



ReFashionized

Fashion Evolution towards Sustainability



Practical Toolkit

T R A I N E R ' S C O R N E R



Co-funded by
the European Union



**“Sustainable
Fashion is not a
trend but the
future.”**

– Antonia Böhlke, founder of mochni.com
and a sustainable fashion advocate.

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About

The fashion industry is one of the most significant businesses globally, but also one of the most polluting: alongside the pollution generated during production processes, there is also pollution resulting from clothing discard. Fashion has accelerated its pace, and we are now accustomed to buying and disposing of clothes much more easily and quickly than our parents were.

Millions of tons of textiles are wasted every year: around 12% of fibers are discarded on the factory floor; 25% of garments remain unsold, and less than 1% of products are recycled into new garments (The state of fashion, 2021). Extending the life of a garment and keeping it in use as long as possible is essential to diminish the environmental impact generated by fashion. When we dispose of our garments, not only we contribute to environmental pollution, but also waste the natural resources and human labor that went into making them.

The first thing we should do as consumers is to rethink our buying habits and choose quality over quantity: buying fewer but better clothes made with quality materials and well-manufactured items that will not deteriorate after a few washes. Furthermore, it is crucial to mitigate impulsive buying tendencies and educate ourselves on curbing the desire for new products.

There are other virtuous practices that can address our desire for newness without having a negative impact on our planet, such as renting, swapping, or buying second-hand clothes. Additionally, practices like reusing, repairing, and repurposing are simple actions that can extend the fashion products' lifecycle and reduce the consumption of mass-produced fashion items.

By upcycling we mean the creative recovery of materials, which become the starting point for different products of a higher value or quality, in contrast to recycling, which relies on the use of chemical or mechanical procedures to break down fibers to be made into new fabrics. In fashion, this means revaluing what the industry considers textile waste, such as used clothes or warehouse leftovers, by prolonging the textiles' life through creativity, turning them into new designs.

By upcycling textile waste into higher-quality products, we can prolong their life cycle, slow down unnecessary textile production, and reduce the demand for natural resources. This also prevents the 'waste' from being downcycled or discarded.

We can identify four main approaches within upcycling:

- Subtraction: removal of part of the material, including cutting, cropping, and slashing.
- Deconstruction: division and reassembling of garments.
- Addition: incorporating other materials, such as embellishments, inserts, patches, appliques, etc.
- Refunctioning: rethinking the purpose of the original product. (Parung, Viviany, 2022)

Thanks to these techniques, you can add new value and completely reinvent a piece of clothing. Upcycling is usually used to create unique pieces, but lately, several designers have also employed this technique systematically to create reproducible collections.

Upcycling has become very popular in recent years with the growing attention to sustainability. Many independent upcycling brands have emerged, and established companies have integrated upcycling practices into their businesses, offering clients a completely new category of products. However, upcycling is nothing new; examples include Boro, a Japanese technique used by poor populations in the 17th century, and the Punk subculture with its DIY approach to fashion, expressing anti-establishment values of rebellion (Srinidhi Madurai K, 2014). Even famous designers like Martin Margiela aimed to "take the fashion world's cast-offs and reinvent them into a powerful statement about waste and mass consumption" (Lesso, 2022).

This toolkit aims to share knowledge about garment upcycling to extend the fashion lifecycle as much as possible and encourage different consumption habits. This should be based not on incessant purchases but on care, repair, and creative repurposing. You will be guided through eight techniques you can easily use to reinvent your wardrobe, with tips regarding material choice, application, and some historical/fun facts to fuel your imagination.

“

**I love turning
waste into
something cool.**

- Bethany Williams, designer





UNLOCKING THE POTENTIAL OF GARMENTS / UNIT 1

The art of upcycling is a creative process that can breathe new life into garments that are no longer used or worn by simply repurposing and reusing them. Not only does upcycling save water and resources used in the production of new garments, but also it is a statement of a commitment to sustainability.

Techniques vary depending on the material properties and the garment's condition. Choose items with minimal wear and tear, preferably made from quality sustainable fibers, as they are easier to work with and will last longer. It is important to identify the materials used in the piece of clothing you want to upcycle, as well as its texture, size, weight, colour and condition to determine the best way to upcycle it.

For your first project, opt for versatile materials such as cotton T-shirts and denim that can easily be cut and sewn. Old shirts can be transformed into stylish tote bags, denim jeans can be turned into fashionable shorts, and oversized sweaters can be repurposed into comfy scarves.

Garments with a timeless style will be easier to include in your creations. But remember, the key to upcycling is to look at your clothes differently. Which one sparks your creativity the most?

Selecting Garments, Embracing Quality

Understanding the characteristics of various textiles is the first step towards a successful upcycling project, ensuring the longevity and sustainability of the newly crafted garment. Here are some important aspects to know:

→ Materials:

- **Cotton** is a versatile fabric, soft and comfortable, and easy to work with. However, it has the highest water demand in the industry. (The world counts, n.d.) This calls for extending the garment's lifespan. The possibilities are diverse. Fortunately, it is easy to work with this type of textile. Blue denim jeans offer many possibilities, and their resistant nature makes them a great basis for patchwork. (Tilli, n.d.)
- **Hemp** and **linen** are highly sustainable fibers (Spencer, H, 2023), and they are both very resistant and can be upcycled in many different ways, from a tote bag to an apron (Textile Exchange, 2023).
- Research shows that woollen products can potentially have several "lifetimes" lasting 20-30 years and often longer (IWTO, 2024). Just like cotton, **wool** can be attacked by moths that can leave holes. Fortunately, embroidery offers just the right solution.
- If **silk** encounters the same problem, its fragile nature can make sewing projects challenging. However, it shares other similarities with natural fibers and is easy to dye (Nguyen, 2024).
- **Synthetic fibers** made out of petrochemicals like **polyester**, **nylon** or **elastane** tend to degrade in quality over time. It can be challenging to preserve their original composition through the upcycling process. (Tonti, 2023)

If the quality or durability may vary from one textile to another, upcycling remains a great option for repurposing the garment, thus, reducing textile waste and extending the lifespan of already existing products.



