

CHOSEN FOR REDESIGN DIY

LOVE & DESTROY, TUTORIAL 2 - ASSEMBLING

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Aalto University
School of Arts, Design
and Architecture

 t-rex



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Photo: Aino Ahola



Hi!

I am Saimi Parikka, a textile designer graduating from Aalto University. During my studies, I specialised in knitwear. In the summer of 2024, we did a project in collaboration with T-REX and Emmy.fi, where we came up with ideas and made new products out of the unsold clothes from Emmy's second-hand store. In the summer project, I was working specifically with cotton knitwear, unpicking and reworking these. In these tutorials, I'll show you some ideas I've come up with over the summer to revamp old knitwear.

The majority of secondhand clothes that are not sold are in small sizes. When knitwear is modified by unpicking, it widens as the stitches are dropped and at the same time increases in length as the remaining stitches are loosened. This way, a knitwear in size XS can be modified into a knitwear in size M-L. The unpicked surface becomes slightly transparent, lacy and in my opinion interestingly untidy.

These tutorials are particularly suitable for people who are already knitting enthusiasts, as they have a basic understanding of how the stitches and the structure of knitwear work. Unpicking, like knitting, is a repetitive movement that can even feel meditative. The brain likes repetitive and predictable movement, which is a good counterbalance to mental work, screens and hectic everyday life. Unlike in knitting in general, I think the more irregular and sprawling the surface becomes, the better.

For reworking, it is worth choosing good quality knitwear. For these tutorials I have used 100% cotton knitwear. Smooth-stranded knitwear, such as mercerised cotton or viscose, is easier to unpick than rough, industrially tightly strung cotton knitwear. Thicker yarns are faster to unpick than thinner ones. Fingernails are helpful when unpicking, they can "pluck" the structure open conveniently. When unpicking a garment, you learn to visualise patterns and structures at the same time, when you see what kind of pieces the garment is made of. Unpicking knitwear can feel a little scary - will the whole garment unravel uncontrollably when you cut a hole in it? However, most industrial knitwear is so sturdily made that it does not easily unravel in undesirable spots.

Plenty of great raw materials can be found second-hand. I hope these tutorials will inspire you to save old knitwear and enjoy making things by hand.



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Love and Destroy, Tutorial 2.

Technique: Assembling

This tutorial shows how to use the knitwear pieces unpicked according to Tutorial 1. This instruction uses pieces from two different knits: a beige children's knit and a white cable knit dyed beige with coffee. The pieces have been finished before assembly so that they do not unravel and can be put together without worry.

For the tutorial, you must be able

- to sew straight stitches on a sewing machine
- and
- to baste by hand.

Supplies: Prepared pieces of knitwear, sewing thread of the same colour, red sewing thread for basting, pins, sewing machine, iron, (crochet thread for making inserts, crochet hook)





WORK ORDER

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1. Assembling

Choose a garment that fits you well from your own wardrobe and whose design you particularly like. This will act as a base garment, which will be removed at the end.

Start composing the pieces on top of the garment of your choice.

When you start to find the right spots, fasten the pieces to the base garment with pins. Fold over the remaining sections to the back of the garment and fasten with pins.

Continue the same way, a bit as though you were putting together a puzzle.



WORK ORDER

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2. Crocheted inserts

There may be gaps in the garment where you can't find a suitable piece - this was the case with the example garment in the tutorial. You can crochet separate pieces in these areas using a double crochet stitch.

In the example a doubled sewing thread has been used for the crochet to create a mesh-like surface. Thin sewing thread can be challenging to crochet. You can use any thread that you feel is compatible with the unpicked pieces for the crocheted inserts.

The red arrows indicate where the crocheted inserts have been added.



WORK ORDER

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3. Assembling the reverse side

Now turn the garment. The pieces remain in place once you have fastened them to the base garment with pins.

This is what it looks like on the reverse side. On this side, only the pieces turned from the front are visible.

Continue collecting the puzzle pieces until the entire shirt surface is filled.

On the reverse side, additional pieces have been crocheted on the neckline. There is ribbing at the edge of the neckline of the original knitwear.



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4. Basting

Next, baste the pieces together. It is a good idea to use a clearly different-coloured thread for basting. This makes it easier to see which points are still unsewn and from which point to sew.

Baste the pieces together with an overlap of about 1cm. Be careful not to baste the base garment to the knit.

When all the pieces are basted, take the base garment away from under the garment.

Now you can try the knitwear on. If you want to change any part, place the garment back on the base garment and put the desired parts together again.



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5. Sewing

Sew the garment together with a sewing machine using a straight stitch. Use a sewing thread of a colour as similar as possible to that of the knitwear.

Sew according to the basted points. Cut the ends of the threads off.

When all the seams are sewn, pull the basting thread out of the seams.

Carefully steam the seams and the entire garment.

Done!



personalisation CHOSEN FOR REDESIGN DIY



How can you vary the appearance of your product?

This clothing assembly technique is like a puzzle. You can add pieces of fabric, knit patches, crochet inserts - almost anything!

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