Visible Mending Workshop with Uncommon Closet

Sources

- Info about various mending techniques
    - The art of visible mending — Bel Jacobs
- In-depth info and more resources for visible mending
    - Introduction to Visible Mending: Highlighting imperfections

Scan to view online!

Intro: History of Visible Mending

The practice of repairing damaged or worn-out items has a long and rich history, evolving from a necessity to a and even a form of social commentary. Before mass production and fast fashion, clothing and household items were expensive and time-consuming to create. Mending was essential for extending the life of these valuable possessions.

Mending was not just a utilitarian task; it often involved skilled craftsmanship, with techniques passed down through families and communities. Different cultures developed unique mending traditions. For example, Japanese women in the Edo period created sashiko patchwork, using decorative stitching to reinforce and repair clothing. In Europe, darning samplers were used to teach girls mending techniques. While mending was often done discreetly in the past, the wartime period saw a rise in visible mending, as people embraced the need to repair and reuse items.

In recent years, mending has seen a revival as a way to combat fast fashion's environmental impact and embrace sustainability The visible mending movement celebrates the beauty and stories embedded in repaired clothing Mending is now recognized as a valuable craft that promotes mindful consumption and reduces textile waste Visible mending can be a form of social commentary, challenging the disposable culture of modern fashion and promoting a more conscious approach to clothing

Supplies Needed

- Needles (sewing, embroidery, or darning)
- Pins (straight pins or quilting pins)
- Thread (sewing thread, embroidery floss, or even some yarns)
- Fabric (for patches)
- Scissors
- Fabric Pen or Chalk (for marking) (Ideally something that washes out)
- Ruler
- Embroidery Hoop (for stabilizing fabric)
- Optional: Stick-on/wash-away designs or printable sheets

Sashiko Mending

1. Prep your materials

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   a. Wash the garment you'll be mending. If the fabric is delicate or you're worried about the hole getting bigger, you should hand wash the garment and lay it flat to dry.
   b. You'll also want to wash the fabric you'll be using as a patch. Wash it the same way you wash your clothes normally.
2. Cut your patch so that it's 1" bigger all around than the hole.
   a. If you're reinforcing fabric (the area is worn out but no holes), you can hold the area up to a light to see how big the wear is. You can use your fabric pen to outline the worn-out area and then cut the fabric patch to be 1" larger than the worn-out area.
3. Plan your design
   a. Do you want the patch fabric to be fully exposed or just visible through the hole?
   b. Do you want the design to be larger than the patch? The design needs to at least reach the edges of the patch. Normally an extension of one or two inches is needed
   c. Do you want it to have multiple thread colors?
   d. Freehand vs. stencil
      i. Drawing out your design freehand (or with some rulers) can be really fun and make your mending unique to you! Things to keep in mind:
         1. Sashiko mending is all about geometric repeating patterns to help reinforce the fabric.
         2. You can either come up with your own design or you can look up a design and draw it onto your patch.
         3. Your stitches should be no more than ⅜" or 1cm apart.
         4. Do you want to draw out each stitch so that they're all evenly spaced, or do you want it to be a bit more free flowing?
      ii. Using a stencil can help those who are just starting to sew or who don't feel they have "an eye for design".
         1. There are a lot of premade stick-on/washaway patterns available online, or you can purchase printable washaway stick-on sheets that you can print your own design (or one you find online) on and then stick onto the patch.
4. Pinning on your patch
   a. For stretchy garments
      i. If possible, you'll want to put the garment on, lay the patch fabric in place (either on the right or wrong side of the garment), and carefully pin the patch all around. Doing this will allow the fabric to stretch when you wear it.
         1. I also recommend that you stick on (and pin in place) your washaway design or use a piece of washaway stabilizer to ensure that the garment stretches the right amount when you hoop it. Even if it's sticky, you'll want to pin it in place because it'll likely unstick when you take the garment off.
   b. Non-stretch garments
      i. You can pin your patch fabric to either the right or the wrong side of the garment while the garment is lying flat. Make sure to avoid warping the hole as you pin.
5. Hooping your garment
   a. To keep the fabric stable and ensure that your stitches don't seize up the fabric by pulling too tightly, we strongly recommend using an embroidery hoop.
   b. If your garment is delicate or if your hoop is wooden, we recommend binding the hoop.
      i. Some fabrics can get what is known as hoop burn (the friction from the hoop can damage the fabric or leave a shiny ring)
      ii. Sometimes the oils from wooden hoops can stain fabric

iii. Here's the nice way to bind a hoop:
1. Tutorial: Binding an Embroidery Hoop – NeedlenThread.com
2. You can bind one or both sides of the hoop. You should bind both if you're worried about staining or hoop burn.
3. You can also do this with masking tape in a pinch. You'll want to do two layers of tape.

c. First, lay the area you want to mend over the inner hoop. Make sure you're only hooping one layer of your garment.
d. Loosen the screw on your embroidery hoop enough so that the hoop can fit over the inner hoop with your garment on it.
e. Now you can tighten the screw while gently pulling the fabric taught.
i. You want to make sure that the fabric (specifically the hole) isn't being pulled out of shape or being overly stretched.
ii. You want the fabric to be drum tight and the screw to be as tight as you can with your hands. Too tight can break the hoop. Too loose can let your fabric shift around.

6. Sewing your patch
a. You'll want to cut a length of thread that is no longer than the length of your arm. This helps you avoid wearing out your shoulder and your thread knotting up.
b. Embroidery thread is made of six thread the size and width of your thread is determined by the number of threads, commonly 3 threads are used.
c. Starting and ending your mending thread will determine how long it last, knotting the thread and backstitching will extend the life of your patch.
d. The next step is to stay stitch the patch onto your main fabric, this holds the patch without the need for pins, this is done by a running stitch. This helps make the outline to the grid and can be removed later.
e. Once two to four inches of thread are left, or switching to a different thread color, to secure the stitch backstitch your thread, gathering a few threads of the fabric and backing it three or four times. To finish the thread, split the threads and knot, cutting to leave a one inch tail.
f. Once you are finished, rinse off the stencil in room temperature water until it has dissolved. Then wash your garment on a delicate cycle in cold water and dry normally.
g. Optional: iron your patch to smooth out the stitching.
h. YOU'VE FINISHED YOUR PATCH! Congrats 😊