**There is no such thing as 'away'.
When we throw anything away it
must go somewhere.**

- Bethany Williams, designer

PRACTICAL TOOLKIT

UNIT 2

In this Unit, you can find all the essential tools that you need to experiment with the upcycling techniques featured in this Booklet.

These general sewing tools, such as scissors and pins, are always good for any creative activity with fabrics. You already have them at home, if not these items are usually available at any sewing or craft shop. Any additional tool useful for developing a specific technique will be mentioned at the beginning of the Unit.





1. Fabric scissors: big pair of fabric scissors, useful to cut your fabric or garment.

2. Embroidery scissors: small pair of embroidery scissors, for fine details.

3. Seam ripper: a seam ripper, a small, handheld tool used to remove stitches.

4. Ruler: clear ruler for precise measurements on fabric.

5. Measuring tape: measuring tape for taking body measurements.

6. Felt pen or pencil: a simple felt pen or pencil.

7. Tailor's chalk: fabric marking tools are used to transfer patterns or make temporary guidelines on fabric; options include tailor's chalk, washable fabric markers, or disappearing ink pens.

8. Sewing yarn

9. Embroidery floss: tools such as fabric paints, beads, and embroidery floss, for adding unique touches to upcycled garments.

10. Embroidery hoop: practical when textiles need to be held in place - it is often necessary when embellishing garments, like appliqué and embroidery to avoid wrinkles in the fabric.

11. Tapes or rubber bands: needed for temporary fixation of the materials.

12. Needles of different sizes: a variety of hand-sewing needles in different sizes and sewing needles in different colours and thicknesses.

13. Pins: essential for holding fabric pieces together.

BASIC STITCHES

UNIT 3

Running/Straight stitch



Most basic and easy form of hand sewing and embroidery. It consists of “running” the needle in and out of the cloth at a regular distance. Start by threading from the back of the cloth (wrong side). To create a stitch, place the needle back in the material approximately one centimeter away from the desired stitching direction and pull all the way through. Repeat by pulling the thread back through the fabric.

Backstitch

Consists of tiny stitches that can hold an amount of strength and it is used in mending seams or in a seam to make it resistant to strains and pulls. Make a single running stitch starting from the back of the fabric. To maintain the stitch taut, then draw the thread from the underside of the fabric. Raise your needle once more and insert it into the fabric at a distance equal to the single running stitch.

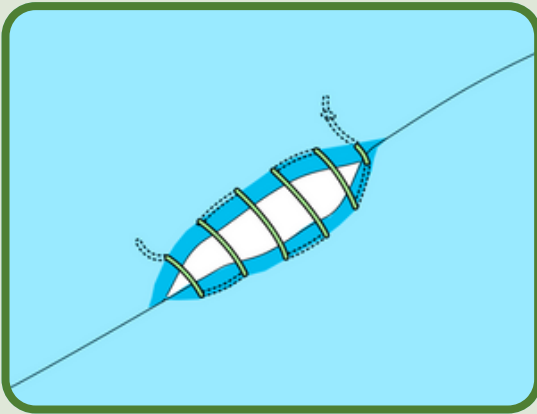


Satin Stitch



A satin stitch is used to fill shapes with straight parallel stitches. Insert the needle from the back to the front of the cloth at one end of the shape. Put the needle back down into the cloth on the other side of the shape, creating a straight stitch. Ensure that the stitch is parallel to the outline and toward the shape's edge. Re-insert the needle into the fabric, right close to the initial stitch. To create another straight stitch, put the needle back down on the other side of the shape. Cover the entire area you wish to fill by keeping your stitches parallel and close together.

Ladder Stitch



Helpful for sewing hems if you want to hide the stitches. It is meant to go through the cloth fold, with the wrong side facing up. Insert the needle and thread through the folded edge to bury the knot below the first fold and then pass it through the upper side. Do not draw the needle through the entire piece of fabric! Return the needle to the fold where you initially drew it out, keeping it parallel to the fold and repeat.

Blanket/Buttonhole Stitch

Ideal for making buttonholes or completing blanket edges. Insert the needle from the back of the fabric and pull it all the way through. Then, stitch through the back of the fabric once more. After passing the needle twice through the back of the fabric, you will have formed a loop. Insert the needle through the loop. Repeat the steps by stitching approximately one centimeter apart.



Cross Stitch



Used for finishing hems and front-face designs. Consists of creating Xs in the fabric. Insert the needle from the back of the fabric and stitch diagonally left, about a centimeter apart. Then, bring up the needle from the back of the fabric approximately one centimeter to the left of the last stitch. Create an X by sewing diagonally over the previous stitch.

Fun Fact

Women's buttons are not sewn on the right side like men's. They are sewn onto the left side of clothing. This is because buttons were very expensive and only wealthy women who employed domestic help could afford them. They were therefore on the "wrong" side to make it simpler for the helping person to button up!



UPCYCLING TECHNIQUES



Crop



Applique



Embroider

In the introduction of the toolkit, we emphasised that upcycling involves elevating old products through creative intervention. Although we have mentioned four main approaches within upcycling, there are no strict rules governing it: anyone can upcycle their old garments or fabrics as they wish—the only limit is one's imagination.

In the upcoming units, we will provide you with examples of how garments have been renewed using various textile techniques. A solid understanding of these techniques undoubtedly enhances your upcycling endeavours.

We have chosen eight textile techniques for their exemplary quality, attributes that contribute to the revitalization and repurposing of garments and textiles, and accessibility, requiring only basic tools.

Let's take a closer look at each of them!



