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Aalto University  
School of Arts, Design  
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 t-rex



CHOSEN FOR REDESIGN DIY

# MINIES skirt







Hi!

I am Paula Malleus-Lemettinen, a 43-year-old master seamstress and entrepreneur with 25 years of experience in the textile and fashion industry. I have been an entrepreneur since 2007 and my special expertise is in extending the life cycle of clothes and upcycling techniques.

I have worked with the Chosen for Redesign project during autumn 2024 and directed the production of DIY tutorials.

The production of denim material consumes a lot of natural resources and causes significant environmental damage, especially in terms of water use: it can take up to 7,500-10,000 liters of water to make one pair of jeans. This is due both to the irrigation of cotton fields and the processes of dyeing and washing the fabric, which burdens water resources especially in cotton producing regions such as India and Uzbekistan.

In addition, dyeing and softening of denim material requires a high amount of harmful chemicals, which without proper treatment can end up in the waters and pollute the environment. The manufacturing and washing phase of denims consume a lot of energy and the worldwide transportation of products further increases the carbon footprint.

Waste problems are also significant, as a lot of cut scraps are generated from the production of denim fabric. Used jeans also often end up in landfills. Upcycling techniques and redesign can reduce environmental impact: old jeans and cut scraps can be turned into new, unique products, saving water and energy and reducing waste. All this supports a circular economy.

I hope you enjoy working through these tutorials and find them inspiring!

### **My tips for making the product:**

- Read the instructions carefully first
- Find the materials you need
- Check that supplies and machinery are ready
- Proceed consistently step by step, ironing the product between each step





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This tutorial is inspired by a product designed and created in the first phase of the Emmy x Aalto University collaboration.

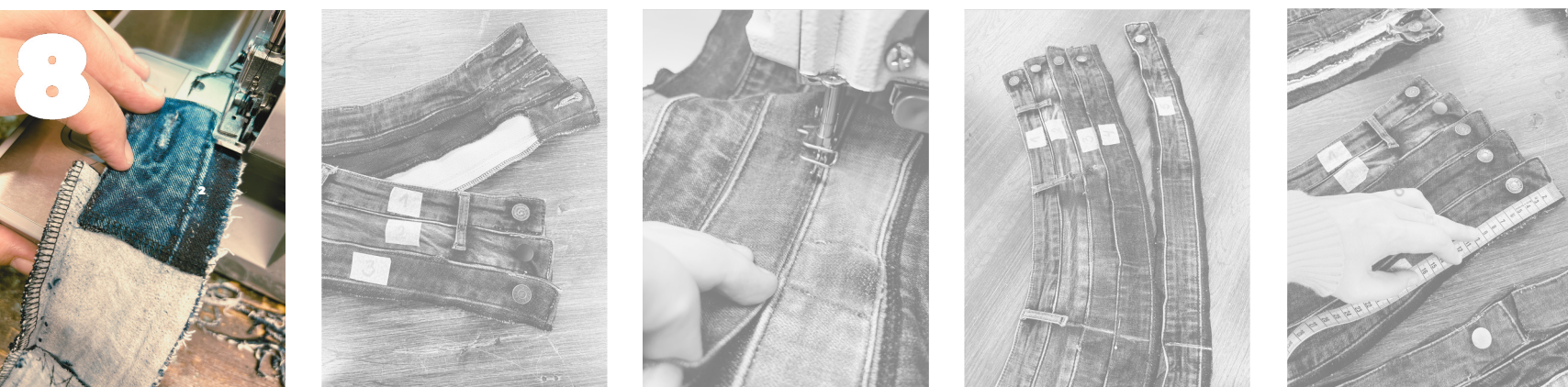
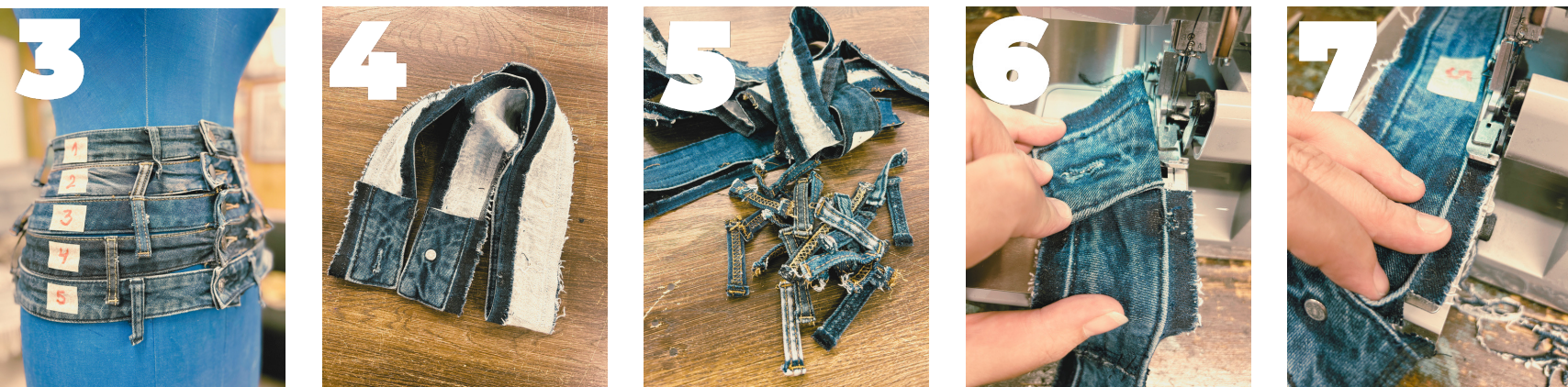
**Inspirational product information:**

