

# Supplement to *Paganoonoo* Garment Patterns



TO INCREASE THE CHANCES OF  
**BEING WILDLY SUCCESSFUL**  
READ ALL SECTIONS

## First of all:

**Relax:** Mistakes are part of the learning process. They are just garments, not irreplaceable vintage silk garments, and almost anything can be fixed. Visible patching is a *feature*.

**P.S.** **Don't use your favorite-ever shirts for the first attempt.** Give yourself permission to have a learning curve. The more you fail, the more you learn, I promise. And you have been set up for success!

## DESIGN ELEMENTS: WHAT TO CONSIDER

### A) YOU ARE THE DESIGNER:



**Just like with a traditional pattern, your design choices will make your garment unique.** The difference is that instead of buying fabric yardage, you will be selecting 2-3 previously owned men's (or possibly women's) dress shirts as "fabric". When starting with upcycled garments there are unique considerations in selecting materials.

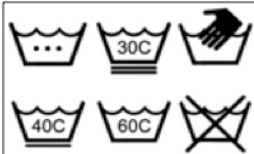
### B) SIZING:



Blouses and dresses: The upper body is the critical factor for fit. Cross your arms in front, there should be no tightness across the shoulders and bust, preferably it is a bit loose. Some designs can be made oversized, with a drop shoulder. Some designs provide extra ease in the hip so if the bottom half of the base shirt is a little too tight across the hips it is not problem.

### C) FABRICS & GARMENT CARE:

**One of the beauties of starting with pre-owned garments is that the final fabric character is readily apparent:** soft with great drape, stiff, scratchy, prone to wrinkles, pilled, lustrous, dull, textured, etc.



Most patterns work quite well with fabrics that have some softness and drape vs. very thick or stiff. A no-iron cotton blend with a soft drape is ideal.

Touch the fabrics you are considering, do they feel nice to the touch? Crush them in your fist and release, how prone to wrinkling are they? Ask yourself how you want to care for the garment. Are you willing to iron? Prefer not to iron? Are you good at catching things just as they finishing drying so as to avoid creating wrinkles in the first place?

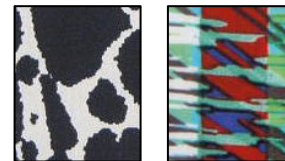
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## D) COLOR AND PATTERN CHOICES:

The look of the garment will be greatly influenced by your color and pattern choices, for example:

### Dramatic:

Dramatic coloring is high contrast, such as black and white, or colors opposite on the color wheel, such as red and green, or orange and blue.



**With dramatic contrasts the eye is likely to be drawn somewhere specific rather than taking in the garment as a whole.** This can be a good way to draw attention exactly where you want it, and away from where you don't. Light colors advance bringing attention to the area, darks retreat and draw less attention.

### Classic and Understated:

Colors are limited to the same color family, such as a collection of related reds. Colors are combined in similar themes, such as pastels, medium colors, dark colors. Patterns may or may



not be on a similar scale: small, medium or large but they always share an obvious color relationship.

**Note:** Sometimes using a color combination sourced from an example is helpful. Think of the paint color combinations suggested in paint manufacturer's brochures – combinations we wouldn't necessarily choose on our own, but look great. Use anything – stationary, a patterned fabric, illustration, etc. for sourcing and inspiration.

**TIP:** When thrifting, the choices can be overwhelming. Train your eye to focus on the quality

## E) CUTTING GUIDE

**The patterns do not include/require actual pattern pieces. Cut the garments as illustrated in the diagrams.** Sharp scissors are essential for making clean cuts. *Use scissors that cut crisply the whole length of the blade if at all possible.*

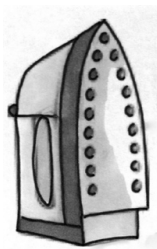
**If you don't have a good pair, please treat yourself.**

**Tip:** To avoid other people using your sewing scissors lock them closed through the handles.



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## F) SEAM FINISHES



It makes a tremendous difference in look of a garment to press each seam. If I learned one thing in design school, I **learned that a garment with well-pressed seams during construction looks noticeably more professional, even after subsequent washings.**

