

9 Ways

to Transform Old T-Shirts



9 Ways to Transform Old T-Shirts eBook

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Letter from the Editors

Hi Sewers,

It's time to start sewing with some fabric you've already got lying around: T-shirts! Sew your way to a new wardrobe while saving money, de-cluttering your home, and being environmentally friendly. All of the easy sewing projects featured in this eBook can be made with t-shirts, either ones that are collecting dust in the back of your dresser, or inexpensive, new t-shirts from the store. Embellish t-shirts to breathe new life into them, or deconstruct them completely to make pillows, aprons, accessories, and more!

You can find more upcycling ideas, free sewing patterns, sewing tips, and extensive decorating ideas at www.AllFreeSewing.com.

Our eBooks, like all of our sewing projects, are absolutely FREE to members of our sewing community. Please feel free to share with family and friends and ask them to sign up at our website for our [free e-mail newsletter](#).

Happy Crafting,

The Editors of AllFreeSewing

www.AllFreeSewing.com

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank these bloggers and designers for contributing to the eBook:

Jess for [Floral Showers Crafts](#)

Jane Skoch of [Maiden Jane](#)

Barbara Matthiessen for [Earth Safe Finishes](#)

Jennifer Juniper of [Hope Studios](#)

Disney from [Ruffles and Stuff](#)

[The Sisters 4 Say More is More](#)

Lindsey for [The Pleated Poppy](#)

Ashley for [Make it and Love it](#)

Thank you for sharing your ideas and continuing to inspire us!

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T-Shirt Pillows

Ruffle Pillow Tutorial

By: Floral Showers Crafts

The ruffle pillow tutorial is a free, easy sewing pattern for making a pillow covered in ruffles, all made from an old T-shirt.



Project Type: Make a Project

Time to complete: In an evening

Sewn by: Machine



Materials:

- An XL t-shirt (or larger)
- Rotary cutter, mat, and ruler
- Fiber fill or some sort of stuffing

Instructions:

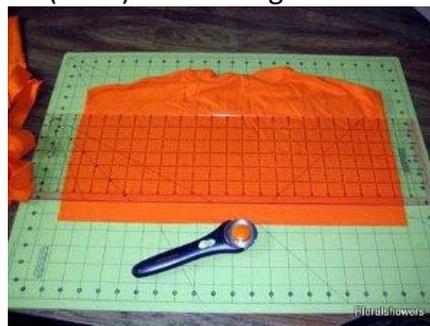
1. Lay t-shirt flat on cutting mat. Cut hem off bottom of t-shirt and straighten sides out (if needed).



2. Cut a 14×14 square through both layers of the t-shirt. These squares form the front and back of the pillow.



3. Trim off sleeves and use remaining t-shirt fabric to cut strips about 1 ¼ inch wide by 21 (or so) inches long.



4. Lay out strips on pillow top to determine how many ruffles you want. I wanted 10 for mine.



5. Set your machine to a really long stitch (called a basting stitch). Sew down the center of each strip, leaving a tail of thread, and making sure to NOT reverse stitch on either end.



6. Lay strips back on pillow where you'd like them (with the bobbin thread side facing down). Pin ends in place (it makes the next step easier).



7. Ruffle time! Gently pull the bobbin thread (the thread on the bottom) to create the ruffle. Spread the ruffle across the entire strip and pin in place. Repeat for each strip.



8. Set your machine back to a regular (or slightly smaller than regular) stitch length. Sew down the center of each ruffle (right on top of the baste stitch).



9. Pin pillow front to pillow back, with ruffles inside. Tip: to make sure you don't sew the ruffle in the side seam, pin bottom-most and top-most ruffles to the side.



10. Sew front to back, leaving a 4-5 inch gap on one side. Trim corners. Flip right side out. Stuff.



11. Pin opening closed and hand sew shut.



T-Shirt Pillow

By: Jane Skoch

Learn how to turn a sentimental t-shirt into a comfy pillow with this sewing tutorial. Designer Jane Skoch likes to make T-shirt quilts and use a few extra t-shirts for matching pillows.