- Handmade Denim skirt, size 34
- Product designer: Elma Leminen / Aalto University
- Material: Emmy secondhand online surplus clothing

**Description of the DIY product:**

- Slim straight-line mini skirt (you can also make a longer one)
- Skill level: requires a little patience from the creator!
- Material input: Waistband pieces from 6-8 pairs of jeans, depending on size (the rest can be used for other products)
- Tools needed: Sewing machine, overlocking machine, ironing board, steam iron, thread of suitable color, scissors, seam ripper, chalk, pincushion with needles and a mannequin (if available)





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## 1. PREPARATORY WORK

### Prepare the pieces for assembling:

1. Undo the waistband pieces of at least 8-9 pairs of jeans (the number depends on the size - the smaller the original jeans, the more waistband pieces you need).

2. For the top piece, choose the one with the girth that suits you best. The piece can be a little snug, so that it will hold the skirt securely. Choose 4-5 top waistband pieces (depending on size), so that they are sure to fit around the hips.

3. Number the pieces from top to bottom, as shown in the picture. This piece will mainly remain intact, you only need to undo the bottom edge of the belt loops and iron the seams straight. Finish the bottom edge together.

4.-5. Undo the belt loops from the waistband pieces and cut off the bottom surfaces (this will take some time, so don't worry if you feel a little tense). Save the lower surfaces, they will be used to create the hem part later. Leave about 5-7 cm of the inner surface after the button and opening.

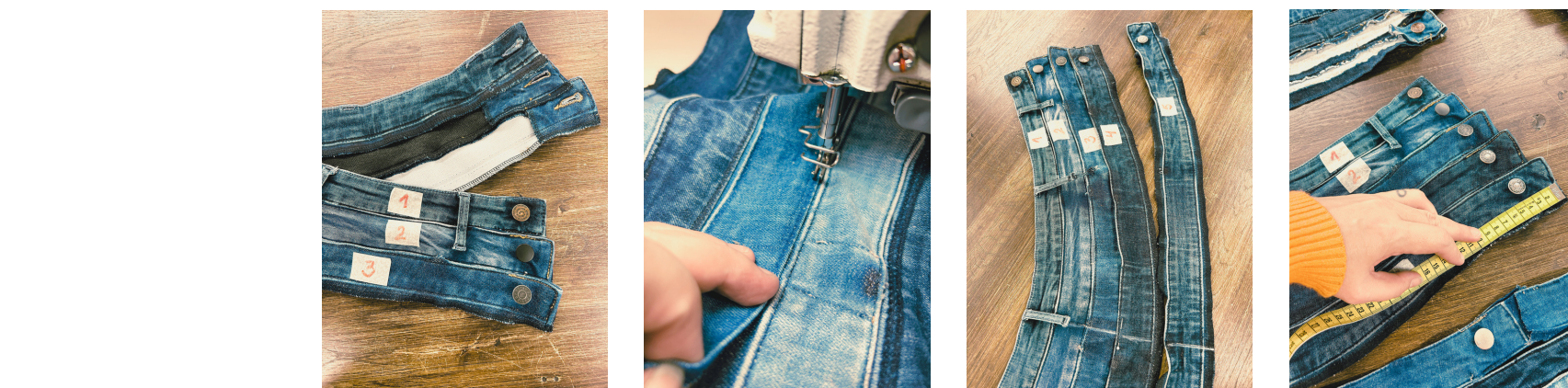
6. Finish the vertical edges of the button opening and the underside of the button.

