

Underwear from knit shirts

By: fabricitis

<http://www.burdastyle.com/techniques/underwear-from-knit-shirts>



If the elastic on underwear is still good, but the fabric is falling apart, you can use this technique to re-make your underwear from an old t-shirt. It took me about 5 hours to make 2 undergarments, not including time to take apart the old underwear. This will probably take less time with experience. Still, at \$20 per hour, these undergarments cost \$50 each in just my time. But the actual cost was \$0 in materials because I already had old t-shirts and underwear on hand. So if you have spare time, it is otherwise very economical.

Step 1 — Take apart old underwear



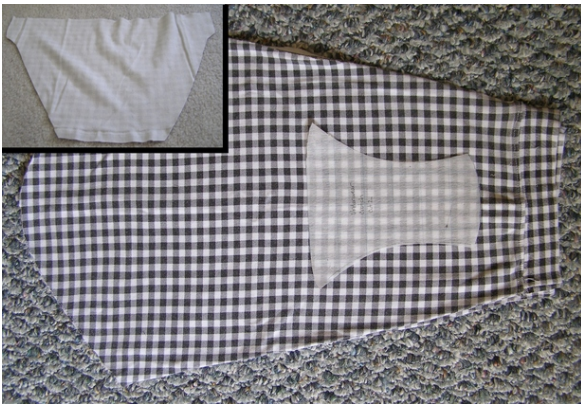
Take a picture of your underwear from various angles so that you remember how your underwear were sewn together. Use a seam ripper to separate the elastic from the fabric of the underwear. Undo all the seams in the underwear. Separate these peices. On the type shown here, the crotch piece was a double-layer which was sewn to the back and front of the underwear. This underwear happened to not have side seams (it was tubular), so I cut the pieces to make a separate front and back.

Step 2 — Create pattern pieces



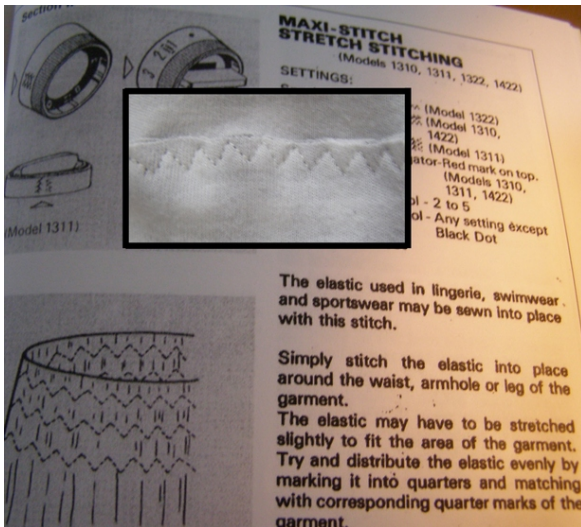
To make a durable pattern for multiple uses, lay each of the pieces of the underwear you just took apart on paper or grid fabric and draw around each of the pieces. Cut out the pieces from the paper or grid fabric. These will be your pattern. Mark your pieces indicating grain line, location and how many need to be cut. In this example underwear, there were two layers in the crotch, so two of the crotch pieces would need to be cut out. Pay special attention to the direction of weave in the knit in the old underwear.

Step 3 — Cut out pattern pieces



Lay the pattern pieces on the knit fabric, such as an old cotton shirt. Make sure that the weave of the knit is the same direction as in the original underwear. Cut around the pattern pieces to make as many pieces as necessary or desired.

Step 4 — Set sewing machine for stretch stitch



Check your sewing machine settings and set it to some sort of stretch stitch. In this case, I used a zig-zag-like stretch stitch.

Step 5 — Sew the pieces together



In this case, there were 4 pieces: back, front and double crotch pieces. I put the two crotch pieces on top of each other and sewed them on one end to the front piece and to the back piece on the other end. The seam was formed by keeping both pieces right side up and overlapping them by 1/4 inch or less. I then sewed along the edge of the fabric in such a way that the zig-zag stitch caught the edge of the fabric on top and on bottom. If the pieces appear to be different sizes, don't worry. The stretch in the fabric will allow for any minor differences in sizes between pattern pieces. Just pin both ends and stretch the fabric until both pattern pieces are the same size along the seamline. Sew the seam while lightly stretching the fabric.

Step 6 — Almost ready for elastic



At this point, all the seams should be sewn and the project should resemble underwear.

Step 7 — Preparing elastic for attachment



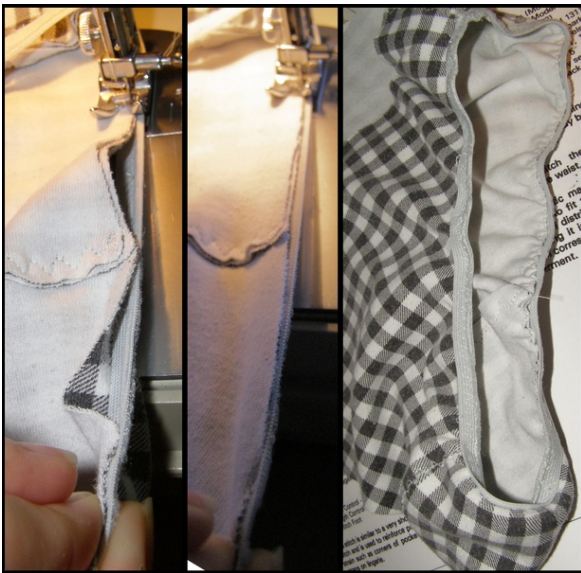
Take the ring of elastic for the leg hole and fold it in half. Place pins at each of the bend points. This should divide the elastic into 4 even quadrants. Now take the underwear leg hole and fold it in half. Also mark each bend point with pins so that this leg hole is divided into 4 equal quadrants. This will allow you to pin the elastic to the underwear evenly.

Step 8 — Pin elastic to leghole



Now using the pin markers on both elastic and leg hole, pin the elastic to the edge of the leghole at the marked areas. This will result in the elastic pinned in 4 evenly spaced areas around the entire leg hole. You can also add pins halfway between each spot by further folding the area between each pin and pinning the halfway point on fabric to halfway point on elastic.

Step 9 — Sew elastic to leghole



Choose one of the pinned areas. Set the pinned fabric onto the sewing machine with the elastic on the bottom against the feed dogs and the fabric on top directly touching the presser foot. Place the pinned area directly behind the presser foot so that the foot is not sitting on the pin. Drop the presser foot and needle into the fabric. Grab the next pinned spot between your fingers and pull gently until the fabric and the elastic are smoothly touching each other with no gaps. Sew while exerting this gentle pressure until you reach close to your fingers. At that point, remove the pin and grasp the next pinned section of fabric and elastic. Again pull gently to make sure the elastic and

fabric are smooth. Continue sewing in this fashion all the way around the leghole. Repeat from step 7 for both leg holes and also for the waistband.

Step 10 — Waistband elastic



The waistband is finished similar to the leghole. There are, perhaps, some minor differences. In the example underwear, the fabric was attached only to the bottom 1/4 of the waistband elastic. Also, the strength of the waistband elastic might also require you to hold onto the fabric and elastic behind the presserfoot. Without holding onto the elastic with both hands (one in front and one in back), the stronger elastic might pull too much on the needle and presserfoot when trying to stretch the elastic when sewing. Try to capture the edge of the fabric in the stitch to help hold it down.

Step 11 — Done



Now you're done. Check your seams. If they need reinforcement, you can stitch over them again.

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