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make-overs
from
MEN'S
SUITS

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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
BELTSVILLE BRANCH

LEAFLET No. 230

**U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE**

MAKE-OVERS FROM MEN'S SUITS

by

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Uniforms of the military services are fast taking the place of civilian suits. This means that much good wool may lie idle—stored away in moth balls—or be wasted. If folks at home cannot use these discarded suits as they are, it is patriotic to rework them into clothes that will be worn. By using this wool you help reduce the demand for new wool—a war material vital to the protection of our armed forces.

Outgrown suits and suits worn so that only parts are usable provide still another source of wool cloth that should be put to good use.

Before you cut into an old suit, study your family's wardrobe. See where the reworked suit would fit in best—for whom the material can be used with the least waste, how it can be made up to last and look well as long as there's a good yarn in it. And in reworking suits, make needed garments—not extras you could get along without.

Look the suit over carefully. If it's old, hold the trousers up to the light. See if the seat and the knees are thin—if edges are worn. In a coat, the neck edge and elbows are likely to be frayed or worn. Plan to dodge these places if you can. However, thin places or even holes can be mended with patches or darns so as to be hardly noticeable.

Choose a Pattern to Fit the Goods

Size.—Early in your planning consider the size of the suit and the size of the person for whom you want to rework it. Even though the pieces in the suit are shaped right they may be too small for a certain new garment. Naturally there is more to work with if the suit is large-sized, is double-breasted in style, and has two pairs of pants.

Style.—Study fashion books for a pattern as nearly as possible like the garment you wish to make. Changes can always be made in the pattern, but try to make them fit in with the style of the garment. That's one secret of making old clothes into new successfully. Be resourceful. Think out ways of adapting a style to what you have, but never let an outfit show signs of skimping and scheming.

Material

Select a pattern that will make up well with the goods you have to work with. Nothing labels a garment as a "made-over" any quicker than misused material. Business suitings with their harder finishes make up best in man-tailored suits and jackets. Sport suits of tweed and other rough weaves can be made into more casual clothes.

Rip the Suit Apart Carefully

When your plan is soundly worked out, rip the suit apart, but with care. A razor blade is all right to use in some places—in others, pick out the stitching carefully with a pin. It is easy to cut or tear material when you are in a hurry. And the old stitching lines may be in a prominent place in the new outfit.

Save all good buttons, tapes, and lining materials to use again. Pick out loose threads left from ripping; remove every spot or stain that won't come out in washing. If the cloth is likely to fray when washed, machine-stitch around the edges. This also helps pieces keep their shape.

Wash and Press the Pieces

Most suitings can be washed—and old suits usually need washing to thoroughly clean them. Wash the pieces in lukewarm, mild suds; rinse several times so there is no trace of soap left. When the cloth is almost dry, press it. Keep a cloth between the iron and the suiting—and don't press it too dry, or it will look hard and lifeless. Watch that you press each piece straight, or cut edges may stretch. You can now see what you have to work with. Most wools are not only cleaner but brighter and lovelier after washing and pressing—a real encouragement to go ahead.

If the nap is worn off in places, the material sometimes looks better if you turn it inside out. This will depend on the weave—some materials have a definite right and wrong side.

Place Pattern With Grain of Goods

With each piece of the old suit neatly pressed, you are ready to place your pattern. This takes great care, for there are no selvages to guide you in finding the straight of the goods. Yet, it is important that each pattern piece be carefully placed with the grain of the material. After pinning the pattern to the material, do not shift it even though it might fit better on the suiting or make piecing unnecessary.

If the pattern extends over the edge of the goods, piecings can be added so that only you know they are there. The secret is this—sew the pieces on with lengthwise or crosswise yarns matching exactly. Then when the seam is pressed open, turn to the right side. Pinch the seam line be-

tween the thumb and forefinger of your left hand. With a fine needle and matching thread, stitch back and forth over the seam, catching the first yarn on each side of the stitching line. Pull the thread close as you work and the seam will hardly be noticeable.

Each Make-Over an Individual Problem

No set of rules can be made for reworking a man's suit. Each one is an individual problem to be worked out according to the style and size of the suit, the size and needs of the person for whom it is to be made over, the kind of material and how much of it is usable.