7.-8. Finish the bottom edge of the pieces.





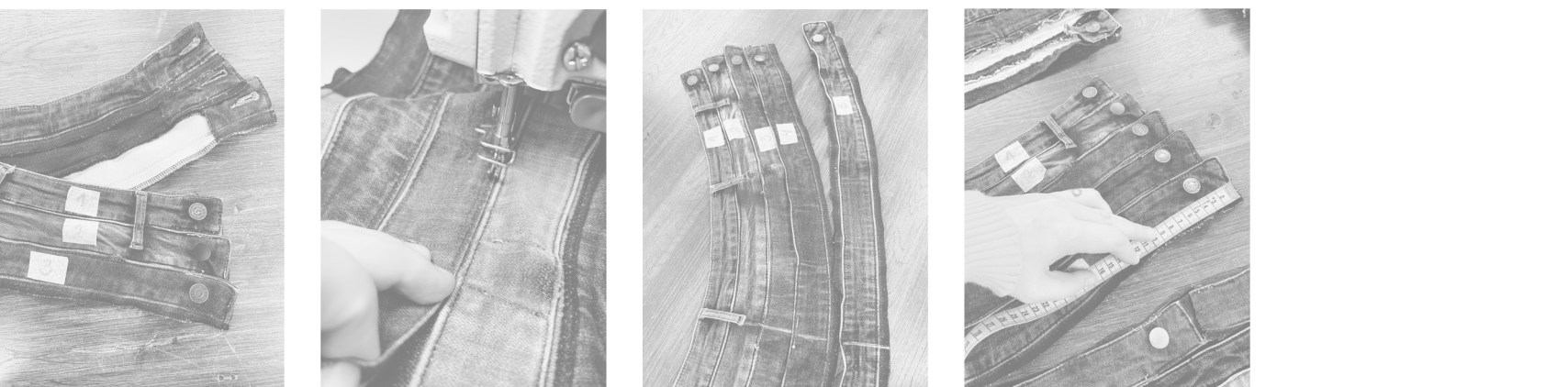
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## 2. ASSEMBLING THE TOP PART

- Attach the pieces with a straight stitch, stitching through starting from the top. Centre the following pieces with the lower one proportionally longer: the lower piece layer should be about 2-3 cm longer than the previous one. You will have to stretch the layer that was attached before to get the shape of the hips! Start sewing from one end of the button area and finish at the other end.
- Attach the pieces of the top part in the same way until you have reached below the hips.
- Measure the bottom edge and check if the remaining waistband pieces are long enough to make the topmost piece of the bottom part.





