



## PROJECT #72

# UPCYCLE YOUR CLOTHES

To upcycle your clothes, you will need...

### **For stencils:**

Clear masking tape

Paper

Pencil/pen

A tool to cut paper (preferably a box cutter or X-Acto knife)

Paint

Paintbrush or sponge

(Optional) An iPad or computer

### **For cutting shirts:**

Scissors

Shirt of choice

Chalk or washable markers

A bar of soap for sketching

### **For patching clothing:**

Scissors

Sewing needle

Thread

Scrap fabric

Safety pin or sewing pins

Whatever clothing you want to patch!



Hello! My name is Aspen, and I love to sew. I love sewing because I can express myself and make things to use in everyday life!

I also believe it helps me feel less anxious. I, like many others, get a lot of climate anxiety and stress from global warming. I feel so powerless when it comes. But recently I've been sewing upcycling projects, which has helped my anxiety while making a positive impact on the environment!

Today, I'll be showing you fun projects that transform used clothes into something new and reusable.

[A note from OK You: If you have a project idea to share, we'd love to hear from you! You can follow our OK Challenge project instructions, or reach out to us at [hello@okyou.org](mailto:hello@okyou.org).]



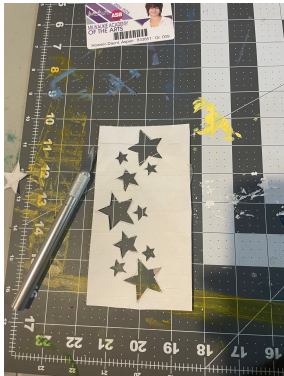
### Step 1 of 11

One way to make old clothes feel new again is to stencil designs onto them.

First, you will need an image for your stencil.

You can make a sketch on a piece of paper from a reference, or from your imagination! You can also create a stencil by tracing an image from a computer, book, or magazine.

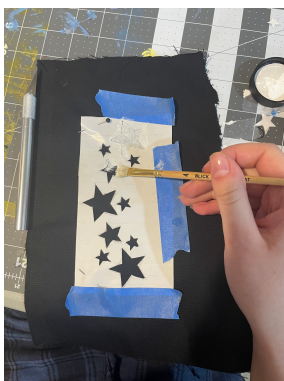
To trace an image from your computer or tablet, hold or tape a piece of paper over your screen and turn the brightness all the way up. This will make the image more visible through the paper so you can trace it.



### Step 2 of 11

Next, cover your sketch with clear masking tape. This will make the stencil sturdy and easier to reuse.

When you're finished taping over your sketch, cut out your design with scissors, an X-Acto knife, or a box cutter. (Ask an adult for help on this step!)



### Step 3 of 11

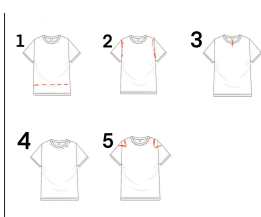
Now it's time to tape your new stencil to your fabric of choice!

Once it's securely taped to your clothing, paint over your stencil with fabric paint. If you don't have fabric paint, you can make some by mixing equal parts of fabric softener and acrylic paint!

### Step 4 of 11

Let your design dry for 72 hours, then heat-set it with an iron. To heat-set:

1. Make sure the paint is 100% dry.
2. Place a thin, clean cotton cloth (like a pillowcase) or parchment paper over your design to prevent it from sticking to the iron.
3. If your design is on cotton fabric, set the iron to the highest setting, no steam. If your design is on more delicate fabric, set the iron to medium, no steam.
4. Press the iron down firmly and keep it moving over your design in circular motions for 3–5 minutes.



### Step 5 of 11

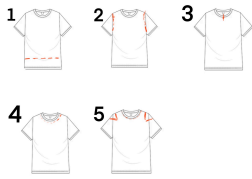
Next, you can try cutting a shirt in cool ways!

First, decide if you want to make:

1. A crop top
2. A tank top
3. An off-the-shoulder shirt

4. An open-shoulder top
5. A shirt with ties on the side

(See diagram for examples.)



### Step 6 of 11

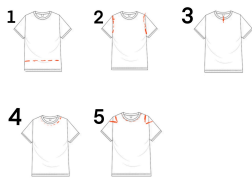
Now that you've decided on a style, grab a pencil or the edge of a bar of soap and follow my patterns to mark where you will cut your shirt. If you decided to make a shirt with ties on the side, skip to Step 8.

**To make a crop top:** Draw a line where you want the shirt to end

**To make a tank top:** Draw lines along the shoulder seams.

**To make an off-the-shoulder shirt:** Draw a line along your shirt collar.

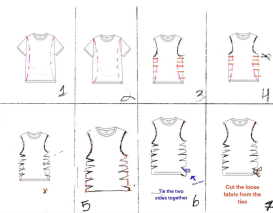
**To make a funky open-shoulder shirt:** Draw a line along the collar and triangles at each shoulder seam.



### Step 7 of 11

It's time to cut your shirt!

Just follow your marked lines to create your new shirt.



### Step 8 of 11

To make a shirt tighter or smaller without sewing, you can cut and tie the sides of your shirt. Here are the steps (see diagram for help!):

1. Trace the shape you want your shirt to be
2. Cut off the sleeves
3. Mark horizontal lines on each side, ending where you traced your lines in step 1.
4. Cut each horizontal line
5. Cut the end of each line vertically to separate the back and front of your shirt
6. Tie each pair of strips into knots
7. (Optional) Cut the extra fabric after the knots and save it for making patches!



### Step 9 of 11

Another way to upcycle clothes is by adding patches to cover stains or holes.

First, cut some scrap fabric into whatever shape you want your patch to be—get creative! I recommend simple shapes like a rectangle, circle, or heart.

### Step 10 of 11

Next, pin your patch in place with a safety pin or sewing pins.

With your sewing needle, whipstitch around the edges of the patch. If you don't know

how to do a whipstitch, here is a [simple tutorial](#).

### **Step 11 of 11**

Thank you so much for coming along on this journey with me! There are so many fun ways to experiment and change older clothing into something new. I hope this project leaves you feeling empowered to reduce fabric waste while getting creative!

Want to share your upcycled clothes in OK You's online gallery? Just take a photo and click the button below!