Materials:

- 2 t-shirt sides, washed
- 1 yard of fusible interfacing (Pellon 906F, 911FF)
- ½ yard of fabric for border, washed
- 18" pillow form

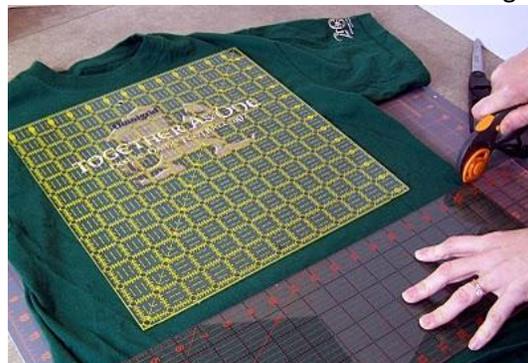


Notes on Materials:

- Use a t-shirt front and back or two separate t-shirts.
- The border fabric can be a contrast or coordinating fabric. I have used polka-dots, tie-dye, and anything that does not have a directional pattern. My pillow fabric is Oxygen from Contemporary Cloth.
- Prewash the t-shirts and border fabric to preshrink them, especially if they are brand new.
- It isn't necessary to use an interfacing specifically designed for knits. The t-shirts will not need stretch for the pillow. The interfacing is added for stability and ease of sewing.
- Pillow forms are available in many sizes. If you decide to make another size, you will want your completed square to be one inch larger than the pillow form. So if you want to make a 16" pillow, then you will design the square to be 17" before sewing the two sides together.
- When cutting the t-shirt into a square, I use an Omnigrid that has been custom cut to a 13 ¼" square template. You can make a cardboard template or simply measure and mark a square.

Instructions:

1. Rough cut square: The application of interfacing can cause the shirt to shrink so I cut a larger square than needed. Place template over the desired area of the t-shirt. Cut the t-shirt out with an extra inch around the edges.



2. Cut Border Fabric Strips:

Cut 4 strips 3 1/2" x 13 1/4"

Cut 4 strips 3 1/2" x 19 1/4"



4. Cut the T-Shirts to 13 1/4" square: I use my Omnigridd to center the t-shirt design and cut using a rotary cutter.



3. Apply interfacing: Apply the interfacing per the manufacturer's instructions to the back side of the t-shirt. When I have large areas to fuse, I take an old plastic tub and fill it with water so that I can quickly dampen the hanky I use as my press cloth.



Place the t-shirt on your ironing board with the logo side down. Then place the interfacing on, covered by a damp hanky. Fuse using a dry iron. When the hanky stops steaming, the fusing is typically complete.



5. Assemble and Sew Pillow Top and Bottom: Pin the shorter border pieces to the top and bottom of the t-shirt.



Sew or serge using a ¼" seam. Press the stitching line and then press seams toward the border. When pressing, especially from the right side, avoid pressing the t-shirt logo. It can melt!



Now pin the longer border pieces to the sides of the t-shirt. Sew and press.

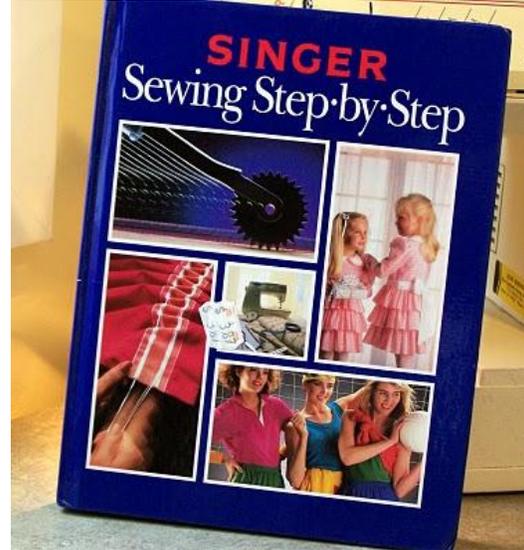


You now have a completed t-shirt block. Repeat for other t-shirt.



6. Prepare the Squares for Sewing: I use a handy tip from "Singer Sewing Step by Step"

(what a steal that was! I can't believe I left the price tag on.)



I modify the pillow squares to remove excess fabric in the corners. Fold the fabric into fourths. Mark a point halfway between the corner and the fold on each open side. At the corner, mark a point ½" from each raw edge.



Trim from the corner to the center marks.



7. Sew the Top to the Bottom: Pin and sew the two squares together using a $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowance. Leave an opening in the bottom to insert the pillow form. I usually leave about 10" open.



