

MEND YOUR CLOTHES USING *Hand Embroidery*

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MCREATIVEJ

Over the past few years, visible mending has become more popular. If you Google "visible mending," you'll probably see photos of sashiko-style mends. This Japanese style of mending uses running stitch to create geometric designs and patterns. These can be simple or detailed, depending upon the design.

As someone who is constantly finding stains or small holes in their clothes and wants to make their garments last longer, I was drawn to this method of visible mending.

After having mended a few garments, I quickly realized that the precision and geometric style of sashiko mending isn't my forte. Instead, I wanted to find a way to mend my clothes that is freeform and fulfills the coloring book aspect of hand embroidery that I love.

After starting to make stick and stitch patterns, I realized that these simple water-soluble designs are perfect for mending, upcycling, and embellishing clothing. If you've never used stick and stitch patterns before,

they're like water-soluble stickers. You simply peel off the backing, place the designs on fabric, stitch over them, then wash them away with warm water.

This project uses stick and stitch patterns to mend a T-shirt. I'll share what you'll need for this project, give you step-by-step instructions so you can mend your own clothes, and show some additional inspiration from my own closet.



SUPPLIES

- Garment with holes to mend
- Stick and stitch patterns of your choice (or make your own with Sulky Sticky Fabri-Solvay; see "Sources")
- #5 embroidery needle
- Embroidery thread
- Embroidery hoop
- Sulky Tender Touch iron-on stabilizer (optional; see "Sources")
- Iron

PREPARE

With the garment on a flat surface, place the stick and stitch patterns over the holes and stains to cover.

tip Audition the placement of the patterns before peeling off the paper backing. Depending on the placement of the holes and stains, you may want to add patterns to even out the design. Be creative; there are no rules here.

With a final plan for the patterns, peel the paper backing off the patterns and place the sticky side down on the garment. Try on the garment to confirm the design.

Hoop the garment in the embroidery hoop. Make sure to hoop only one layer of the garment, to avoid stitching the garment closed (1).

With the garment in the hoop, pull the fabric around the edges of the hoop. Be sure not to stretch the fabric too tightly, as it could warp and distort.

tip When mending a stretchy fabric, the fabric inside the hoop will be looser than traditional embroidery. For a sturdier fabric such as denim or canvas, you may not need an embroidery hoop.

1



EMBROIDER

Using thread that complements the pattern and garment, stitch the design following the pattern stickers.

tip It is best to use short stitches for clothing embroidery and mending, as longer stitches can pop away from the fabric and are more likely to get caught and tear.

For this flower design, consider using chainstitch for the stems, split backstitch to fill in the leaves, detached chainstitch to create the petals, and backstitch to fill in the flower centers.

When finishing off the thread on the wrong side of the garment, use a slipknot to tie the end of the thread, then run the tail end of the thread under additional stitches before trimming (2).

Remove the garment from the hoop and run under hot water to remove the pattern stickers. Avoid scrunching or wringing out the garment while rinsing the pattern, so the stitching doesn't distort.

Lay the garment flat to dry.

An optional final step is to cut pieces of stabilizer $\frac{1}{4}$ – $\frac{1}{2}$ " larger than the embroidered designs. Place the stabilizer on the wrong side of the dry garment, covering the back of each design. Press the stabilizer to the garment following the manufacturer's instructions. ⑤

SOURCES

Sulky carries Sticky Fabri-Solvy and Tender Touch iron-on stabilizer: sulky.com.

2



ADDITIONAL INSPIRATION

Check out these creative ways to repair your clothing with hand embroidery.



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