

Module 2

UNIT 5

UPCYCLING SPECIFIC
CLOTHING CATEGORIES: A
FOCUS ON REDESIGNING
STRETCH GARMENTS AND
REQUIRED FINISHINGS

Duration: 13 hours





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Overview of the Unit

This Unit takes a more specific and practical approach, focusing on applying creativity to redesigning stretchy garments such as t-shirts and jerseys. Emphasis is placed on finishings, tailored to the fabric choice.

The unit also includes a basic introduction to using an overlock machine. The entire redesign process will be covered, from initial research to the final garment finishings.





Expected Learning Outcomes

By the end of this Unit, you will be able to:

1. Creatively redesign stretchy garments, such as t-shirts and jerseys, adapting them to new styles and purposes.
2. Gain proficiency in applying various finishing techniques, both by machine and by hand, tailored to different fabric types.
3. Acquire a comprehensive understanding of the garment redesign process, from initial research and conceptualization to the completion of final finishing touches.
4. Learn to select and adapt finishing methods based on the specific characteristics and requirements of different stretchy fabrics.

Pre-requisite knowledge

This Unit assumes a basic understanding of pattern cutting and sewing



Learning Objective

The Unit aims to give learners tools to apply creativity to redesign stretchy garments like t-shirts and jerseys, using overlock and hand sewing with a focus on finishings



Target Audience

This Unit targets people/learners/entrepreneurs including NEETs, low skilled adults looking for a job or in reconversion but also looking for a better placement within the artisanal clothing sector, professionals already working in the sector, students graduated by secondary schools within fashion or textile design curricula. Among the target groups, special regard will be given to women with economic fragilities.

Key concepts

Redesign, stretch fabrics, overlock, finishings

For this Unit's practical part you will need

- T-shirts
- Measuring tape
- Pins or clips
- Fabric scissors
- Overlock Sewing machine and thread
- Elastic band at least 2,5 wide

Necessary equipment



01

Teacher's Profile

Teachers should know basic of pattern cutting and overlock sewing.

01

Methodology

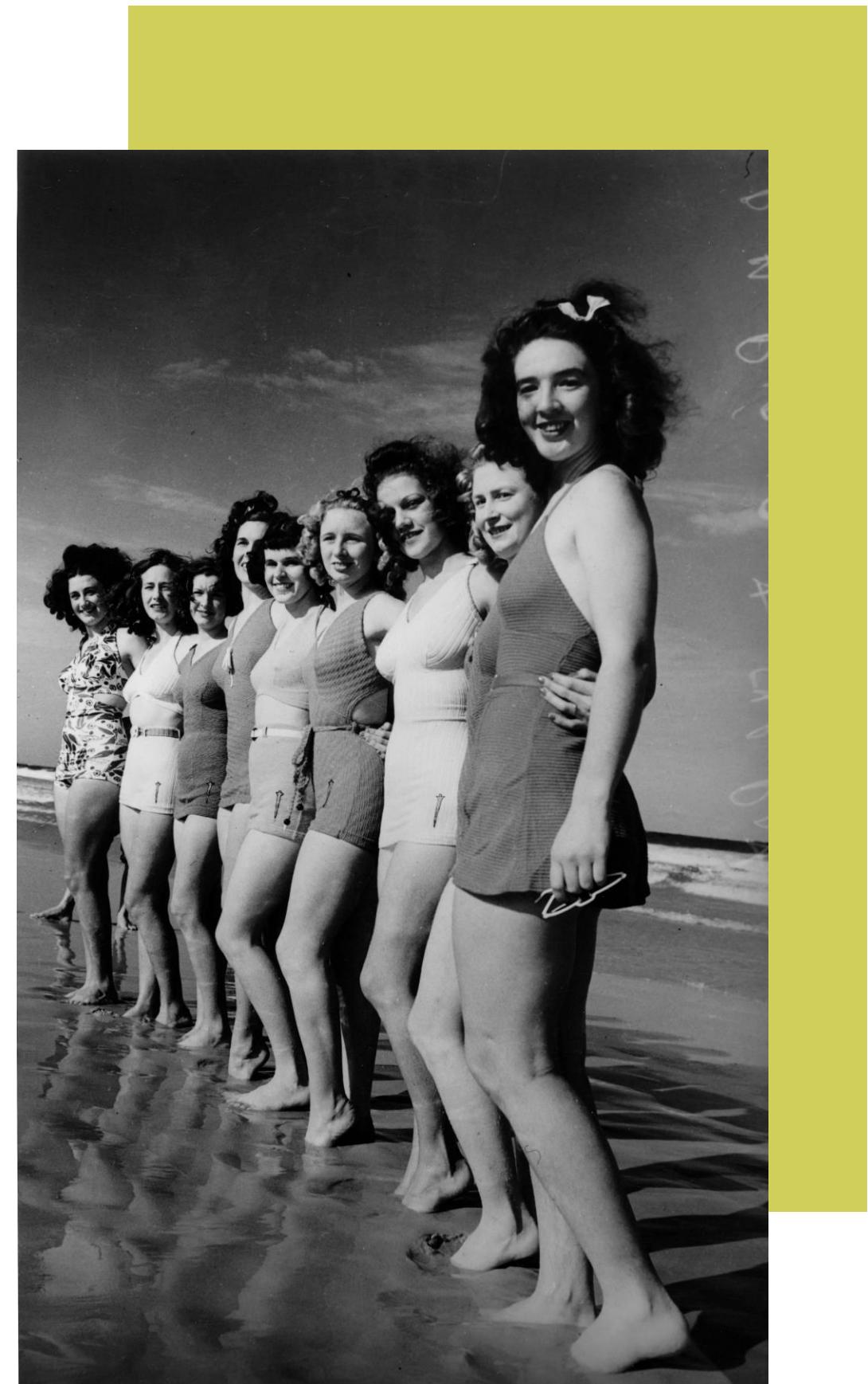
This Unit introduces a theoretical part which is followed by a practical part.



STRETCH FABRICS

Stretch fabrics (knit fabrics) are made using interlaced looped fibres rather than woven fibres. The 'knit' or loops give the fabric some of its stretch, alongside elastic fibres which have stretchy properties themselves (for example lycra/spandex/elastane, three names for the same fibre)

Initially used in swimsuits and women's bras, these materials were adopted by fashion designers in the mid-1980s. By the early 1990s, they had entered the mainstream market and became widely popular in sportswear.



STRETCH FABRICS

Lightweight stretch fabrics have revolutionized garment design, making fit adjustments easier as the fabric naturally expands and contracts with body movement.



Tommaso Ferri photography

EDITORIAL



JERSEY

Jersey is usually known for its soft hand and its ability to drape.

Jersey cotton fabric is among the most commonly used textiles today. Lightweight and lacking in structure, it requires the designer to create garments that do not cling tightly to the body.



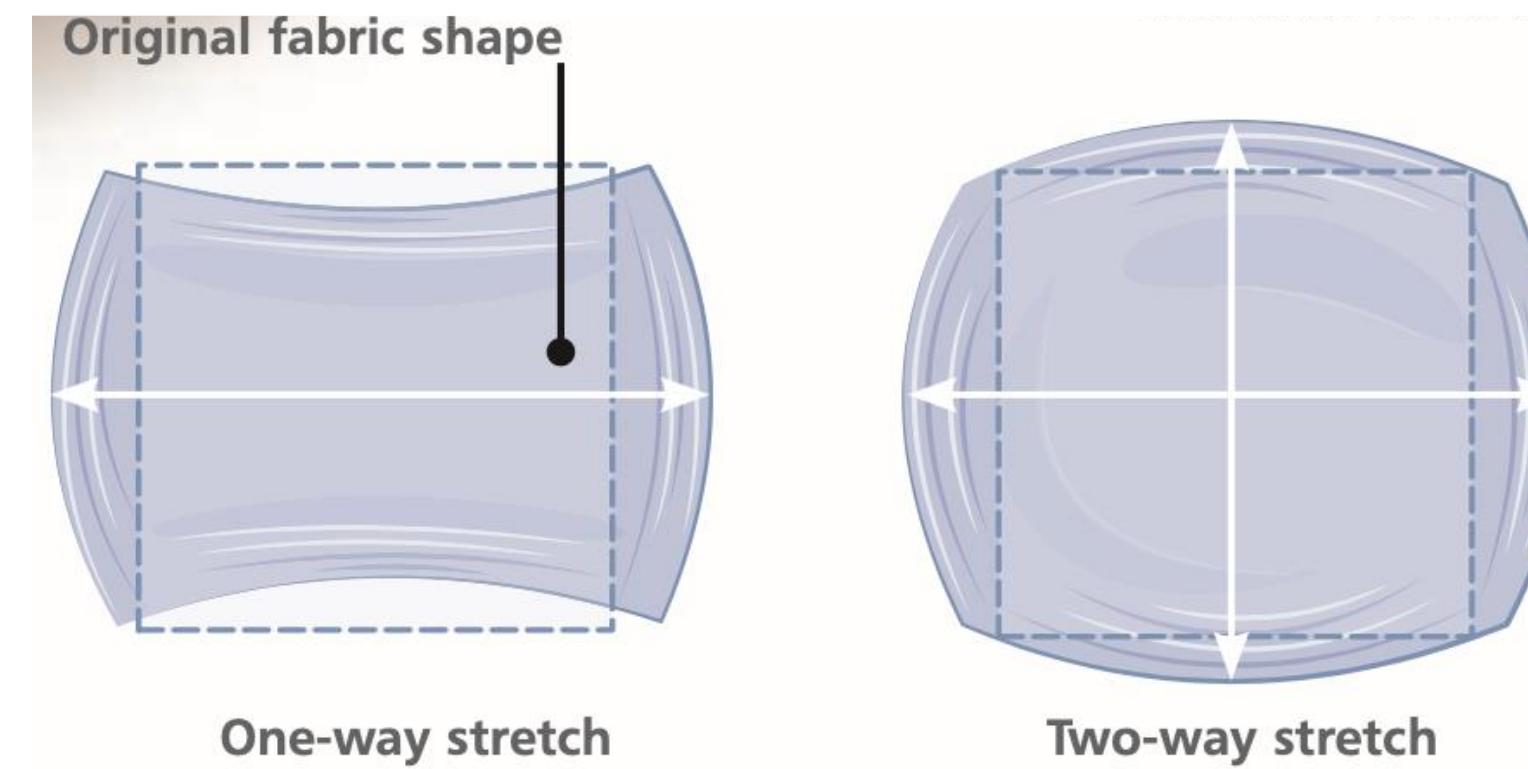


2 way stretch

2-way stretch is horizontal, running across the fabric from selvedge to selvedge.