Patchwork



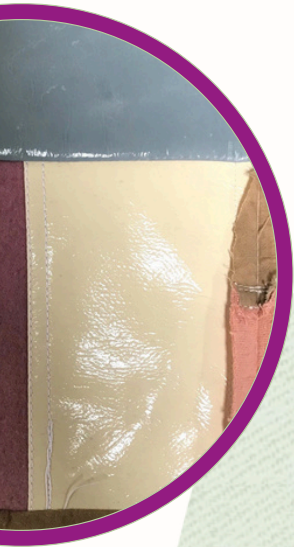
Needle punching



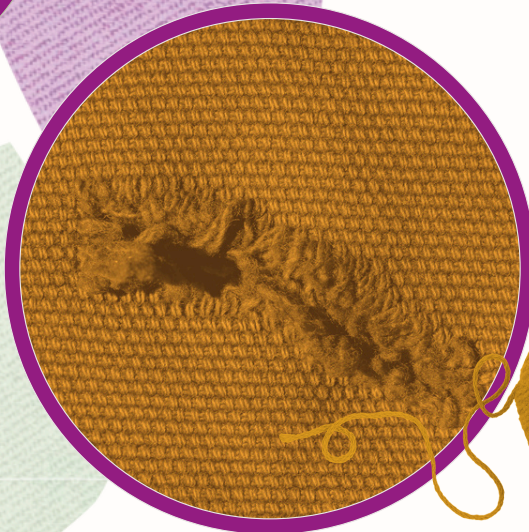
Bleach



Tie-dye



hwork



Repurpose

Crop

Crop is an easy technique that is used to shorten a garment, and all you need is a trusty pair of scissors. For example, by cutting off trouser legs, you can create a new style for another season, or by shortening an old sweater, a modern and stylish crop top is created. This is a very basic but very useful technique that meets one of the most important needs of people when they want to change and/or discard their clothes. This edgy style trend of cropping garments can be traced back to the punk subculture that emerged in the 70s as a form of rebellion against the capitalist status quo. Cropping is definitely the easiest way to upcycle an old garment!

Patchwork

Patchwork is an ancient craft that dates back thousands of years, with the earliest evidence tracing back to ancient Egypt (Crumbledheritage, 2023). This technique involves sewing together pieces of fabric to create a larger piece. It is a very creative technique that allows the use of very little scraps of fabric otherwise difficult to use in order to create something new. Patchwork can also be used to create various other items such as clothing, bags, and home decor. It is a popular and creative way to repurpose and use up fabric scraps.

Needle punching

Needle punching involves using a large needle tool to punch loops of yarn into a chosen fabric, to create structures and patterns out of yarn. It is believed to have originated in the 19th century in Great Britain, at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, when workers in expensive rug factories used any leftover fabric to make their homemade rugs, increasingly developing the needle punching technique; and out of necessity, a hobby was born (Moomzart, 2023). This technique is very easy and it is particularly indicated to repair damaged knits.

Bleach

Bleach involves removing or lightening the colour of fabrics through natural or chemical agents. Its origins can be traced back to early civilizations such as the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans, who used natural substances including sunlight, sour milk, rice water, and even urine to lighten fabrics. Then, with the advancements in chemistry, industrial bleaching processes began to emerge and chlorine was discovered, which made it possible to remove all colour from textiles. This is a useful craft to remove old stains on the garment and dye it again, creating new and individual patterns (Wikipedia, 2024).

Tie-dye

Tie-dye is a dyeing technique made with knots, an easy method of fabric design that can give a new character to boring clothes, thanks to its millions of possibilities of variations. This technique involves folding, tying, and then dyeing fabric to create vibrant patterns. The earliest examples of tie-dye can be found in India's ancient art of resist-dyeing called Bandhani. It then gained popularity in the Western world during the 1960s and 1970s as part of the counterculture movement, particularly with the hippie movement, becoming a symbol of non-conformity and personal expression often associated with peace, love, and freedom (Fagan, 2023). It is an easy technique to cover stains and reinvent old garments.

Applique

Applique is a needlework technique in which one or more pieces of fabric are attached to a larger background fabric to create pictures or patterns. The fabric can be attached by hand, machine, or fused. This is a decorative technique in which fabric pieces or other materials are sewn or adhered onto a larger fabric to create a design or pattern. The fabric can be attached by hand, machine, or fused. One of the earliest known examples of appliqué is from Egypt, dating back to around 980 BCE (Kit Kemp, 2022). With the advent of new technologies and materials, appliqué has evolved, allowing for even more intricate and innovative designs. Through this technique you can easily hide holes or stains in clothing, giving new life to old garments.

Embroidery

Embroidery is a decorative technique that is used to embellish and personalize garments. The art of embroidery has been prevalent in various cultures for centuries, however, its origins can be traced back to ancient China, where examples from the third to the fifth centuries BC have been discovered. Initially, embroidery was primarily used to repair fabrics and garments to extend their lifespan. However, it evolved, becoming a way of adding embellishments and personalization to clothing, and even a form of art to tell stories. Although it is an advanced craft, every stitch adds significant value. This technique is very useful if you want to cover a stain or a hole in your garment. It is a more advanced craft, but we will provide you with all the steps to succeed in it!

Repurpose

The last upcycling technique of our selection is repurpose. In this case, we propose you repurpose an old t-shirt and transform it into a new yarn. This could be useful for any other future projects that require yarns. You will see how it is not necessary to buy expensive yarns, but you can make them yourselves out of old clothes. T-shirt yarn consists of cutting the fabric into long strips and then twisting the strips together to create a continuous strand of yarn (Infarrantly Creative, 2023). In many traditional cultures, such as in parts of Africa, Asia, and Central/South America, it has been a common practice for generations due to scarcity and economic reasons. In recent years, this habit has come back for sustainability purposes (Fletcher, 2022). With this technique, there are no limits to creativity and sustainable upcycling.

The next Units will provide step-by-step instructions for these simple upcycling techniques ... get ready and have fun!