Following are a few examples of clothes made from men's suits, separate coats, and trousers. They show what can be done.

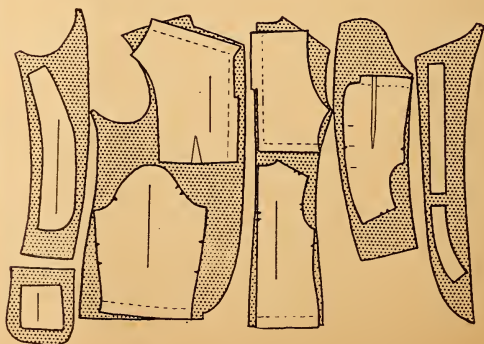
A Separate Summer-Weight Coat

Still a good coat, but of no use to its owner—now enlisted in the service. The best thing to do in these times when every scrap of wool needs to be put to good use was to rework it. Besides, a 4-year-old boy in the family needed a Sunday suit for winter.



The coat was ripped, the pieces washed and pressed. The pattern was laid on the pieces according to the plan shown below. In places, little points—and even a placket—of the pattern extended beyond the goods, but the points came out in the seams and the placket was pieced.

Tailoring as neat as you would do on brand-new cloth made the suit so trim looking no one will ever suspect that it is a make-over.



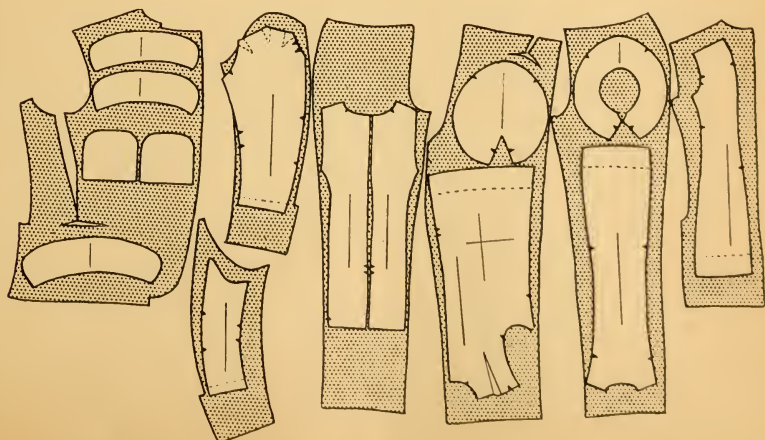
An Old Teal-Colored Suit

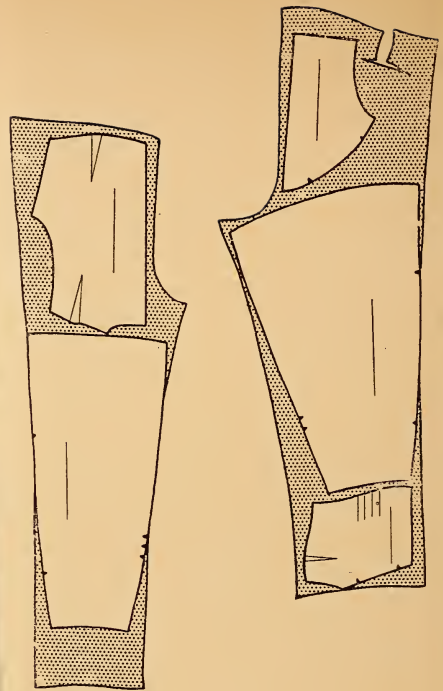
Not especially good in the beginning, this suit looked color-worn and shiny on the right side. It was ripped apart, washed, pressed, and turned. The material looked fresh and new and colorful, yet practical enough for a youngster to wear.

A simply styled coat and matching tam for a 4-year old daughter fit the suiting with little waste of good cloth. Some of the shoulder padding and the same buttons were used. In this case, new material was purchased for the lining, but any matching or contrasting material on hand could be used.



Fortunately there was no up and down to this material, so pattern pieces could be laid in both directions. That helps considerably in getting the best out of the goods you have. Where it appears on the lay-out below that some goods was wasted, mends and worn places had to be avoided. But there was enough left over in the upper part of the coat front to cut cuffs for the little girl's coat. In this case, the coat looked just as well without them, so they were not used. Later they might be helpful in adjusting the coat for extra sleeve length.