4 way stretch

4-way stretch is both horizontal AND vertical, running across the fabric and up/down the fabric.



Interlock

This lightweight fabric has a structure similar to woven textiles and is more rigid compared to a single-knit jersey.



Punto Roma

This Ponte di Roma double knit in a solid volcanic red has an even surface, which is ideal for tailoring.
It looks the same on the face and back sides



Sweatshirt Fleece

On the outside, it looks like any other knit, on the inside it's fuzzy. This fuzz is what distinguishes sweatshirting from French terry,



the fabric. Terry Cloth

Terry cloth is engineered for optimal moisture absorption, with its looped yarns providing an increased surface area to soak up moisture effectively.



Weft terry knit

Knitted terry is a fabric commonly used for women's tops. This terry is a yarn-dyed stripe, with the colored stripe introduced in the looped pile only into a solid-color knit ground cloth.



Warp terry knit

Knitted terry in a warp-pile knit creates a stable knitted fabric that is very popular for fashion tops. The looped surface uses "thick and thin" irregularly twisted yarn to create irregular loops. The knitted back side shows how it provides the "base" to insert the looped yarns that show on the surface.

Mesh

is a lightweight, breathable textile with an open, net-like structure that offers flexibility and elasticity. It is typically made from a blend of synthetic fibers like nylon, polyester, or spandex, allowing it to stretch and recover while maintaining durability.



Small holes

Small holes, knitted closely together, produce less durable fabrics but are more sheer than large-hole fabrics. This small-hole mesh is often used for women's fashion tops, and it is often printed.



Medium holes

Medium-holed mesh is often used for linings in jackets and pants.



Large holes

Large holes are usually knitted far apart and create durable fabrics for athletic activity. These large-holed mesh fabrics are not sheer like the small-hole mesh knits.

Inspirational projects

2 t-shirts become one new top

Technique used: machine stitch

Most of the hems were left raw to emphasise the grunge look.



Inspirational projects

Unused stockings and jersey scraps repurposed in a 2 pieces set

Technique used: overlock and hand stitch.

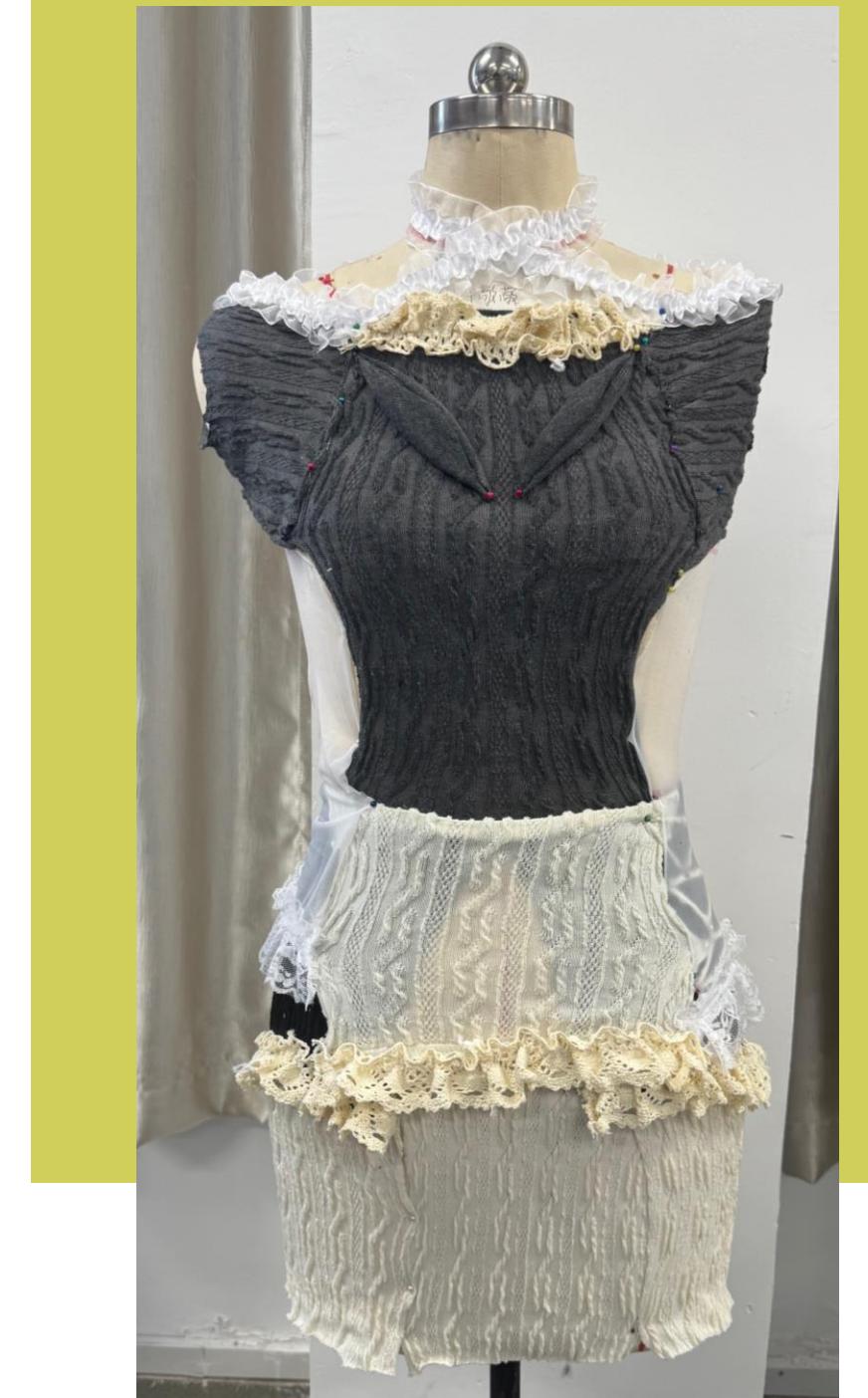
Tip: Use a narrow overlock hemming



Inspirational projects

Unused stockings repurposed in a dress

Technique used: machine stitch



Inspirational projects

Unused socks repurposed in a decorative application inspired by Dada and famous Man Ray picture