“From the Atacama desert in Chile to Ghana, upcycling and the reuse of clothing have become a modern craft that combats waste and promotes sustainability. That’s where I want to put my energy for the next ten or fifteen years.”

Orsola De Castro, upcycling pioneer
and co-founder of Fashion Revolution

Crop

by UPV

1



Prepare

Do you have an old T-shirt or a hole in your T-shirt and that's why you don't wear it? Maybe it's time to enlarge those holes and create a new design. For this technique, all you need is an old T-shirt and a pair of scissors!

2



Make a crop top

First, use scissors to cut the T-shirt to the desired length. If you want the cut to be super straight, use a ruler to mark a line, if not, be brave and do it freehand, don't worry if it's not straight, it's cool that way too.

3



Make small cuts

Make several cuts across the T-shirt! Use Pinterest or Instagram to find a reference if you want, otherwise, have fun and make any cut design you want. If you make too many or too big cuts, you can always wear a top underneath or something similar when you put on the T-shirt.

4



Cut off other parts of the T-shirt

If you want to make the T-shirt even more different from the original, cut off one sleeve, or both sleeves, or make a V-neck, whatever you want! You will create your unique T-shirt!

5



Wear it, if you don't like it you can make more cuts!

Try the T-shirt on, if you don't like it, you can make it even shorter, cut another sleeve or make more cuts. You can wear it with another garment underneath or with nothing at all.



Fun Fact

In the Renaissance, underwear was shown, not in the way that young people did at the end of the 20th century, by showing much of the underwear, but through slits and slits in the clothes. These "cuts" in the garments were called stratagli or "slashing" and revealed the white shirt worn underneath the brightly coloured garments, creating beautiful contrasts (Xataka, 2015).

Additional Resources

Crop Top From T-Shirt (5 Easy Upcycle Projects!)

- Link: https://youtu.be/4HQy5H1Dc48?si=2GY_ThL9GoH05-N3
- This video shows how from a basic T-shirt a multitude of different versions can be made by making small changes.

Thrift flip Ep.3 | DIY Denim Crop Top From Old Jeans/Denim Upcycled

- Link: https://youtu.be/ChLNoiCaFyA?si=7A3VhU9u5UN5CE_w
- This video shows how to create a modern denim top from old jeans.

UPCYCLING OLD CLOTHES ♻️ | Upgrade your old boring shirts *super easy* | VILLAMOR TWINS

- Link: <https://youtu.be/BJ-vy4uth6k?si=AJuUFUGpIPxnZlvY>
- This video shows you step-by-step how to transform a simple black tank top into 3 versatile and fashionable tops.

Embroidery

by LOTTOZERO

1



Prepare

Collect your upcycled clothing items, embroidery hoop, embroidery floss, assorted needles, scissors, and any desired embroidery patterns or designs. Pick a design that complements the chosen clothing item and the details you want to embellish.

2



Design

Plan the placement of your embroidery, considering the garment's shape, size, and desired appeal. Transfer the design onto your clothing item using methods like tracing, transfer paper, or freehand drawing with a fabric pen or chalk. If you want to cover a rip, it is better to sew it together before the next steps. The design should be slightly larger than the area to be covered. Stains that can no longer be washed out can also be integrated into the design.

3



Stretch

Place your item into the embroidery hoop, make sure the chosen section for embroidery is stretched out. This will provide stability and ease during the stitching process. This tool is particularly important for fine and elastic fabrics. For firm materials, such as denim, the embroidery hoop is not necessary.

4



Thread

Choose embroidery floss in colours that complement your design. Embroidery threads consist of several separable threads, with the number you decide on the thickness and the three-dimensionality of the embroidery. Thread the needle and knot the end securely to prevent unravelling. Experiment with various embroidery stitches, such as running stitch, backstitch, chain stitch, satin stitch, or French knots. Tipp: You can try out the different stitches on a separate piece before realizing your design.

5



Stitch

Start stitching your design, following the lines or outlines you have drawn. The different types of stitches can add texture and dimension to your design.

6



Knot

Once you have completed your embroidery, remove the clothing item from the embroidery hoop. Knot and secure any loose threads on the backside of the fabric to ensure durability.

7



Iron

To get a nicer result, you can steam the garment with the iron or the steamer; in this way, the shape of the hoop will disappear. Be careful to not iron with pressure, as the three-dimensionality of the embroidery will disappear as well.

Fun Fact

Do you know how much it measures the world's largest embroidery artwork on a single piece of cloth? It measured 103.96 m² and it was produced in Mexico by a team of 1270 highly skilled artisans, in 2019.

This intricate embroidery masterpiece depicts the history, culture, and heritage of a particular region. The masterpiece took several months to be completed with 110 m of fabric, 75,000 m of thread, 3,000 needles and 1,500 embroidery hoops.

Additional Resources

- [Victoria and Albert Museum \(V&A\) embroidery collection](#): The V&A has an extensive collection of historical embroidery pieces, and their website allows you to explore their collection online.
- "The Art of Embroidery: Inspirational Stitches, Textures, and Surfaces" by Francoise Tellier-Loumagne: Visually inspiring book, all-color survey of designs and patterns for embroiderers.
- "Art of Embroidery: History of Style and Technique" by Lanto Synge Book with a wide-ranging history of textiles, embroidery, and needlework, featuring 350 illustrations drawn from many countries and sources vestments and costume, samplers and pictures, great beds and furniture.
- [Needlethread blog](#): Blog run by an embroidery expert which provides detailed tutorials, product reviews, and stitching tips for various embroidery techniques.

**“Demand quality,
not just in the
products you buy,
but in the life of
the person who
made it.”**

– Orsola de Castro, an upcyclist, fashion designer, author, and co-founder of Fashion Revolution, an activism movement which works towards a sustainable fashion industry.