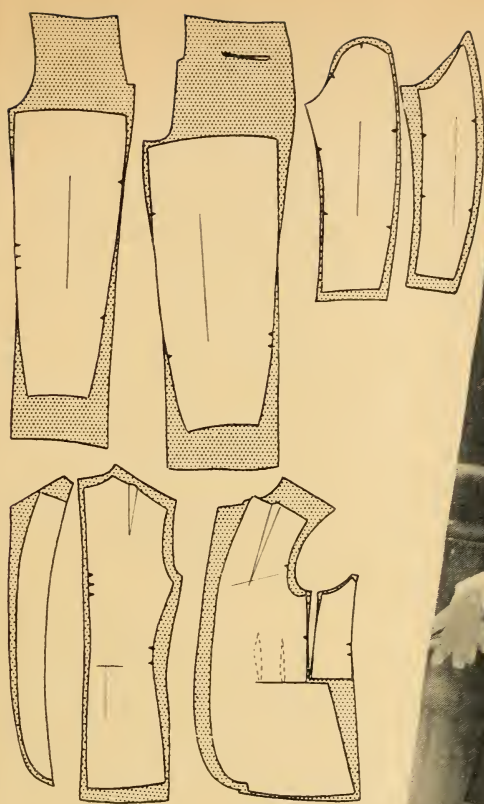


A Man's Sport Trousers

Medium gray-blue in color and undamaged except for a few moth holes, these pants were discarded because the material was scratchy next to the skin. The color was becoming to the daughter, and she could avoid the scratchiness of the material by making a jumper to wear over a blouse.

The trousers had been worn only a few times, so it was not necessary to wash the material. A few moth holes that couldn't be dodged were darned, but they don't show because they are at the underarm of the waist and in the lower corner of the skirt.

The front top of the jumper had to be made from a two-piece pattern so as to fit the goods, but a nicely stitched yoke line with little pockets set in was worked out. This line actually gives the jumper more style. The self-material belt on the trousers was shortened and used on the jumper. The placket zipper was salvaged from another discarded garment.

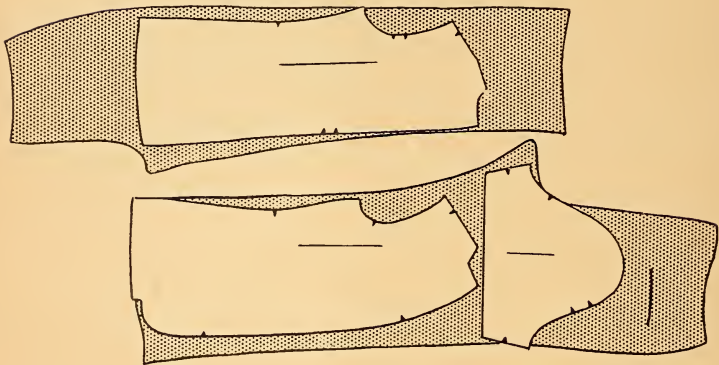


A Worsted Suit

The suit was 10 years old—too small for the owner and worn looking in places. But there was enough good cloth in it to make a woman's suit. The real problem was that the suit was size 38—the wife for whom it was to be made over, size 36 and tall. Careful planning, a bit of mending, and a few facings made it work.

First the suit was ripped apart, the pieces washed and pressed. Worn spots showed on the right side, so the material was turned. Along the collar roll and front edge the cloth was worn, and the buttonholes were ragged, so one of the new collarless jackets was chosen. In one elbow a hole was mended with a neat block patch that you'd never know was there.

The slim four-gore skirt pattern fitted the trouser pieces with a little seam skimping in places. But good inside finishing kept this from being serious. There wasn't enough material for a hem, so a facing of rayon lining was used. The result was a trim-looking suit, and nothing wasted.



White Linen Trousers

They had served eight summers, but the linen was still strong and well worth making over. Not a thin spot could be found in these trousers.

Washed and ironed, the pieces looked like new. The jacket was made with a center back seam so it could be cut from the two trouser fronts. The jacket fronts and sleeves came out of the two backs of the trousers.

There wasn't enough material to face the scalloped edge, but a lighter weight material was more desirable anyway. The jacket needed nothing more except the two link buttons at the waist.

