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Refashion to Refresh and Rewear

Michigan State University

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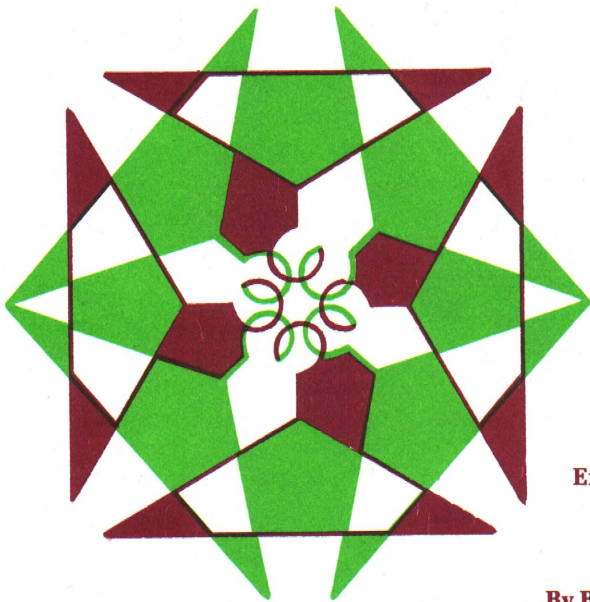
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# REFASHION to Refresh and Rewear

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COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE  
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

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**CLOTHES ARE AN INVESTMENT.** Any profitable investment gives a good return for the money. With clothes, that means satisfaction and wearability over a period of time—the longer, the better.

Because of today's freedom of choice from many fashion directions, and because of more freedom to make our own individual fashion statement or style, wearing clothes just as they are for a longer time is an option we can feel free to make.

However, if you feel the need to change the appearance of some of your clothes so that you want to wear them longer, **REFASHIONING** is one way to do it. Making things last longer has come of age again, and refashioning clothes has become popular as well as practical.

You no doubt have your own good reasons for wanting to refashion clothes. Some obvious ones are:

- to use money ordinarily spent on new clothes for other needs,
- to make better use of the clothes already accumulated in the closet,
- to join the environmental save, reuse and recycle bandwagon,
- to enjoy the creativity of "do it yourself" hand-crafting or sewing.

Remember that you will be making your own investment in addition to the garment when you refashion. What will your added investment require and will it be worth it?

Can you picture in your mind the final effect you want?

Will you need additional materials, fabrics, trims, accessories or other garments to do the job?

How much will they cost?

Will you require any equipment or supplies which you don't have? Can you borrow them?

Do you have the "know-how" to do the work or do you have to learn to sew first?

*Do you have the time, energy, and above all, does the idea of refashioning appeal to you?*

*If not, do you want to pay someone to refashion your clothes?*

Self-searching will pay off when considering refashioning. The big "payoff" should be:

- feeling that you're going to enjoy wearing the clothes longer.
- feeling that additional cost, time, effort and work was well worth it.

If you decide that refashioning is your thing," you can still have considerable leeway in making it a MINI or MAXI type production:

- Changing the look of clothes by making simple changes or additions to up-date them fashion-wise or
- Completely remaking clothes into entirely different garments for a new need or use.

## **GENERALLY, refashioning involves:**

- removing or adding trim or contrast
- adding or changing accessories
- removing, adding, or changing details such as sleeves, necklines, collars, pockets
- changing proportions by lengthening or shortening sleeve, skirt, tops, and pants
- changing the wastline area
- removing or adding fullness
- rejugling separates and accessories in new ways

## **SPECIFICALLY, refashioning can take many directions.**

Here are a few:

Add a belt to a no-waistline shift.

Shorten a mini-dress into a top or tunic to wear with pants.

Shorten a button-front tailored dress into a jacket blouse, or make a safari jacket look with pockets made from the skirt.



Stitch trim or hand embroider over hemlines which show when hems are let out. Repeat at other garment areas to give unified look.

Shorten a coat to pants coat length.

Change a shift to a fitted dress with lengthwise waistline darts or with a drawstring belt made with a casing.

Enlarge slim pants by inserting braid or other contrast down the outside seams.

Recut and refinish the sleeves and necklines of sweaters.

Trim off the ribbing and buttonhole—button openings of sweater and edge finish with braid, ribbon, or yarn embroidery.

Make cardigans or vests from pullover sweaters and edge finish.

Insert cording or piping between a dress top and skirt to give a finished waistline look without a belt.

Make a double breasted style out of an oversized single-button style or do the reverse.

Add ribbed knit turtlenecks and sleeves to a basic dress.

Make a figure-hugging knit dress into a body suit.

Recut and finish armholes and neckline of a dress and convert into a jumper.

Rip apart clothes, clean them and remake into another.

## REMAKING

Remaking requires sewing skill and inventiveness in deciding what to make and what steps to take. The original garment is ripped apart and the pieces recut into something else.

Children's clothes are often made from adult clothes. Be sure that the fabric is soft enough for sensitive skin and that it isn't too heavy, stiff, or bulky for young shoulders to carry. The color and pattern should be youthful or brightened up with trim or contrast.

The fabric in the original garment should be in good enough condition to be worth remaking—no worn areas, spots, rips, tears, stains, discoloration of any kind.

Carefully rip garment apart, wash or dryclean the pieces, and press them if wrinkled.

*You may prefer not to rip long seams at first—it might save you sewing time or eliminate the need for piecing.*

Choose a pattern that takes the best advantage of the garment pieces you have—a raglan style pattern for a raglan sleeve coat or dress.

*Check the size and shape of pattern pieces on the layout guide of the pattern you are considering. Will*

*they fit into the fabric sections you have? Are they smaller or will you have to do considerable piecing?*

The new pattern should allow you to make use of buttonholes, pockets, darts OR to cut around them OR to cover them with yokes, patch pockets, trim or contrast. Place pattern pieces on garment pieces with the grain.

*It may be necessary to cut out some smaller pieces on the crosswise grain.*

If piecing is necessary, plan it for places that don't show:

under the arm	under labels
inside pleats	under collars
under overblouses	

Sometimes you can capitalize on piecing and make it very noticeable as a design effect. If you need more fabric, be sure that seams can be "pressed out" as well as "let out." Use the quickest and easiest sewing technique to put the garment together. You can easily spend too much time and energy. Even ripping can take a long time.

## COMBINING FABRICS

Sometimes two old garments are combined into one, or new and old fabrics are brought together. Fabrics can be alike or different in color, texture, pattern, weight, crispness, sheerness. You'll want to have some similarities for unity and some contrast for interest.

Put fabrics together that require the same kind of care. Before combining new fabric with old, wash or dryclean the new fabric. That will make the difference between the "old" and "new" less noticeable.

Remnants, sewing fabric, leftovers, and trims are sources of fabrics for combinations.

## REFASHIONING IS INDIVIDUALISTIC

Each item of clothing that you want to refashion has its own special possibilities and limitations. There's no pat formula for deciding what to do.

Borrow ideas from magazines, pattern books, and ready-to-wear clothes that strike your fancy. Have a "show and share" session with friends who also want to refashion. Bring in or wear clothes you want to change. Pool and exchange ideas and experiences.

Be reasonable about refashioning. It's not a matter of seeing to what lengths or extremes you can go just to change the appearance of clothes. It's possible to overinvest for the results you get.

The purpose is to change clothes just enough so that you'll **want** to wear them awhile longer.