Appliqué

by KAINOTOMIA

1



Prepare

To begin with, you will have to gather all the necessary items so that you are prepared through the whole process. You will need: scraps of cotton fabric in complementary colours for your appliqué shapes, a basic fabric or an article of clothing to appliqué to, a line drawing or pattern to serve as your design pattern, a fusible heat bonding web with paper backing, a pen, scissors, an iron, a board for pressing and a sewing needle and thread that complement the colours of your fabrics. Make sure to read all the steps once before you begin to fully understand the process and avoid any mistakes.

2



Cut your pattern

Select your pattern, image or template and print it at the desired size. After cutting it, trace the pattern onto the fusible web's paper side by using a pen. Cut around the traced pattern of the fusible web, making sure you leave a small border and avoid cutting on the drawn outline.

Caution: Remember to print your appliqué in reverse if you want it to look exactly like the template, as the applique results in a "mirror image" of your chosen design.

3



Choose your fabrics

Now it is time to choose the fabrics you would like to work with. Pay attention to fabrics with directional prints or patterns as you wouldn't want your pattern to be reversed. Work with the fabric's grain so that the threads cross the template vertically and horizontally rather than diagonally.

Caution: Remember to avoid layering darker fabrics over lighter-colored ones, as the darker material may show through.

4



Iron the fabric to the fusible web

Once you are ready, heat your iron selecting a hot non-steam setting. Put the fusible web piece on the back/wrong side of the fabric. Keep in mind that you should be facing the template and that the webbing is between the paper and the fabric. Then, use the iron to fuse the paper to the fabric for a few seconds. It is recommended to use 100% cotton for best results. If you use different materials make sure to cover the design with a press cloth or a piece of cotton fabric.

5



Iron the applique on your garment

Cut out your applique carefully and peel off the webbing paper. Then, use the hot iron to secure the applique to the desired position on your garment. Make sure to slightly press down the applique with your iron instead of moving it around to keep your pattern in place. Both the garment and the applique should be facing upwards in this step.

6



Finishing touches

Start sewing your applique's edges by hand or by machine. If you hand-sew, make sure you switch to a sharp hand needle. Although blanket stitching is recommended, feel free to use any sewing method you prefer. You could also use a satin stitch, running stitch, or backstitch. Use top threads in colours that coordinate with your appliqué pieces.



Fun Fact

One of the most memorable fashion statements from the 1950s in the US was the poodle skirt, a wide swing felt skirt with an appliqued coiffed poodle dog. It was designed by Charlot Juli Lynne as a last-minute Christmas skirt, having little money and little sewing skills and it became popular through Hollywood movie stars.

Additional Resources

Intro To Applique (For Beginners)

- [Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9vKcyymFkyk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9vKcyymFkyk)
- [A tutorial for beginners on the different types and techniques of applique](#)

Machine Applique Technique

- [Link: Machine Applique Technique \(youtube.com\)](#)
- [Machine applique using a variety of stitches](#)

How to Appliqué - 3 Simple Ways + a Free Pattern

- [Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7rgyyGvX3LO](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7rgyyGvX3LO)
- [A video on how to appliqué with downloadable templates to use and practice](#)



Patchwork

by Jugend- & Kulturprojekt e.V.

1



Prepare

Patchwork is a craft or art technique which involves stitching together various pieces of fabric in different colours, patterns and sizes to create decorative items such as blankets, cushions or wall hangings. Patchwork gives you the ability to both repair a piece of clothing or create your own garment: the possibilities are endless! Before we get started, make sure you have all the necessary tools for your patchwork : Fabric / Scissors / Pins / Sewing machine / Flat work surface / An iron

Tip: Patchwork is all about recycling, most of your stained or ripped pieces of clothing can be turned into something new! Select and take apart the parts you want to use. You can also gather scraps from previous sewing projects.

2



Design

Before you start patchworking, choose a simple pattern and the colours you want to use. Sketch your design to visualise the layout before cutting the pieces of fabric. Following these steps will help you avoid mistakes and clearly visualise your patchwork project before beginning to sew.

3



Cutting the fabric

Now that you have finished designing, cut the pieces of fabric according to your design. Draw the measurements on the fabrics by using a tape measure. Use scissors or a rotary cutter to cut along the markings, a ruler can also help you achieve straight edges. Make sure you are precise so that all the pieces fit well together.

4



Arranging the pieces

Lay the different pieces of fabric out on a table or the floor and experiment with different arrangements until you are happy with the design. Consider colours, patterns and proportions. This step allows you to visualise the final result and make any changes before you start sewing.

5



Sewing basics

Begin your sewing journey by learning how to sew by hand or by familiarising yourself with a sewing machine. As a beginner, you can gradually build up your skills and confidence by sewing straight lines on fabric scraps. Keep practising to familiarise yourself with the basics of sewing and improve your skills before moving on to a bigger project.

6



Sewing your fabric pieces

Take two pieces of fabric and place their right sides together. Using a straight stitch, sew along the edge, making sure to leave half a centimetre seam allowance. This joins the fabrics securely and forms the foundation for your patchwork project. The seam allowance refers to the area between the sewn thread and the external edge of the fabric.

7



Pressing seams

After sewing, it is important to iron the seams to flatten them and remove irregularities. Set the iron, open or press the seams to the side and then go over them to smooth them out. Check the result and adjust if necessary. This will help you give a professional look to your work and reduce unwanted bulk.

8



Assembling rows or blocks

Sew the pieces of fabric together into rows or blocks according to your design. Pay attention to the seam allowance to ensure even edges. Precise stitching is important to guarantee that each part of your project will fit together and create your desired pattern.

Using a sewing machine or a needle and thread, stitch the rows of your patchwork together.

9



Insert or attach patchwork to the clothes

Once pieces have been sewn together in rows or blocks, cut them in the shape you prefer. You can use this fabric as a detail to insert or attach to your garment, for example, to hide a stain, or to cover or reinforce a damaged area. You can also create a brand-new garment with your upcycled fabric!

