

HOW TO

Repair a worn shirt collar



Any wear and tear in a shirt is usually noticed first on the collar and cuffs, even while the rest of the garment is still intact. Thankfully, this does not mean you need to discard the entire shirt because it is quite easy to do something about it.

In the past, it was obvious how to fix worn collars. When you had your shirts sewn, or sewn yourself, an extra piece of fabric was usually saved for future repairs. It is a bit trickier, of course, to repair shirts today, because we buy them ready-made in stores without spare material, but by choosing a different fabric you can take the opportunity to give the shirt a new look. If you do not have another already discarded shirt to use material from, it may be an idea to look for a flea market find.

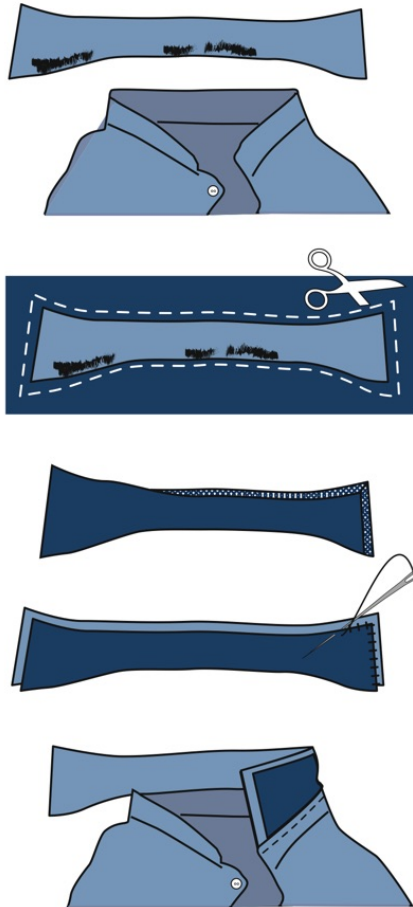
If you do not want to change the look of your favourite shirt more than is necessary, you can often cut a piece of fabric from the bottom edge of the back of the shirt and use it to repair the collar. This of course assumes that the shirt is long enough to start with. If the shirt fabric is patterned, checkered or a solid colour it is possible to make a close to invisible repair of collar or cuff. If, on the other hand, the shirt is striped, the stripes may end up in the wrong direction, but it will usually still be just fine. For the most part, even the collar stand (the narrow edge that the collar is usually firmly sewn into and folded over) needs to be covered.

If only the top of the collar is worn, you can turn it instead. The worn side then ends up on the underside of the folded collar and can also be both strengthened and concealed under a lining. When choosing this method, it is good to see if the underside of the collar has seams for loose collar stays, the arrow-shaped plastic pieces that are sometimes used to hold the points of the collars. Such stitches are difficult to unpick, and in this case they will now adorn the top of the collar. Of course, it is also good to simply cut away the worn collar and give the shirt grandfather collar (see the shirt in the middle of the image on the left.)

To turn a collar, as in the example shown bottom left.

1. Remove the collar from the collar stand and press flat.
2. Place the collar against the fabric you have chosen for your repair. Cut out the collar shape with a little seam allowance.
3. Fold in and press down on the seam allowance.
4. Pin or tack the lining against the worn side of the loose collar. Sew the lining along the short sides and top, with neat overstitches.
5. Turn the collar and pin it between the layers of the collar stand with the lined side as the underside. Stitch through all layers so that they cannot slip apart. Top stitch around the collar with a sewing machine, as close to the edge as possible.

‘If you don't want to change the look of your favorite shirt more than necessary, you can often cut a piece of fabric along the bottom edge of the back of the shirt.’



Karin Björkquist

To replace a collar, as in the example on the top left of the previous page.

The top button and buttonhole of the shirt is usually on the collar stand. The button and buttonhole are removed during the repair and replaced when complete.

1. Place the collar against the new fabric and cut out the shape with a small seam allowance.
2. Fold in the seam allowance and fit the fabric along the top and short sides of the collar. Tack the layers together. Do not pull the fabric too tight, as the collar should be pliable and have a nice shape when folded down.
3. Sew the fabric along the top edge and short sides of the collar with neat overstitches through all layers keeping close to the edge. Leave the edge (towards the collar stand) open.
4. Cut off the collar button to access the collar stand. Cut a fabric strip on the bias if possible (to increase flexibility) that covers the inside of the stand.
5. Fold in the seam allowance and pin the strip to the collar stand on top of the loose bottom edge of the collar.
6. Tack through all layers of fabric so they don't slip, taking care of the tension, so that the collar will sit nicely when folded down. Sew the collar fabric by hand or on the sewing machine as close to the edge as possible. Cut away any loose threads and press the collar.
7. Look for the buttonhole and cut a hole in the new fabric in the same place. Edge with buttonhole stitch through all layers.
8. Sew back button.