My professor Ronda Chaney at Cañada College in California advised us to skip pressing if we wanted the *'made by loving hands at home'* look. We learned to press each seam as sewn first (unopened), and then press the

When two already hemmed seams are sewn together it is important to **align the pre-finished seams** carefully before you start sewing. Start sewing from the hemmed edges first. This ensures that any shifting of the fabric will end up in a less critical area. It

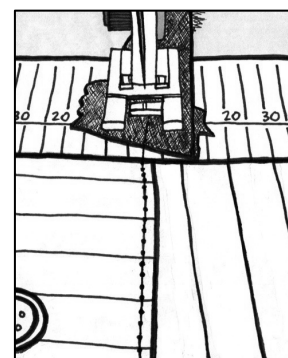
also helps to take a couple hand stitches across the edge of the two seams before starting

**Caution:** Pre-finished seams have multiple layers and starting sewing on these layers sometimes causes the needle to hang up in the fabric.

To avoid this, start sewing on another bit of scrap fabric first and then slip the pre-finished seams under the presser foot butted up against the scrap fabric edge.

This keeps the presser foot level and gives the feed dogs (the part that moves the fabric, located just under the presser foot) something to move until the pre-finished seams reach the needle.

With this arrangement the presser foot and needle will glide onto the pre-finished seams, or use a thick seam aid.



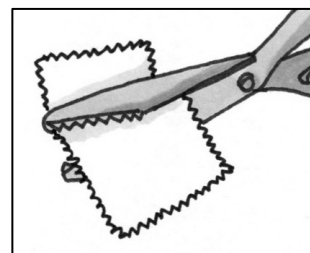
Thick seam aid



**Unfinished woven fabric seams will fray** as the garment is washed (knits won't).

There are a number of alternatives to prevent having a tangled mess of threads inside the garment, including and not necessarily limited to:

- Pinking shears, which cut a zigzag edge, are one of the easiest solutions and my personal favorite
- Hand overcasting works quite well, especially in tricky areas where pinking won't work
- Bias binding makes a lovely finished edge
- Edges can be machine overcast or zig-zagged
- Serging is possible once the seams are sewn, however is not recommended for creating the seams, as more control is needed. Some of the recommended seams are overlaid and therefore can't be serged.

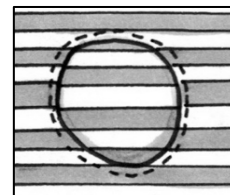


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## G) TROUBLESHOOTING TEARS, HOLES, SMALL MISTAKES, etc.

One of the easiest ways to deal with tears, holes, stains, and small mistakes is patching or mending.

- **A patch** can be a decorative element, such as a triangle or circle in a second fabric – even a button
- **Buttons** can easily hide stains, use one big one or groups of three or five
- **Patches** might be made of a small piece of the same fabric aligned to match the fabric pattern
- **Discreet mending** would feature matching threads
- **Decorative mending** with thread might feature a contrasting or visibly different thread color, or embroidery thread
- **Random direction machine** stitching looks edgy/arty



With all types of decorative mending consider repeating the shape elsewhere for balance. Decorators know a key trick – use uneven numbers: 1, 3, 5, 7, 9 and **multiple sizes** for the most visually pleasing effect. Can't stress this enough!

There are some terrific examples of mending on Pinterest®, Keyword search: mending, visible mending, patching, Boro. My board is titled Celebrating Repairs and Mending name: mrspaganini

### Lastly,

Thank you for upcycling! I believe that upcycling is an important component of eco friendly living. The average American throws away 68lbs of textiles a year, not donates, throws away. In addition, only a small fraction of what is donated to charities is actually repurchased. Most is sold for pennies a pound to other countries to be recycled into rags or resold.

My goal is that every stitcher in the world has a successful upcycling experience and gets hooked. My patterns are intended to give a leg up in that process. Upcycling isn't a replacement for sewing from new materials, rather it is an excellent supplement, and a time honored tradition.

Your Paganoonoo upcycled design is one-of-a-kind and is likely to draw attention. Many people have not heard of upcycling before, so any compliments or questions are an opening

to share, if you are willing, and I hope you are.

Thank you for being a Paganoonoo customer. *Michelle Paganini*

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