Your patchworked garment is now complete and ready to give you comfort and style!

Fun Fact

In Japan, the traditional art of patchwork quilting goes back centuries. It involves carefully sewing fabric scraps together to create beautiful and durable textiles. This technique, called “Boro”, reflects the Japanese concept “mottainai”. This expression symbolises a deep appreciation for resources and avoiding the generation of waste.

Additional Resources

Website “Craftsy”

- www.craftsy.com
- Craftsy offers a wide range of online classes and tutorials on all kinds of crafts, including quilting and patchwork. Their instructors are experienced quilters who provide step-by-step guidance, tips, and inspiration for you to create your own beautiful patchwork projects. You can choose classes tailored to your skill level and interests, whether you're interested in traditional quilting techniques, modern patchwork designs, or specific projects like patchwork bags, quilts, or home decor items.

Book "The Essential Guide to Modern Quilt Making: From Colour to Quilting: 10 Modern Quilt Projects" by Shannon Brinkley

- www.shannon-brinkley.com
- This book offers a contemporary perspective on patchwork and quilting, focusing on modern design principles and techniques. It covers everything from selecting fabrics and colours to piecing, appliqué, and quilting methods. With clear instructions and beautiful photography, it's suitable for quilters of all skill levels, from beginners to advanced.

Webblog "The Quilter's Planner"

- www.quiltersplanner.com
- The Quilter's Planner is a popular planner and organiser designed specifically for quilters. Their blog offers organisational tips while featuring a wide range of articles written by experienced quilters and designers. Whether you're a beginner looking for guidance or an experienced quilter seeking fresh ideas and inspiration, the Quilter's Planner blog has something for everyone.

Needle Punching

by Jugend- & Kulturprojekt e.V.

1



Prepare

Ready to master needle punching? It requires only a few materials to get started.

- First of all, you will need the tool: the needle punch.
- Once you have it, you will need a base fabric like monk cloth, linen or cotton.
- Lastly, pick your yarn in your preferred colours and have your punch needle frame or hoop ready.

2



Choose your pattern

Decide on the design you want to create with needle punching and select the colours of wool roving or yarn you prefer. A reference image or sketches can guide you in this creative process. Here is another idea that might come in handy: use the natural light from the window to outline your design. Simply gather your reference image, base fabric, and a pen. Then, trace the design using the contrasting light provided by the window.

3



Draw your design

Drawing your design directly on the fabric is helpful to have clear lines to follow.

Attention: When you punch the needle, loops will be created on one side and flat stitches on the other. If you draw your pattern in reverse, the loops will be on the front. To have the loops on the back, you should draw your design normally to have the pattern in the same orientation as you want the final design to appear.

4



Create your base

A frame will hold the fabric steady while you punch the design. Unfasten the embroidery loop to enter your base fabric. Adjust the fabric and fasten the loop.

5



Thread your punch needle

Insert the wide threader tool from the bottom of the punch needle to the top. Place a few centimetres of yarn into the loop and pull the threader tool up. Next, thread the yarn through the eye of the punch needle from the bottom. Finally, pull the thread back down, leaving a short tail. Your punch needle is now ready for use.

6



Punching

Your first stitch is important. Pull the thread behind to form a tail that will be removed at the end of the creation process. Pull the needle out and punch again, keeping the needle head close to the surface.

7



It is time to start!

Begin punching your design into the base fabric, following your design (stage 3), and filling it in with colourful yarn. Remember to hold your needle punch with the scooped side facing the direction of your stitches.



Refine and adjust

Pull the last thread gently to not ruin your hard work.

Trim the excess of the first and last thread, and congratulations on your first needle punch!

Fun Fact

What does needle punching make you think of? A small carpet, handmade patches for your jean jacket, or colourful decoration items? But did you know that this technique is also used for the production of car interiors, synthetic leathers or processing glass fibres?

At home, needle punching is generally done with a special needle. But this is not the only technique used! Needle-punching machines also exist and well-equipped crafters may even own a tufting gun. These technologies automatise the process of working with textiles. Needle punching is also considered when working with geotextiles as an innovative way to control soil erosion!

Needle punching isn't just a craft – it's a powerful art.

Additional Resources

Punch needle blog

- <https://www.wholepunching.co.uk/blogs/news>
- In this blog, you can find interesting and entertaining ideas to experiment with needle punching. Different techniques, projects and tips will keep you entertained while exploring this world of crafts.

Youtube Channel "Raising Nobles" by Kristin Nobles

- <https://www.youtube.com/@RaisingNobles>
- A DIY (do-it-yourself) guide for beginners and non that explores various creative techniques. With a step-by-step guide, no craft is impossible!

Book "Punch Needle: Master the Art of Punch Needling Accessories for You and Your Home" by Arounna Khounnoraj

- Arounna Khounnoraj, a Canadian artist based in Toronto, guides the readers in crafting their own designs, offering precious insights on how to master the needle-punching technique. Through 20 ideas of projects for your own house, this art is no longer a mystery.



Tie-dye

by LOTTOZERO

1



Prepare

You will need fabric dye, salt, a pot to heat water, rubber bands, plastic gloves, a wooden stick, and garbage bags to protect your work area from any potential dye spills or stains.

Make sure the garment you choose to upcycle is under the best condition for tie-dye: light-coloured, cotton and prewashed.

2



Mix

Follow the instructions on the fabric dye packaging to prepare the dye mixture in the colour you want to use. Water usually must be boiled, and the salt must be dissolved with the colourants in the correct proportion. Wear plastic gloves to protect your hands. To be more sustainable you can use more natural techniques, for example dyeing with turmeric.

3



Tie

There are various tie-dye techniques you can use, such as spiral, crumple, or accordion fold. Use rubber bands to create different patterns and sections on your garment. The areas tied tightly with rubber bands will resist the dye more and, in this way, you can create a unique design.