8. Turn Inside Out, Press Seams and Press Under $\frac{1}{4}$ " on open edge.



9. Insert Pillow Form and Hand Sew Opening: Pin the opening closed and sew closed using a slip stitch.



10. Enjoy your pillow!



Accessories

Groovy T-Shirt Tote

By: Barbara Matthiessen for Earth Safe Finishes

Why go green and sacrifice style? With this Groovy T-Shirt Tote, there's no need to. This bag is made from recycled and earth-safe materials so feel free to strut your stuff and be groovy.



Materials:

- T-shirt any size
- Thread to match shirt
- Earth Safe Finishes
<http://www.earthsafefinishes.com>
- Fabric Magic
- Generation Green Acrylic paint in Glacier and Sunflower
- Black fabric marker
- Wine cork
- Sponge (I prefer smaller celled sponges.)
- Palette
- Sewing machine with stretch knit stitch
- Scissors
- Sheet of scrap cardboard

Instructions:

1. Cut bottom of shirt off even with bottom of underarm seam. Cut off sleeves. Cut strip across width of shirt just under neckline. This will create 2 pieces for tote handles.



2. Slide a piece of cardboard into bottom section of shirt. The cardboard will keep any paint from seeping through to other side of shirt. Pour small puddles of both paints out onto palette. Mix 2 drops of Fabric Magic into each paint. Dip cork into Glacier paint for each flower center.



3. Dip side of sponge into Glacier paint. Press one end of sponge onto Glacier center then roll or press sponge outward forming a petal.



4. Repeat 5 or 6 times working around center to form flowers. Add flowers as desired, refer to project photograph.

5. Dip cork into Sunflower then onto flower centers. Allow paints to dry.

6. Outline flower petals, add dots around centers and in clusters of threes using black marker.



7. Turn painted shirt section inside out. Stitch across bottom using matching thread and a stretch stitch. Turn 1/2" hem to inside along top edge, stitch down.

8. Fold sides of strips (Handles cut from shirt in Step 1.) into center.



9. Most knits will automatically roll inwards with gentle guidance. Stitch down length of strip.



10. Sew ends of handles next to side seams. Each handle will span one side of tote with ends on opposite side seams. Shown is one side turned up into position it will be used and other end as it is stitched.



Scrunchy Scarf Tutorial

By: Jennifer Juniper of Hope Studios

This free sewing pattern for a scrunchy gathered scarf is a must-have accessory for you and your girlfriends. You get a lot of bang for your buck; it is a great accessory for yourself, and also a great gift to give. It's really a win/win project.



Materials:

- At least 2 yds. of thin jersey knit (I used T-shirt weight)
- Thread
- Elastic Thread (found in the elastic aisle)
- Scissors
- Sewing Machine
- And about 10 minutes of time

Instructions:

1. Cut your 2 yards of fabric into 10 inch by (at least) 72 inch strips (your fabric will end up being half as long when you finish, so the longer the better). At this point, you can decide to taper your ends or to cut the ends apart, like fringe, at least 12 inches up from the bottom. I

might even make longer tails if I did this again.



2. Hand wind the elastic thread onto your bobbin (use ordinary thread on top), and sew with a basting stitch from the center of one tail/fringe alllll the way to the end. Then again from the center of the other tail alllll the way to the other end. So, you have two long seams about 3 inches apart, down the center. (Make sure you back stitch at the beginning and the end, basting stitches will pull out easily if they aren't anchored like this.) See how it is bunching up as it passes through the machine? It's like magic!

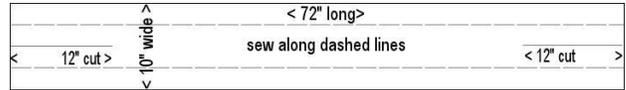


****tip**** If you have machine with self-adjusting tension, you will have to fiddle or turn that option off or your fabric will not bunch up.

3. Here is how it looks all sewn - just two straight seams from end to end. All the magic



Now, prance around all giddy-like with your cute new scarf. Make sure to pose for pictures and make plans to give them to everyone with a neck.



Easy T-Shirt Aprons

By: Ruffles and Stuff

Everyone has an excess of old T-shirts hanging around. Here's a good beginner sewing project that refashions your old rags into easy t-shirt aprons.