Technique used: machine and hand stitch





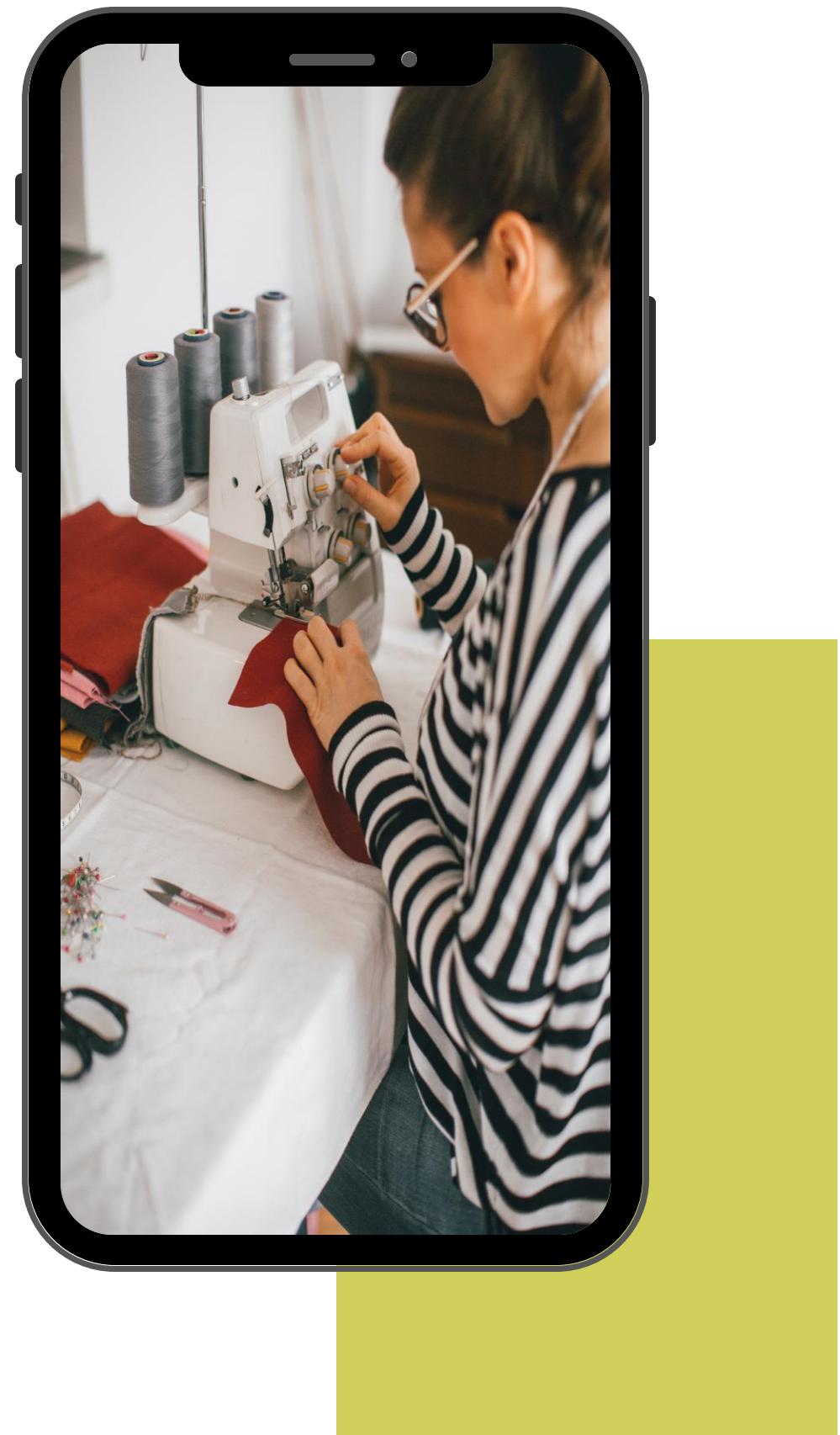
Overlock machine

Overlock machine is also called serger.

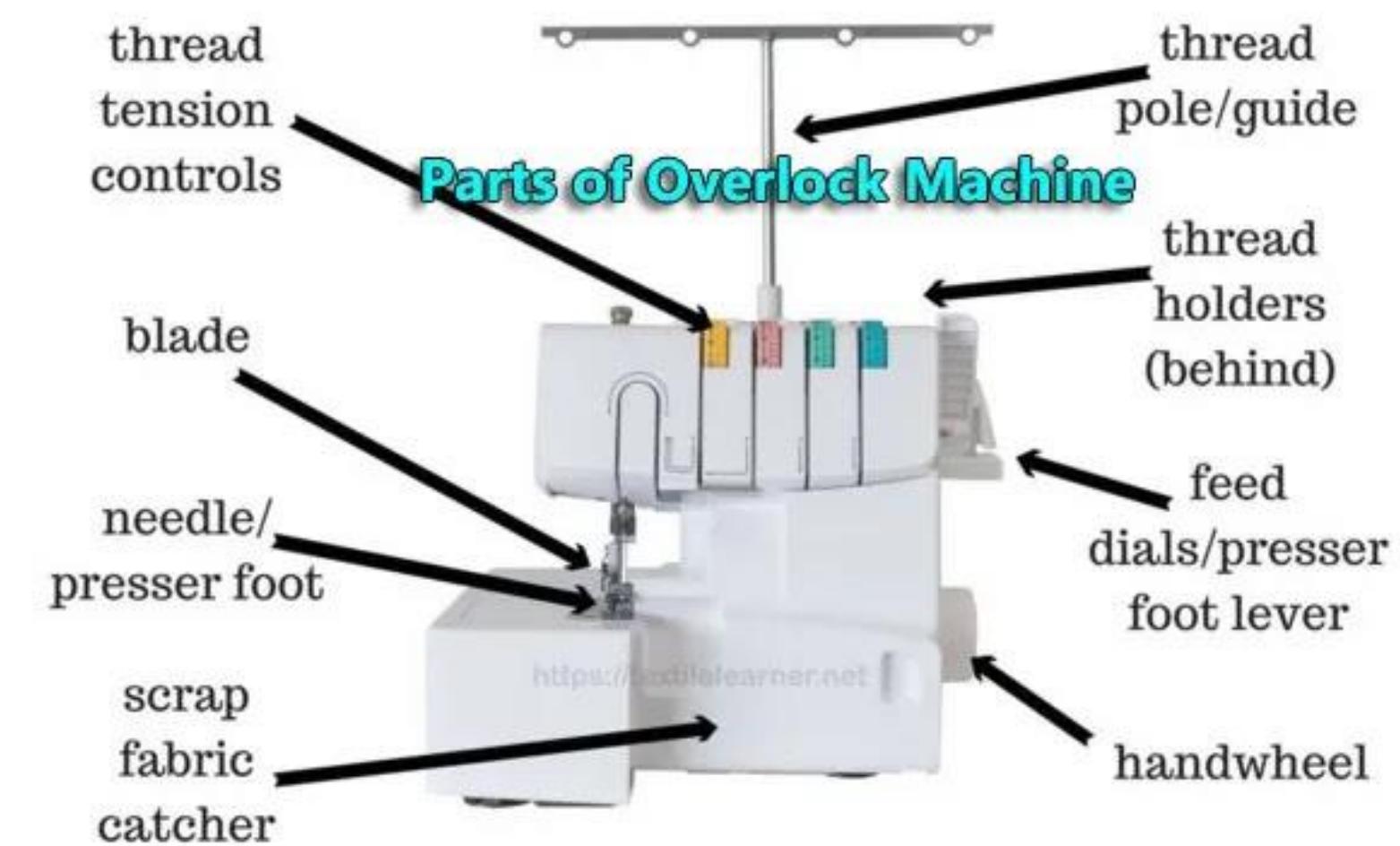
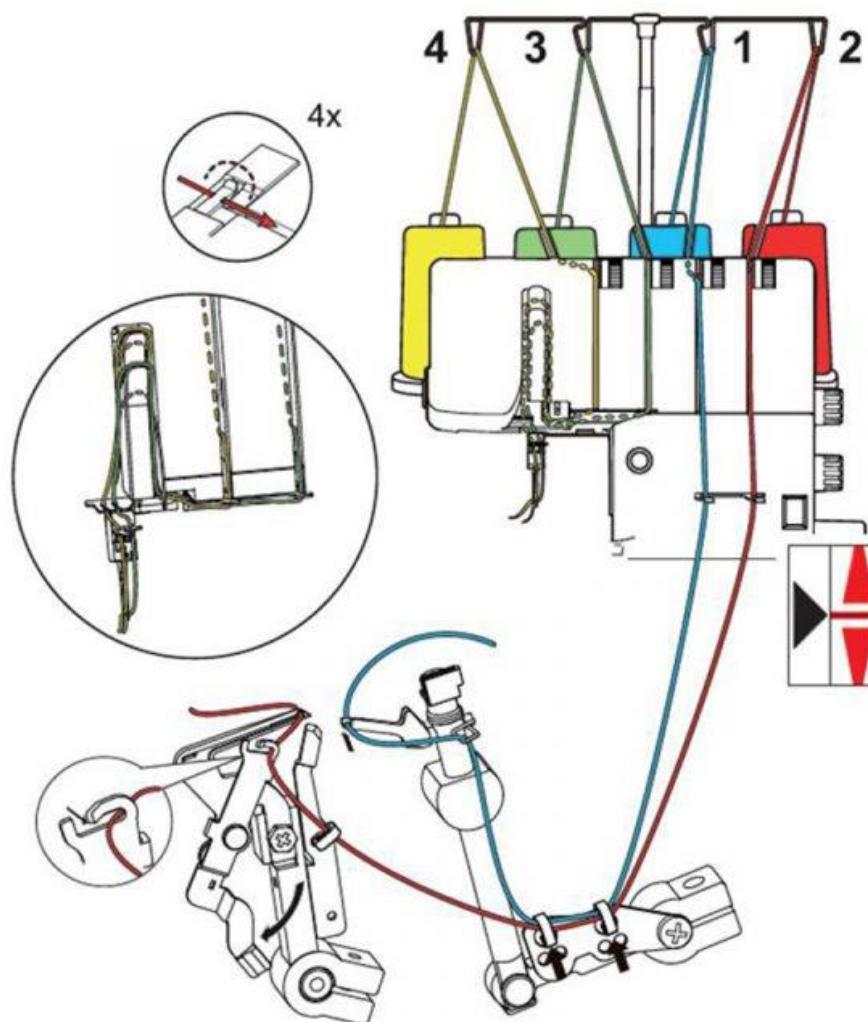
Overlock machines are specialized machines that make the overlock stitch. The overlock stitch is used for edge finishing and seaming. Overlock machines come in both home and industrial versions.

The special feature of this type of machine is that It trims excess fabric while stitching, making it ideal for mass production and professional-quality garment construction.

Watch the
[video](#)



Domestic serger





Industrial serger

Unlike domestic sergers, industrial models are more durable, faster, and built for continuous heavy use. You can find 4 threads and 5 threads machines.

Watch the
[video](#)





3 threads stitch

The left-hand needle is ideal for edge finishes on heavier fabrics or loose-weave materials

40





4 threads stitch

Using both needles creates strong, durable seams when joining two fabric pieces together.





Narrow hem

The right-hand needle is ideal for edge finishes on lightweight fabrics. It also works well for seams on light or sheer fabrics in loose-fitting garments where there is minimal seam stress.





Lettuce hem

This produces a curly, decorative edge on stretchy fabrics.
The settings are the same as for a rolled hem but the
handling technique is different.





