

# Easy Artsy T-Shirt Designs

*by Pamela Fay*

It's fun and easy to make your own custom T-shirt designs. You don't even need a sewing machine. However, you will need a few cotton-blend shirts, either with a graphic design or even in plain colors. For some of these ideas, you will want to use a shirt that fits, but for others, use an oversized shirt that is too big to wear in public. You will also need scissors, a razor blade or craft knife, a box of safety pins, tailor's chalk, ribbon and a ruler.

## **Heart it**

A plain, fitted shirt works best for this project. Turn the shirt inside out. Mark a heart on the center front or use another simple shape such as a clover. Place cardboard or thick layers of newspaper between the layers. Use the razor blade or knife to slash between the chalk lines. Be sure to stay inside the lines so that the heart shape is preserved. Layer your custom T-shirt over a tank top or sports bra.

## **Punk Pin it**

Cut the neckband from a fitted T-shirt. Lay the shirt flat ensuring that it is evenly folded along the shoulder seams. Mark a line with chalk along the shoulder and sleeve ½-inch from the shoulder seam and top of sleeve on each side. Cut along the line, removing about an inch of fabric from the top of shoulders and sleeves. If the shirt is already too tight, simply cut along the seamline without removing any of the fabric. The T-shirt should now be open along the shoulder seams and top of the sleeves. Pin the cut edges together with safety pins at 2-inch intervals. Your skin will show through this custom design.

## **Knot it**

This is a good custom design for T-shirts that are a too large. Cut off the sleeves just inside the seam, i.e., leaving the seam attached to the sleeve. Lay the T-shirt flat. Mark a chalk line along the bottom that is 2-inches above the hemline. Cut off the neckband. Create a shallow boatneck by trimming away an inch or two more of the neck opening. Be careful not to trim too much; leave 2-inches on each shoulder. Cut straight up the center back through one layer of material from top to bottom. On both the right and left sides of the cut edge, make horizontal cuts that are 1 ½-inches apart. Tie the right side strips of your customer t-shirt to the left side in small knots until the entire back is connected.

## **Lace it**

Cut off the sleeves inside the seams of a fitted T-shirt. Mark a chalk line and cut 2-inches from the bottom. Try on the shirt and pin both sides evenly to determine the amount of extra fabric. Remove the shirt and cut the amount you determined, approximately 3 to 6-inches, off both sides through both layers of material. Lay the T-shirt flat. Pin the armholes at the bottom to keep the material from shifting. Use scissors to poke holes down the side of the shirt an inch from the cut edge side at 2-inch intervals. Be sure the holes go through both the front and back of the shirt. Repeat the holes on the other side.

Thread ribbon through the holes on each side starting at the pins (underneath the arm). Criss-cross the ribbon in and out of the holes so that the loose ends extend down below the bottom of the shirt. Tie the end in a bow. Repeat on the other side.

### **References**

Generation T: 108 Ways to Transform a T-shirt; Megan Nicolay; 2006