Project Type: Make a Project

Time to complete: In an evening

Sewn by: Machine



Materials:

- T-shirt
- Sewing supplies

Instructions:

1. Cut the front design out in a large rectangle from sleeve inseam to sleeve inseam, and from under the neck to the bottom of the shirt.



2. Fold the bottom of the shirt up until it's right under the design, then fold the hem down for a more finished look. Sew into four even sections, with the end section sewn into two for spoon slots.



3. Using the back of your shirt, cut 6 strips, 2.5" x 24".



4. Then sew three strips together into one, and repeat for the other three. You should have two long snakes like this.



5. Put them on top of each other with wrong sides facing and seams matched, pin, and stitch alllllll the way around to make your apron waistband/ties.



6. Then pin your apron skirt to the back in the center, and sew on!



Embellished Tees

Dollar Shirts Never Looked So Good

By: The Sisters 4 Say More is More

With these free sewing patterns, dollar shirts never looked so good! Buy some cheap t-shirts and refashion them into trendy tops with this sewing tutorial.



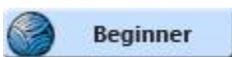
2. This was a crew neck men's XL. I used it to cut 65 double layered 1-1.5 inch circles (Not perfect circles).



Project Type: Make a Project

Time to complete: In an evening

Sewn by: Either Hand or Machine



Materials:

- 2 T-shirts
- Sewing Supplies

Instructions:

1. First, I cut out around the V-neck of the shirt, chopped the sleeves shorter and took in the sides to make the shape more feminine (It was a men's small).



3. Then, I doubled up the circles and pinned them on the T-shirt #1 where I wanted them.



4. Last, I sewed them all on using a zig zag stitch on my sewing machine. This part took the longest.



Petal Tees

By: Ruffles and Stuff

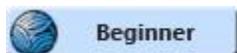
Embellish a boring T-shirt or tank top with fabric petals. The free petal tees sewing project is easy but it looks stylish and professional.



Project Type: Make a Project

Time to complete: In an evening

Sewn by: Machine



Materials:

- Knit Scraps
- T-Shirt
- Sewing Supplies

Instructions:



1. First cut "petal" shapes out of knit scraps in two different sizes. Cut enough to go around your neckline overlapping half of each other. I used 22 each of the large and medium size for my large scoop neck.
2. Lay the larger ones across your neckline, overlapping by half. (don't skimp on the overlap, you don't want to see through when it stretches!
3. Then lay one smaller petal where the larger petals overlap each other. Pin well.
4. And sew on with a narrow zigzag stitch. You're done!

Circle Flower Tee

By: Lindsey for The Pleated Poppy

Embellish a T-shirt and turn it into a circle flower tee with this free sewing project. It's fast, easy, and very stylish!



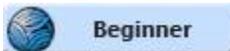
2. I had some white jersey on hand and decided to just use it, even though one side was ribbed. I just flipped it over and used the backside.



Project Type: Make a Project

Time to complete: In an evening

Sewn by: Both Hand and Machine



Materials:

- T-Shirt
- Extra T-shirt or knit fabric scraps
- Sewing supplies

Instructions:

1. I started with a cheap t-shirt that I loved the fit of. My mistake was in getting too thin of a shirt as this one got caught in my machine a lot. Live and learn.

3. I just free handed a bunch of random sized circles on 2 layers of fabric, definitely not uniform.



4. Then I laid out the circles in a pattern that was purposefully asymmetrical. That was a fun challenge for me, since I tend to like symmetry.



5. Then I pinned them all in place.



6. Next I pinched each circle in the middle. I was not precise at all about this.



7. Then I took my threaded needle and did 2 or 3 tiny stitches through the point, just enough to pleat it a bit.



8. Next I just stitched it in place with a couple hand stitches and knotted it.



9. I machine stitched random lines and squiggles until I got all the edges down that I wanted to be tacked.

Women's Corsage Shirt

By: Make it and Love it

This sewing pattern is so easy to do you'll wonder why you waited this long. Create cute top with a decorative flower-like accent.



Project Type: Make a Project

Time to complete: In an evening

Sewn by: Machine



[Click Here for Sewing Pattern](#)

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Included in this eBook:

- T-shirt embellishing ideas
- Pillows made from old t-shirts
- T-shirt accessories

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