Fishingline hem

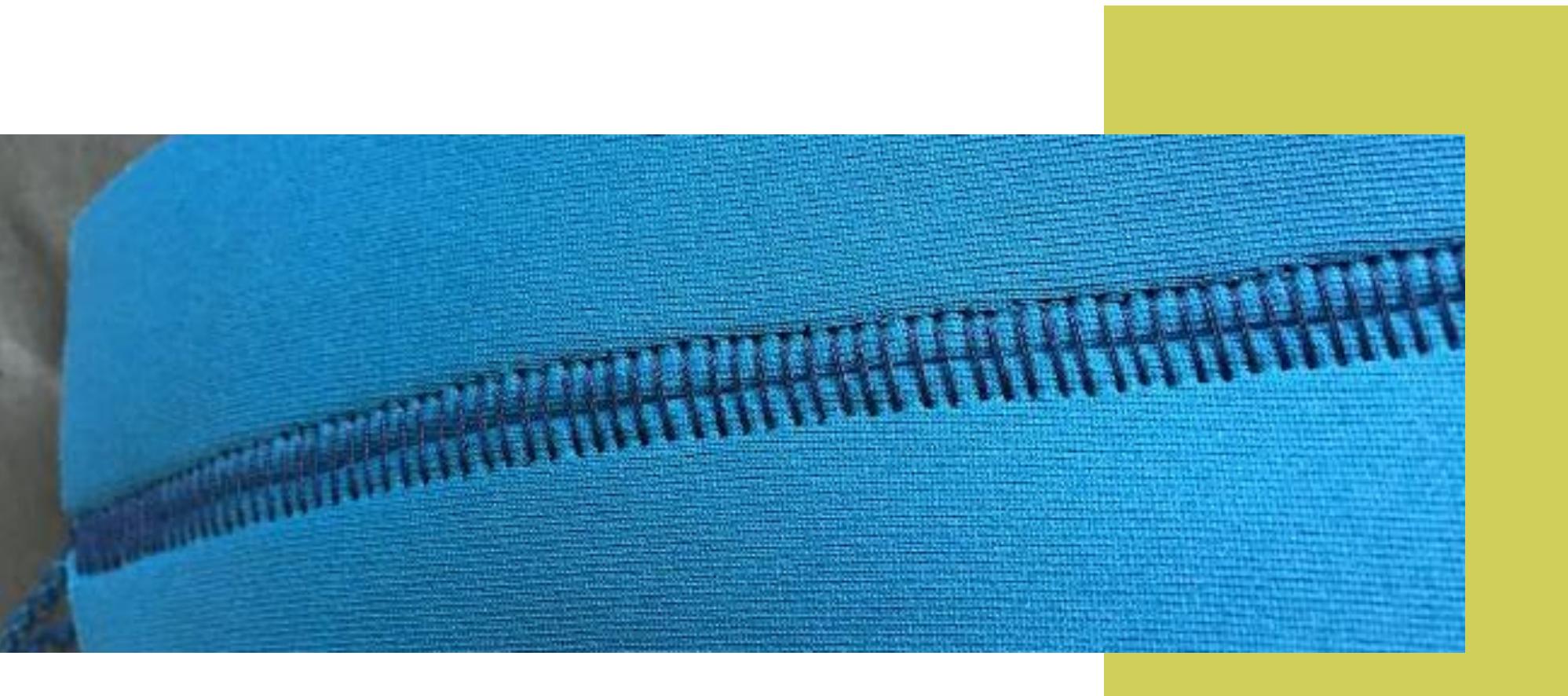
This technique creates a firm, flouncy edge on bias or stretch fabrics. It follows the same settings as rolled hemming but incorporates an overlock stitch that encases nylon fishing line





Flatlock stitch

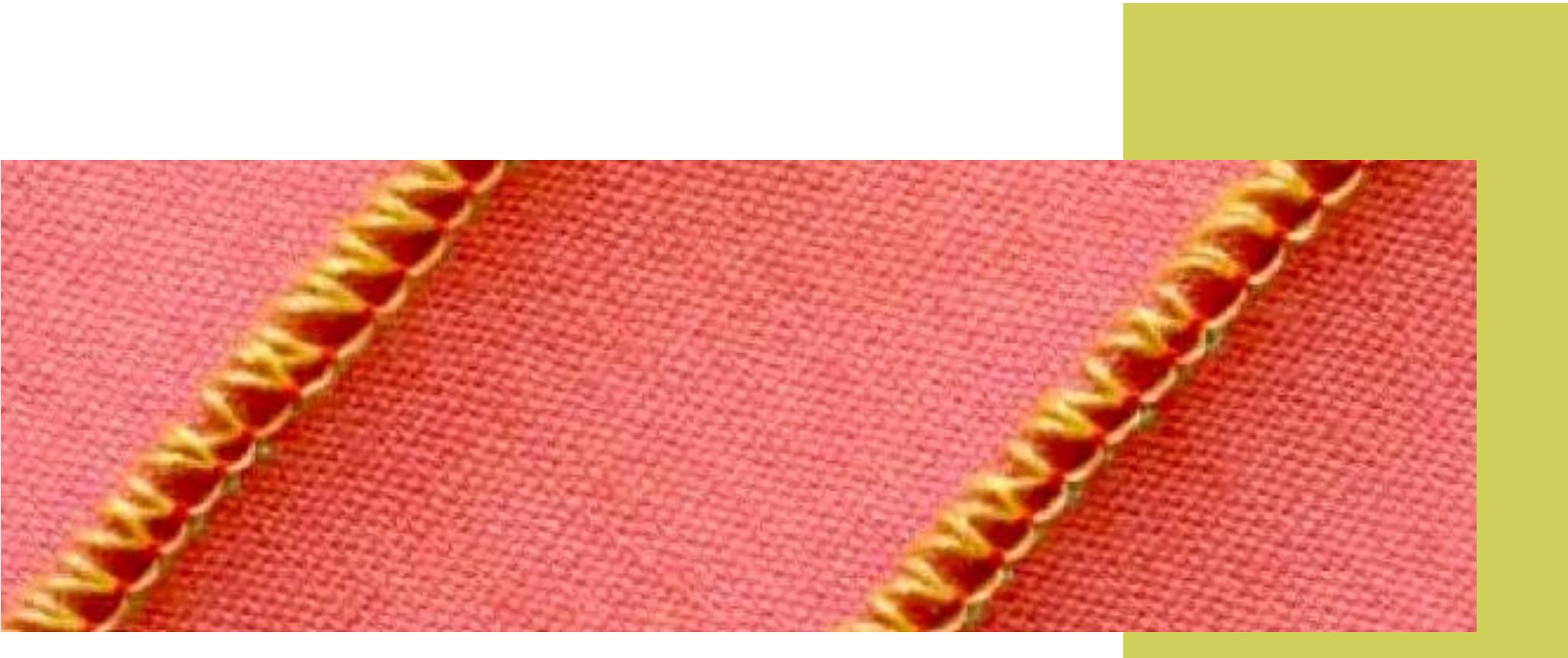
This technique creates a decorative flat seam with visible overlock stitches on the surface. It also forms a folded hem, making it ideal for stretch fabrics





Pin Tucks

This technique creates a textured, decorative finish by sewing a rolled hem along a fold instead of the fabric's edge.