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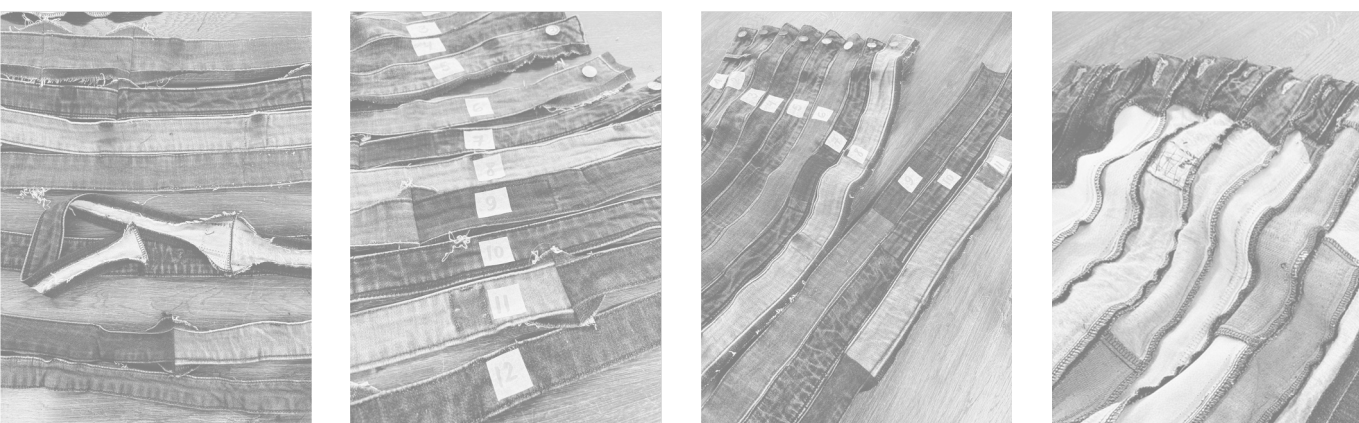
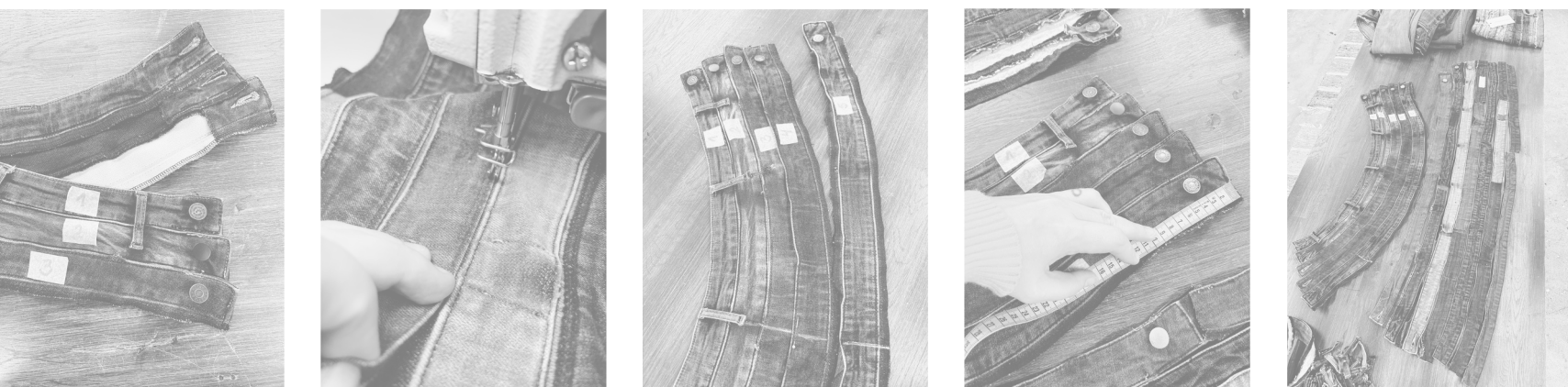


### 3. CONSTRUCTING THE HEM

The hem is constructed from the remaining waistband pieces with buttons and possibly other leftover denim material.

- Measure the width from the previous strips and add about 6 cm to the measurement - we use this measurement as a template for the hem strips.
- Determine how many layers you need to make the skirt the length you like.
- First use the pieces that still have the button area intact.
- Cut the piece at the appropriate point and continue with the inner surface of the left-over piece to the correct length.
- The lower 3-4 layers of the hem are created from the inner surfaces of the upper part, which do not have button areas. Make them about 4-6 cm longer than the upper layers.
- When you have finished outlining the pieces and the rows from them, stitch and finish the joining seams of all rows.
- Number the pieces according to the picture.
- Iron and finish the vertical edge of the button area (if any) and the lower edges of the pieces.





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## 4. THE BOTTOM EDGE AND MAKING THINGS NEAT

- Start attaching the hem strips layer by layer, working from top to bottom. The new strip is always attached to the previous (upper) layer (in the same way as the top).
- Turn the bottom strip (in the example no. 12) inside out with the seam allowance straight and stitch through in place.
- Put the skirt on and pin the bottom pieces without buttons together.
- Finish the hem by stitching through.

Now the skirt is ready - all you have to do is put it on and go!





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Photo: Aino Ahola

## PERSONALISATION

### How can you vary the appearance of your product?

The original output has a three-dimensional shape in front, which is part of a solid structure. I didn't want to do it for this tutorial, though, because the skirt is already a big job. However, if you like that part, you can create an additional part to the skirt, such as a pocket or an apron, as it were, that can be fastened with buttons or snap fasteners. You can also decorate the surface of the product with belt loops left over from disassembling, or use them in some other creative way.

### Share the picture on social media!

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