

DIY Fashion Ideas

by Pamela Fay

If you have perfectly good clothes hanging in your closet that you don't like and never wear, you can remake these items with some simple DIY fashion ideas. You can also repurpose clothes from thrift shop garments. All you need are basic sewing skills and a bit of imagination. You can make these fashions even if you don't have a sewing machine. Do it old school style with a needle and thread.

Not-Your-Grandma's DIY Cardigan

Most everyone has at least one sweatshirt stuffed in the drawer. Although sweatshirts are warm and cozy, they are far too slovenly looking to pass for fashion. So, make yours over. Fold the garment exactly in half so that the center front line forms a fold on the outside. Pin the shoulder seams together to keep the garment from shifting. Carefully mark the center front with tailor's chalk. Lay the sweatshirt out flat. Carefully cut the ribbed trim from the collar, sleeves and hem. (Keep intact for reuse in another project.) Cut up the center front seam right through the logo, if one exists. You now have a funky little cardigan with unfinished edges. If you like, you can sew appliqués or ribbon ties on the cardigan. Or sew on some decorative buttons. Your cardigan looks great layered over a tank top and belted at the waist.

Sassy Pencil Skirt

A beautiful pencil skirt is a wardrobe classic. However, finding just the right skirt in the stores can be a challenge, particularly if you are smaller or larger than the average size. The beauty of this DIY fashion idea is that you can expand your pencil skirt options beyond black and brown without spending a lot of money. If you don't have a skirt in your wardrobe that you can alter, you can easily find beautiful prints at a garage sale or thrift store. Put on the skirt and enlist the help of a friend to pin the sides from the hemline up to the hip. Take off the skirt and turn it inside out. Open the hem at the side seams so that you can mark the seam to the bottom. Mark over the pins with tailor's chalk. Remove the pins and draw a continuous line on one side. To duplicate the line on the other side, fold the skirt in half and pin together the side seams to avoid slippage. Place tracing paper between the two sides and using a tracing wheel, mark the other side. Baste both sides and check the fit. If the fit is right, sew it, hand stitch the hem, press and... work it!

Denim Bomber-Style Jacket

The best thing about DIY fashion is that nothing goes to waste. Remember the ribbing cut from the sweatshirt you used to make a soft, cuddly cardigan? You can make a bomber jacket using the ribbing. You will need a heavyweight denim shirt. Try on the shirt. Make a mark with tailor's chalk at the waist. Remove the shirt and make another mark one inch below. Extend the line all the way around the shirt ensuring that the line is even. Cut off the bottom of the shirt. Wrap the ribbing around your waist and mark it with chalk at the point where it is comfortably closed. Add a half-inch on each raw edge for seam allowance. Cut off the excess ribbing and turn under a small hem on each edge and stitch. Pin the ribbing to the bottom of the shirt, right sides together gathering the shirt as

needed. If there is a lot of excess material to gather, stitch the bottom seam allowance of the shirt with large basting stitches and pull the thread to gather the material more evenly. Stitch the seam and press it up toward the top of the shirt. Topstitch the seam onto the shirt. Attach hook-and-eye fixtures or frog closing to the ribbing. Your fashion forward bomber jacket is ready to wear.

Halter Top

For this fashion idea, you will need a mock neck pullover shirt made of interlock knit. You can use a velvet top for a dressier look. Lay the shirt flat and mark a diagonal line from the underarm seam to the neck. Cut along the line leaving the mock neck intact. Trim the back away dipping as low as you dare. Stitch sparkly braid trim at the hem and along the neck. This is a simple yet elegant look for evening with jeans or a pencil skirt.

References

“Rip It: How to Deconstruct and Reconstruct the Clothes of Your Dreams”; Elissa Meyrich, 2006