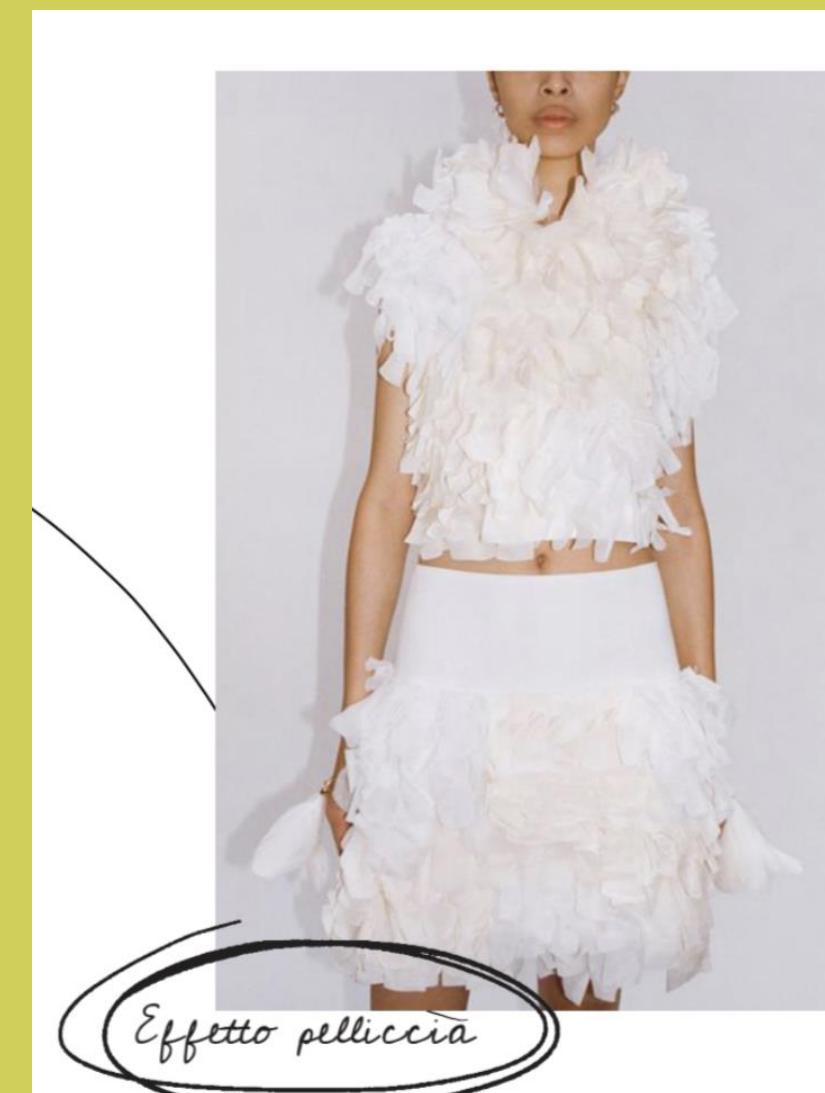
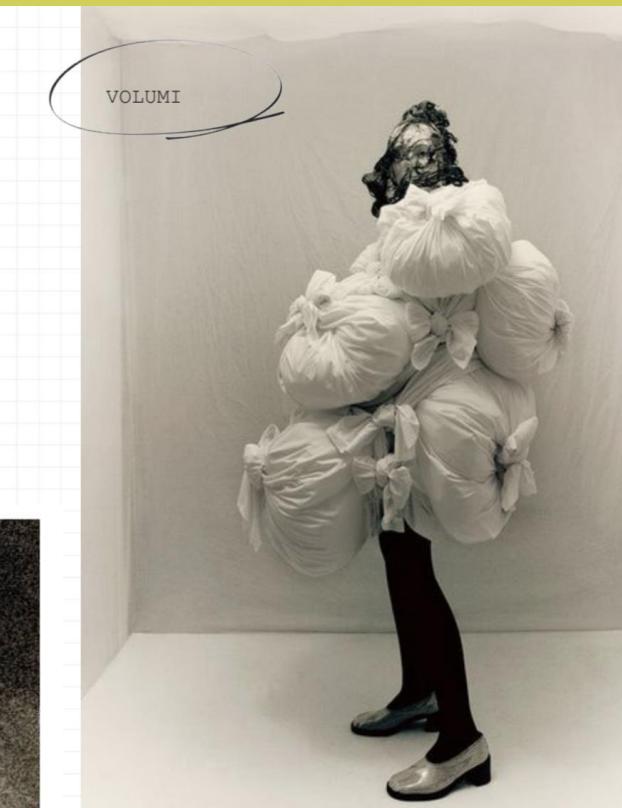
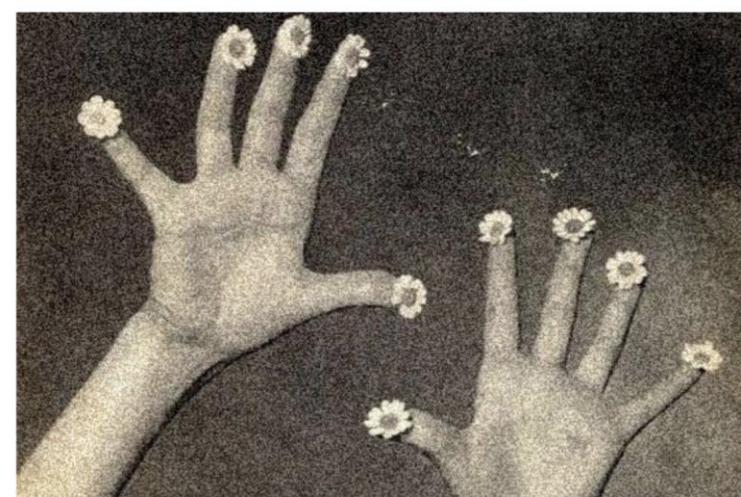


Project study / Giulia Camiciottoli

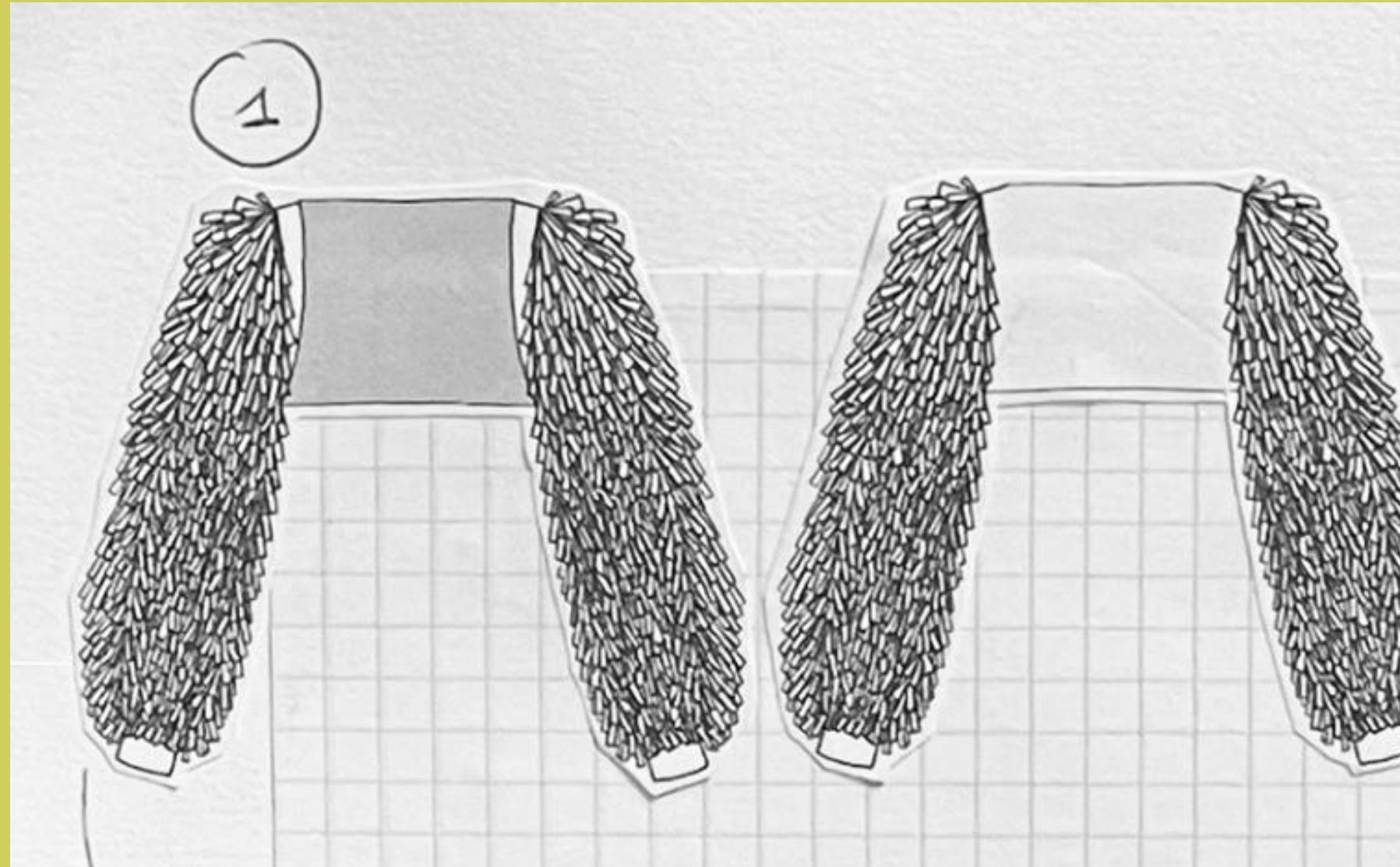
The idea behind this unique garment is layering as a medium to reveal and conceal through the combination of textures and fabrics with varying weights and consistencies. Imperfections are embraced as a value, leaving their mark on the garments: raw hems, frayed edges, and irregular textures become an amplification of the passage of time, reflecting past use and enduring love.

Through various manipulation techniques, different textures have been created by reusing fabric scraps from the collection's production.

This technique is ideal for old t-shirts and mesh jerseys, creating a unique look thanks to an artisanal approach.

