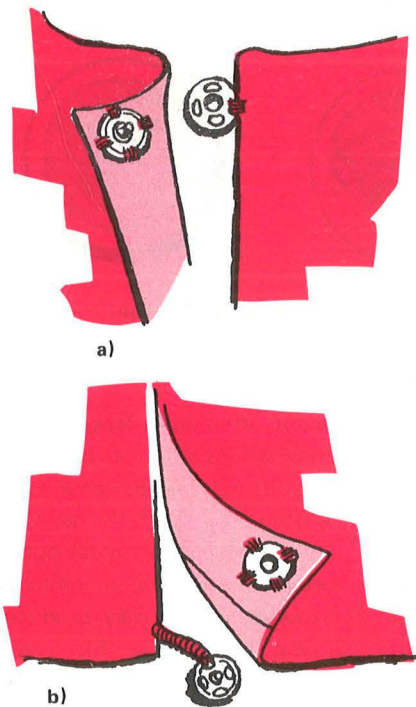


Figure 8. Swinging snaps.

COVERED HOOKS AND EYES

Sometimes a sturdy fastener is needed and a hook and eye best serves the purpose. The glint of the metal may detract from the look of the garment, and an inconspicuous covering is needed. Though covered hooks and eyes may be purchased and dyed to match, any hook and eye can be covered to blend into a garment. A double strand of silk or mercerized thread in a matching color works well with smaller hooks and eyes. Embroidery floss or buttonhole twist will cover a larger hook and eye quickly.

Using a blanket stitch, work from right to left until the metal is covered. Leave a short tail when the thread is fastened at the beginning. Work the tail into the stitch as you proceed so it does not show. Stitches should be pushed close together so the metal does not show through (Fig. 8).

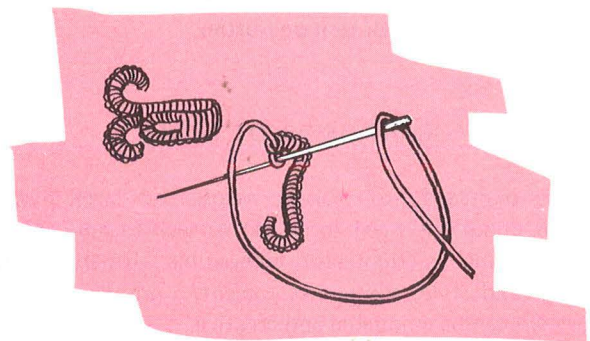


Figure 9. Covered hook and eye.