4



Dye

Immerse your garment or textile in the dye mixture. Generally, the longest you leave your fabric, the strongest will be the saturation of the colour. You can decide how strong you want the colour to be and therefore how long you leave the garment in the water. In any case, it is recommended to carefully read the instructions for your dyeing products. You can also create colour effects by partially dipping the garment in the dye mixture.

5



Wash

Once you have applied the dye, cover your garment or fabric with plastic wrap to keep it moist. After the dye has been set, rinse your garment or fabric under cold water until the water runs clear. Remove the rubber bands and continue rinsing until the water remains clear. Finally, wash your garment or fabric separately in cold water using a mild detergent.

6



Dry

After washing your piece, hang your upcycled garment or fabric to dry in a well-ventilated area. Once dry, your tie-dyed creation is ready to be worn or used in various projects!



Fun Fact

Tie-dye, emblematic of peace and rebellion, was embraced by the free-spirited during the '70s Hippie movement, dominating festivals and protests with its vibrant patterns. Characterized by bold designs and swirling motifs, tie-dye became synonymous with the era's colorful spirit. Today, tie-dye has made a stylish comeback, retaining its lively hues while being applied in more sophisticated ways. This revival has gained traction among celebrities, adorning elegant gowns on red carpets and casual two-piece sets reminiscent of quarantine days, showcasing tie-dye's seamless integration into modern fashion.


Additional Resources

Beloved yet banned: The surprising history of tie-dye

- Link: [National Geographic](#)
- History of tie-dye: experts on historic textiles share the cultural meanings behind different tie-dyeing methods around the world, and how they're living on today

A short cultural history of tie-dye

- Link: [Vox](#)
- Cultural history of tie-dye: article about the spread of this technique from the hippie counterculture movement to today



**“Life is too short
to wear boring
colors.”**

- Unknown

Bleach

by UPV

1



Prepare

We have all experienced bleach stains in our clothes! When you stain a garment with bleach what you can do is to stain it even more and create a new garment with a lot of personality!

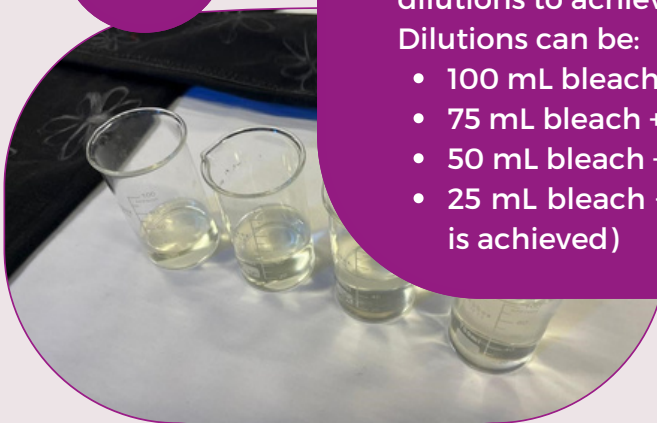
2



Design

If you draw super well you can skip this step, if not, start by drawing a freehand design with chalk on the garment. You can also use patterns to make drawing easier. You can use Pinterest, Instagram, Behance to find inspiration for your designs.

3



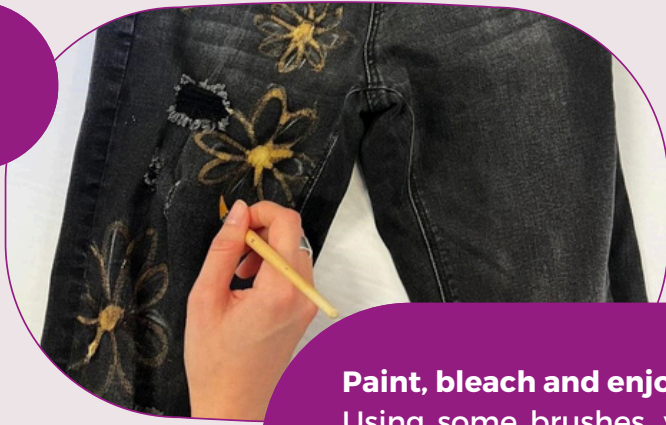
Prepare bleach dilutions

Household bleach does not bleach all textiles, first, test a small inconspicuous area of the fabric to see the effect. You can then use the bleach as such or prepare different dilutions to achieve a gradient effect of the bleach.

Dilutions can be:

- 100 mL bleach (the highest bleaching effect is achieved)
- 75 mL bleach + 25 mL water
- 50 mL bleach + 50 mL water
- 25 mL bleach + 75 mL water (the lowest bleaching effect is achieved)

4



Paint, bleach and enjoy!

Using some brushes, you paint with bleach the lines previously drawn with the chalk. Little by little you will see how the original color of the garment disappears and becomes a yellow or white shade, depending on the initial color.

Experiment and create different bleaches and gradients using the bleach dilutions.

5



Wash

Don't wear it straight away!

Before wearing it you must wash it by hand or machine, and follow the washing instructions on the garment's label.

Caution: Do not mix it with other garments in the washing machine or you will have to repeat this process for each of them!

6



Dry

Let the garment dry and you will see the final result. If you don't like the result, you can continue drawing, and if you think drawing is not your thing, bleach the whole garment! You can do different dipping processes to some parts of the garment or directly spray bleach to get a different print.



Fun Fact

Did you know that in Ancient Rome, urine was used to bleach clothes?

We all know that in the old days hygiene was not as important as today, so they used a mixture of water, urine and ashes to clean and bleach their clothes.

The mixture was put together with the dirty clothes in stone vats, where slaves and lower-class women and children worked, and cleaned by stomping. And where did they get the urine from? From the public latrines in the street!