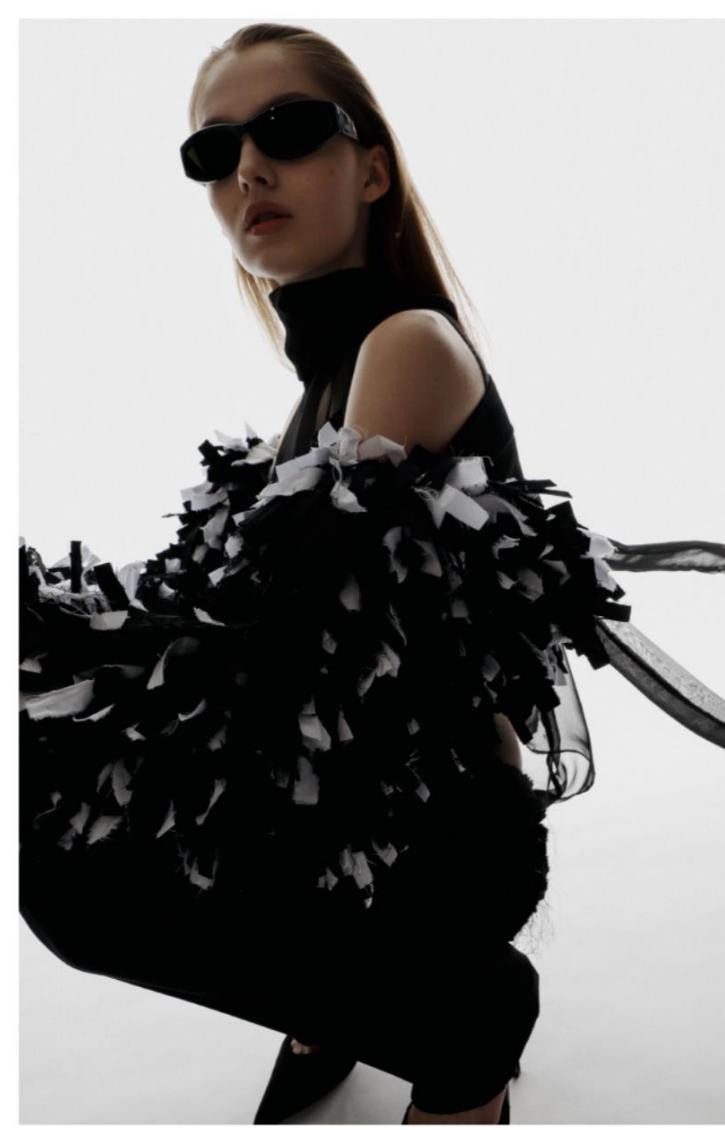
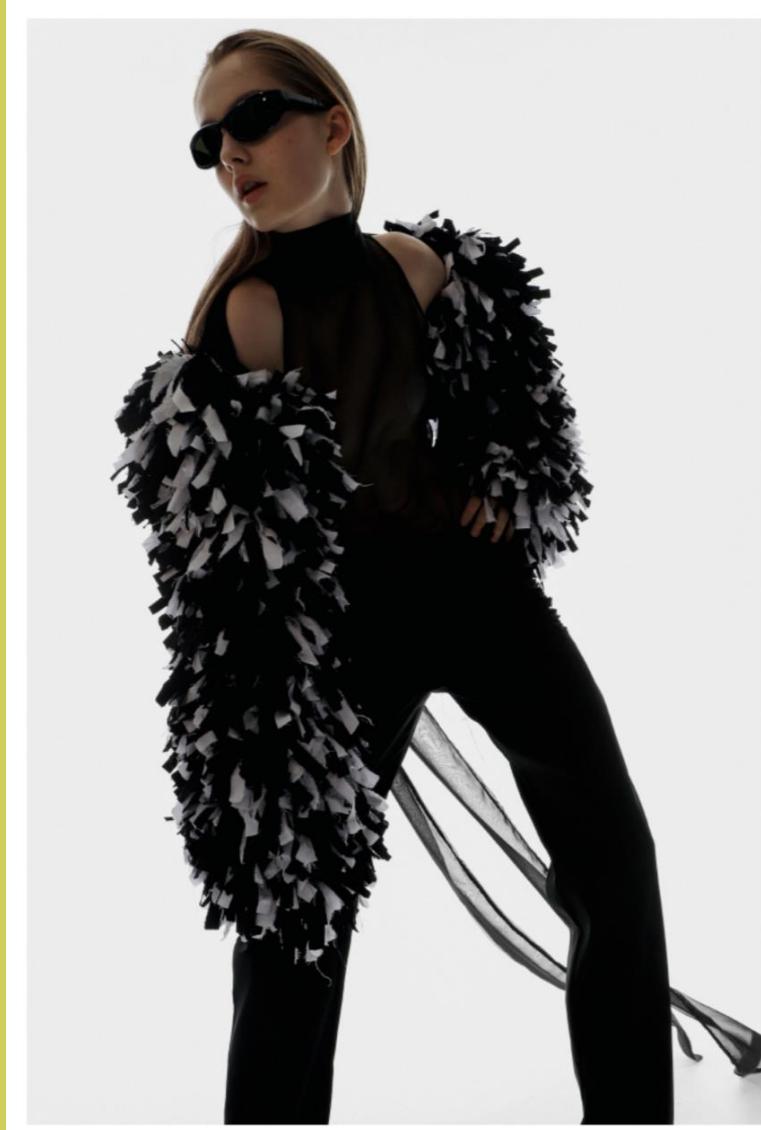


Project study / Giulia Camiciottoli

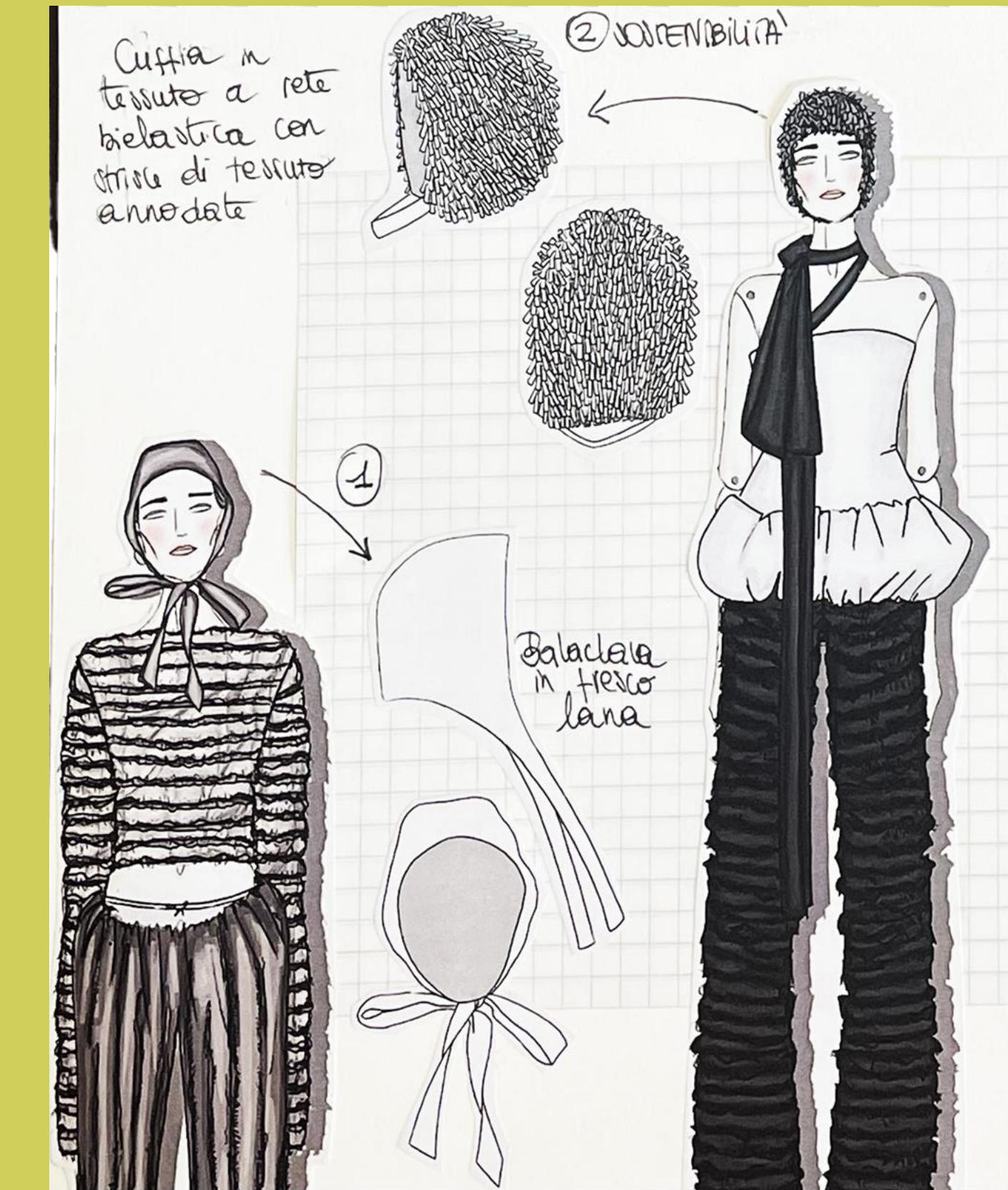




Project study / Giulia Camiciottoli



Project study / Giulia Camiciottoli



Redesigned old T-shirts



01

**Research and
moodboard**

The concept

02

Redesign and sketch

The new design

03

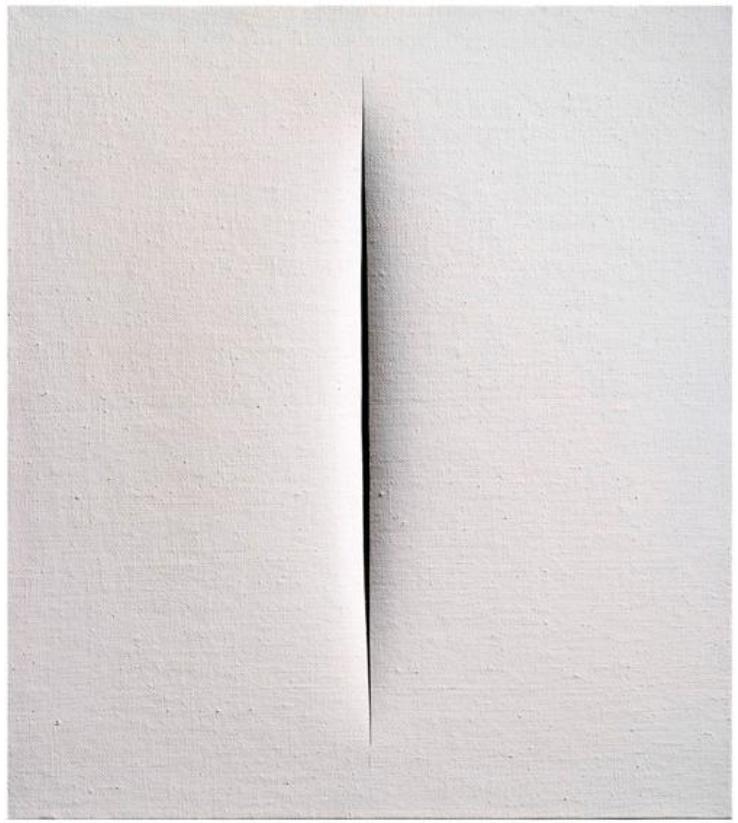
Cut & Make

Cut and sew

04

Final Look

A new set of 2 tops
and a skirt



1. Moodboard / 1 hour

Following this example you can experiment with your own old or damaged t-shirts.