Additional Resources

How to paint clothes with BLEACH

- Link: https://youtu.be/1yKdpbEInak?si=xyP3YV_gkY5Tc65Z
- This video shows how to perfectly square a design on a T-shirt and the effect of using different dilutions of bleach.

27 bleach decor ideas to renew your old things

- Link: <https://youtu.be/WxPgcULaxzk?si=IdKQTuFnZISgGqU->
- A multitude of garments can be bleached in many different ways, this video shows you 27 ideas, using hats, sweatshirts, tops, sprays, patterns and so on.



Repurpose

Create a thread from an old T-shirt

by Catwalk



Get the right t-shirt

To create a t-shirt yarn, a few things must be taken into consideration to get the best results. For repurposing, the cotton t-shirts work best, as they are stretchy and make a durable yarn.

Finding the right T-shirt is important, choose one without prints and logos. The t-shirts without side seams work best as they have a natural flow in the fabric, but these can be hard to find. Alternatively, you can make the yarn flow nicely and continuously by seamlessly joining the ends making a few little stitches to sew them together. Lay the t-shirt that you are going to work with flat on a cutting surface and smooth as many wrinkles as possible.



Prepare

To create a thread from a t-shirt you will need the following basic materials: Old t-shirts / Sharp fabric scissors / Cutting surface / Ruler or cutting mat / Marker or chalk / Sewing machine, needle, and thread (this is optional, in case you want to join the strips to get a continuous yarn).

3



Cut off the hem

Use your scissors to cut off the hem along the bottom of the t-shirt to have a clean edge to work with. If your t-shirt has got logos or graphics you should cut the t-shirt below that point while in the case of a plain t-shirt, you should cut it right under the armholes.

4



Cut the t-shirt into strips

Starting from the bottom edge, cut the t-shirt horizontally into strips from 2 to 3 cm wide. The thickness of the strips determines the thickness of the yarn. To ensure even strips you can mark the strip width with chalk and use a ruler or a cutting mat while cutting the strips. Make sure not to cut all the way across to the top edge. Leave that uncut portion intact as it will serve as a seam to keep the yarn in a continuous piece. When you are done with cutting the strips, the t-shirt should look like a hula skirt.

5



Make diagonal cuts

For the next step, you will have to unfold the t-shirt so that you can work with the uncut part of the top fold. To make the t-shirt look like a yarn, it is important that you cut away the first strip, so that you could have a starting edge. Continue cutting diagonally from the top of the second slit to the bottom of the first one across, and then from the third to the second one until you've cut all the strips apart.

6



Stretch the strips

At this stage, we must turn the strips into tubular yarn. For this reason, all you need to do is to take each strip of the t-shirt and stretch it gently. The fabric will roll up and you will have a tight-knit yarn.

7



Wrap the yarn

To finish making the t-shirt yarn, wind it into a ball or skein for easier storage. Use it whenever you need it for your crafting projects.

Fun T-shirt Yarn Projects

URBAN FIBERS transforms discarded t-shirts into yarns optimized for digital manufacturing technologies like knitting, weaving, and rope making. The studio pioneers a new sustainable textile concept, combining locally available material resources with existing fabrication infrastructure. By utilizing innovative digital tools, they revolutionize textile recycling and its potential in local production. Additionally, they harvest colors from waste, reuse them, and sketch production models for a more sustainable textile landscape.

Additional Resources

Ministry of yarn

- Link: [Ministry of Yarn](#)
- Learn about the story behind the brand “Ministry of yarn”! Because of the shortage and gap of t-shirt yarn in the market, the owner Bek Hudson, founded a socially and environmentally responsible company ensuring that the yarns are sourced from producers who pay fair wages and provide safe conditions for their workers. They can also explore crafting ideas with t-shirt yarns.

The pros and cons of making a T-shirt yarn

- Link: [T-shirt yarn tips and nearly everything you need to know about it](#)
- As much as it is fun to make a T-shirt yarn and create crafts out of it, it is eco-friendly and budget-friendly! You should also know the equivalent number of pros and cons of this practice.

How to make a crochet round bag from t-shirt yarn

- Link: <https://paraligo.com/en/diy/crochet-round-bag/>
- Students can explore how to create a stylish crochet round bag from t-shirt yarn and experiment with it themselves.

**"Waste isn't waste
until we waste it."**

- Will.i.am, musician and environmental activist

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Photos

About by Lottozero

- Designer Rafael Kouto, Lottozero, ph. Rachele Salvioli
- Lottozero, ph. Rachele Salvioli

Unit 2 Tools by Lottozero

- Tools 1, Source: Lottozero
- Tools 2, Source: Lottozero
- Tools 3, Source: Lottozero

Unit 3 Basic Stitches by KAINOTOMIA

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Unit 4 Upcycling techniques

Introduction by Lottozero

- Sources Steps: Lottozero

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Unit 4.2 Embroidery by LOTTOZERO

- Sources Steps: Lottozero

Unit 4.3 Appliqué by KAINOTOMIA

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Unit 4.4 Patchwork by Jugend- & Kulturprojekt e.V.

- Getting your materials, [Freepik](#)
- Plan your design, Source: Lottozero
- Cutting the fabric, [Freepik](#)
- Arranging the pieces, [Cbuske46, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons](#)
- Sewing basics, [Freepik](#)
- Sewing your fabric pieces, Photo by [Merylove Art](#) on [Unsplash](#)
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- Assembling rows or blocks, [L. Marie, CC BY 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons](#)
- Insert or attach patchwork to the clothes, Photo by [Jeff Wade](#) on [Unsplash](#)
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Unit 4.5 Needle Punching by Jugend- & Kulturprojekt e.V.

- Sources Steps, Envato Element

Unit 4.6 Tie-dye by LOTTOZERO

- Sources Steps: Lottozero

Unit 4.7 Bleach by UPV

- Sources Steps: UPV

Unit 4.8 Repurpose: Create a thread from an old T-shirt by Catwalk

- Sources Steps: Catwalk



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