In this project some stretchy tops are redesigned into 2 tops and a skirt. Inspiration behind the project is a very famous artwork by Lucio Fontana "Concetto Spaziale, Attesa" from 1968

Create your moodboard based on the chosen concept
(See also Unit 1 of this module)



Project by Fashion student Heidi



2. Redesign and sketch / 2 hours

3 old tops transformed into 3 new pieces

2 Tops

1 Skirt

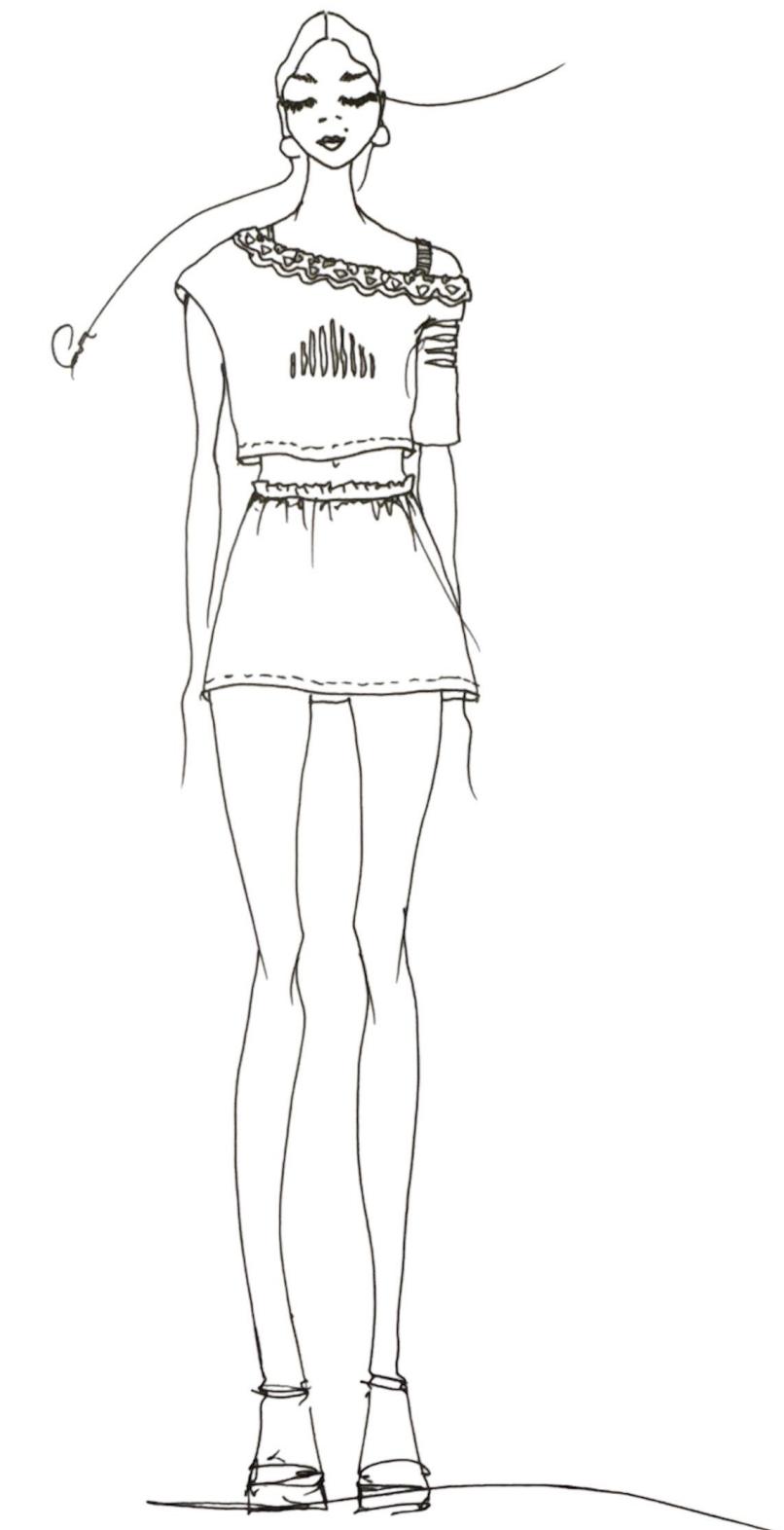
Cut the longest t-shirt to create a skirt

Neckband was redesigned into a shoulder strap



2. Redesign and sketch

Sketch the new design following your idea.
(Also see Unit 2 of this module)



3.Cut / 1 hour

Subtraction technique: removing sections of a garment using techniques such as cutting, laser cutting, or slashing.





3. Make / 3 hours

3 Tops transformed into 3 new pieces

2 Tops

1 Skirt

Cut the longest t-shirt to create a skirt

Stitch an elastic band at least 2,5 cm wide,
measure depends on the waistline.

Technique used: machine stitch



How to [stitch](#) elastic
band



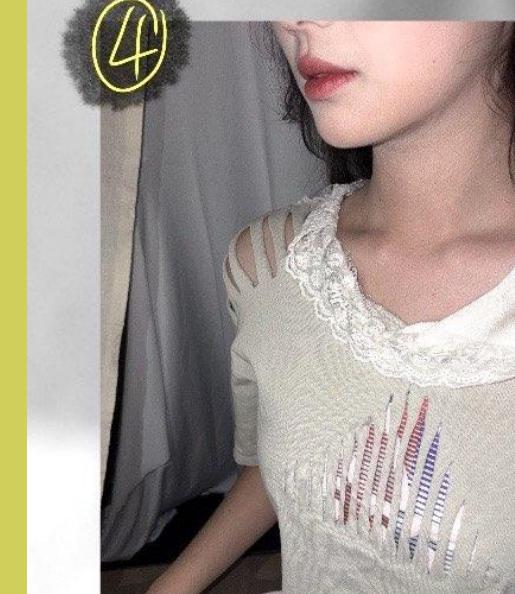
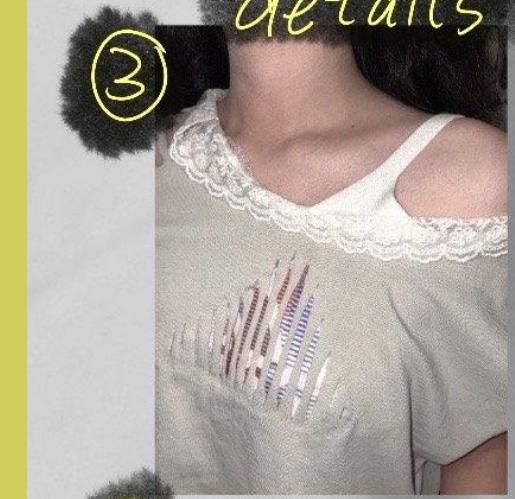
3. Make / 1,30 hours

Lost and found labels were sewn onto the top to create an unusual texture highlighting the concept of reuse and upcycling (hand stitch)



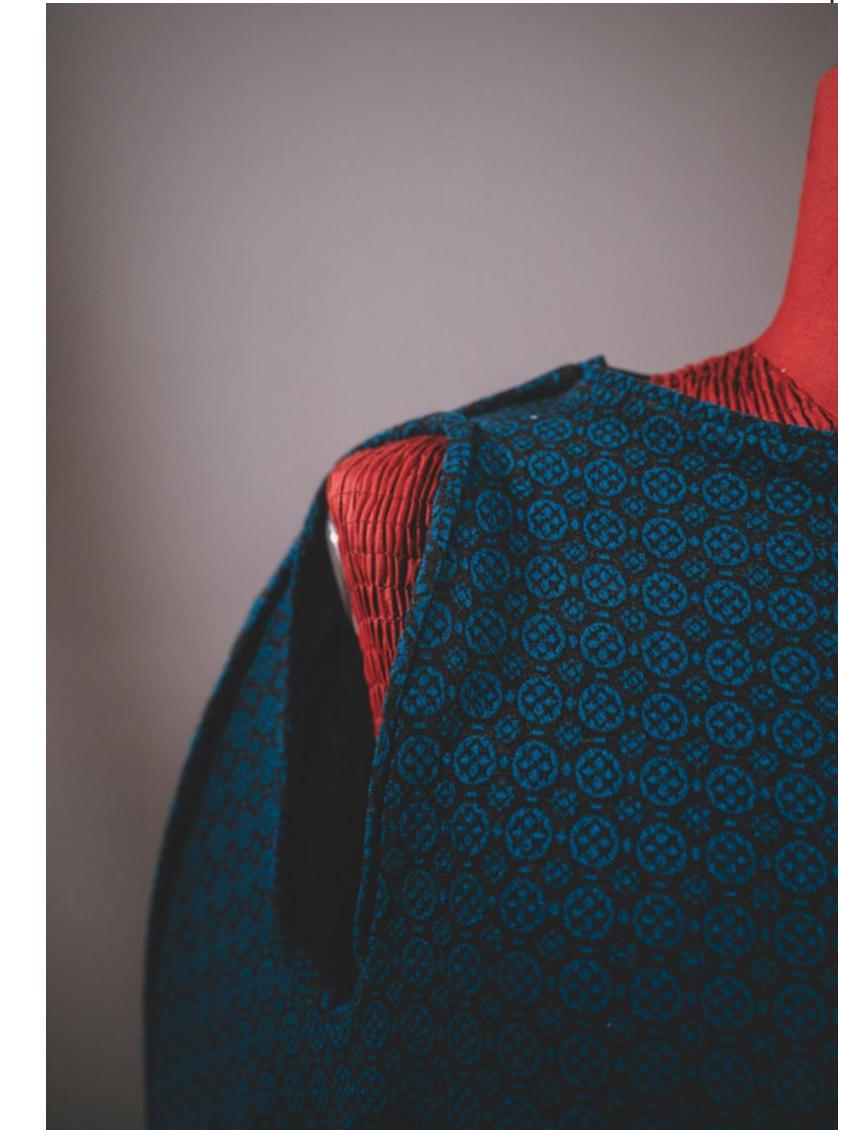
Final Look

Vintage strips of lace-like fabric were added and machine stitched onto the top (4 threads stitch)





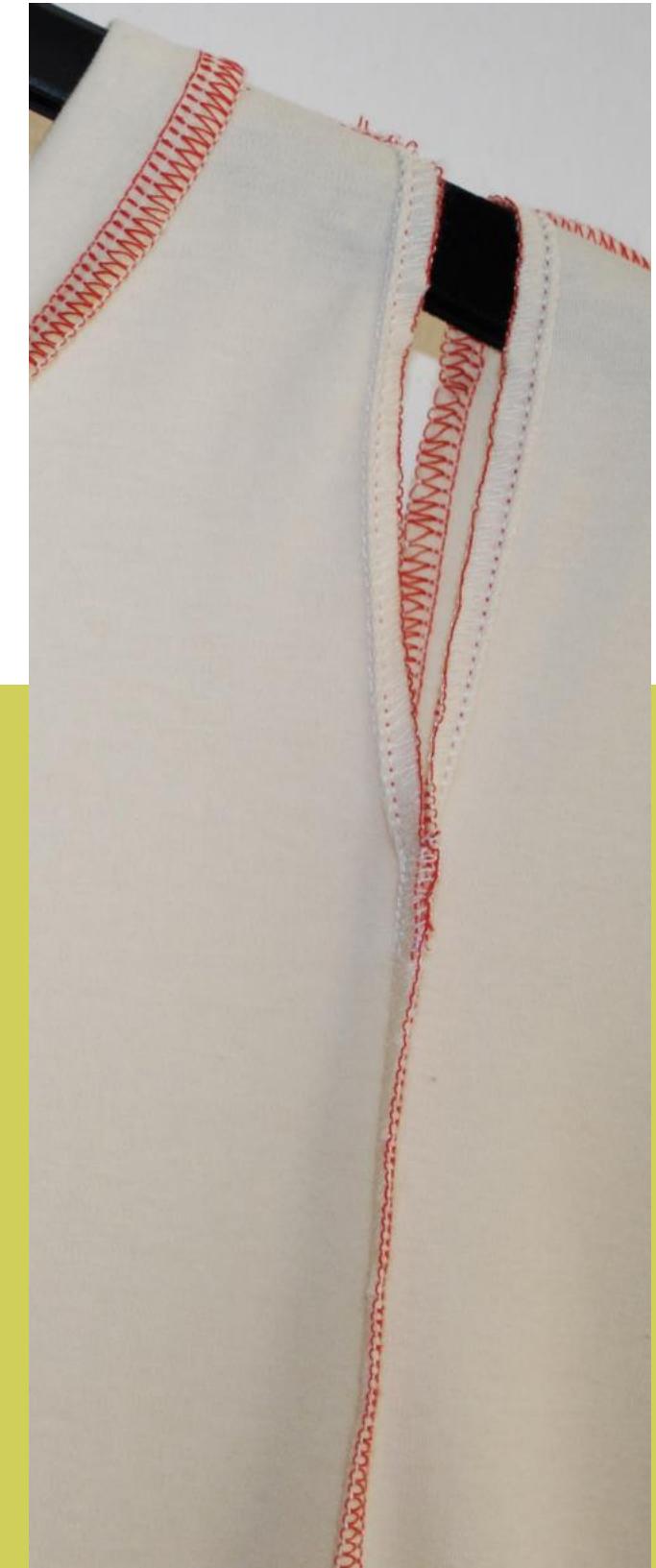
Stitches and stretch garment overview





Finishings as functional and decorative elements

Contrast colour thread for one of the loops



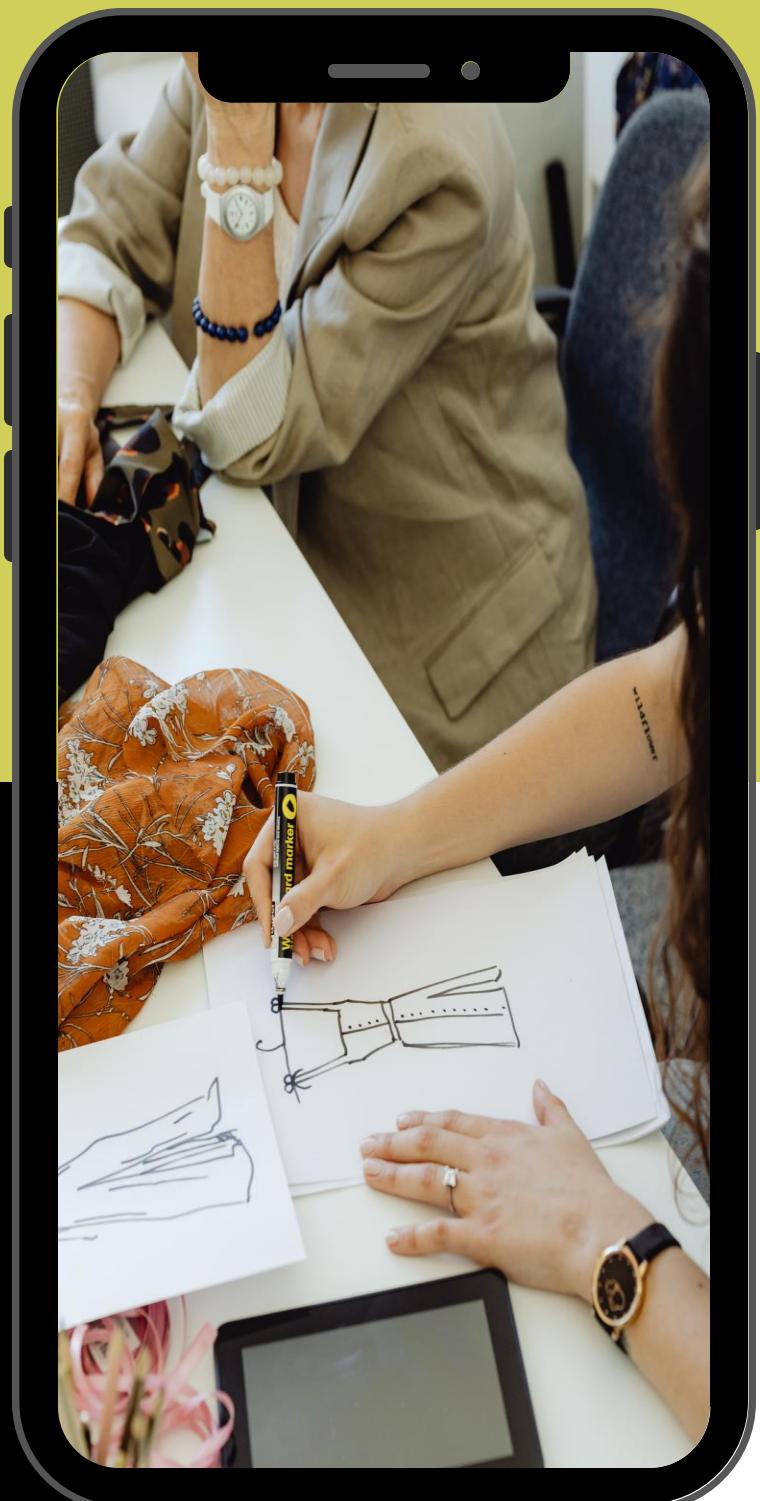


Finishings as functional and decorative elements

Left > matching thread

Right > contrast colour thread





Unit Summary



In this Unit you learned how to creatively redesigning stretchy garments like t-shirts and jerseys, with an emphasis on machine and hand-sewn finishings. It also introduces basic overlock machine techniques and covers the entire redesign process, from research to final garment finishing.

References

- Gail Baugh, The Fashion Designer's Textile Directory, Barron's Educational Series, 2011
ONLINE
- <https://www.thesewingdirectory.co.uk/what-is-stretch/>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=clmQx68fyL0>
- <https://www.alexandragroover.com/>
- <https://weallsew.com/overlocker-for-beginners-the-essential-overlock-stitch/>



Tips

- Always test your stitches on a scrap piece of fabric before sewing your actual garment. This helps ensure they look correct and allows you to make any necessary adjustments.
- Avoid stretching the fabric while sewing. Work slowly and steadily for the best results
- Overlocker tips: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0nkNrO1H3HA>
- Use high-quality polyester or nylon thread for durability and elasticity
- If stitches are too loose or too tight, adjust the thread tension for a balanced stitch