

Easy Patchwork Jacket

Start by choosing a sweatshirt that's a little too big. An old sweatshirt is fine, even with a design on it. I chose a sweatshirt a size bigger than I normally wear.

(You don't have to cut the front open first like this says, I think it actually would be better to leave it together and do this part after all of the pieces are stitched on but I don't have pictures showing it that way)

Lay the sweatshirt out nice and flat, front side up.

Lay a ruler across it and mark the center between the sleeves, at the armpits and near the bottom.

Turn the ruler so that it is along all three marks and draw a line down the center of the sweatshirt.

Now slide a cutting board between the front and back (so you don't accidentally cut the back) and cut the front open along the line.

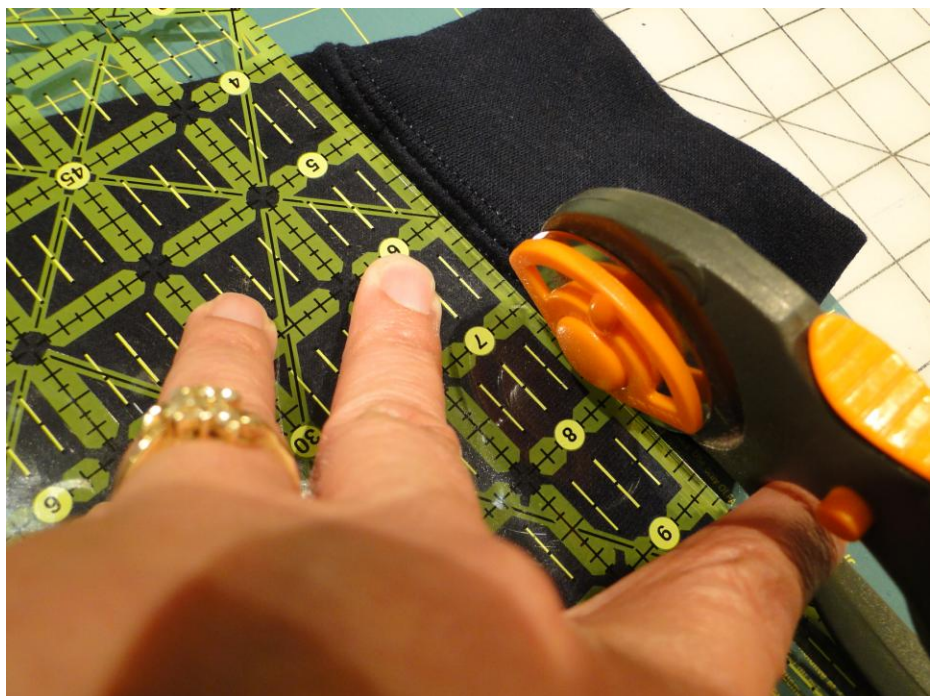




Cut the ribbing off the bottom edge. You can take out the stitching if you want to, but I just cut it off.



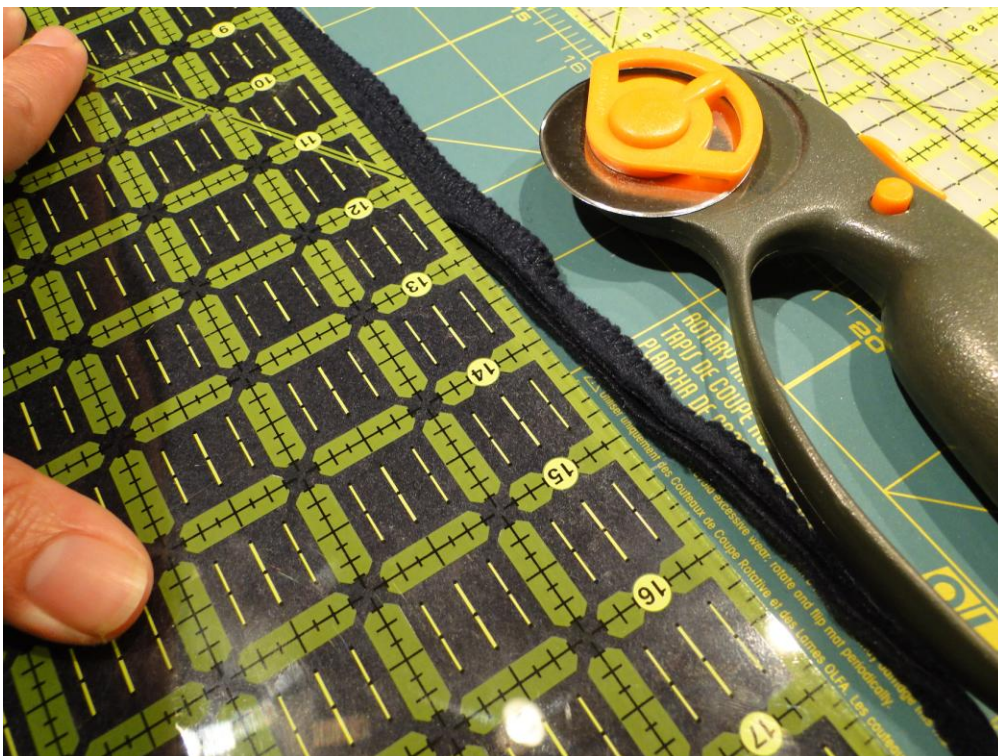
I am very lazy about cutting the ribbing off the sleeves, I just push a ruler up against the seam and run a rotary cutter along it.



Find the crease line on the side, under the sleeve. It's always been nice and straight for me and I just cut up to the seam on it. I have also used sweatshirts that have a seam down the side that can be cut open.

Cut open the sleeve, either with a rotary cutter, scissors, or by removing the threads.

Then you have a big, floppy, chopped up rag.





Now you need at least 5 different fabrics choices, using some good contrasts. I'm having a blue day so I chose these from my stash. I always like to use one with a wee bit of glitter or shine. You need half yards or two fat quarters each if you are using 5 fabrics.

A variety of patterns and lights and darks helps. The first jacket I made was really bright with primary colors. The one for my mother in law was more toned downs in greens, browns and golds.

Press the fabrics and stack them in as many layers as you like to cut at once.



You will need approx. 8 inches (width of fabric) for the binding, or you can use packaged binding.

A couple of the fabrics I chose are 2 yard pieces so I chose one of those for the binding.

Now it's time to just cut the fabric into random pieces. I just use triangles, rectangles and



squares. I stacked 3 folded fabrics (6 layers) and cut 3 different width strips. I think they were 2 inches, 3.5 inches, and about 5 inches. I then cut the strips into smaller shapes. Next, I'll do the other 3 fabrics

Once all of your pieces are cut, just toss them in a pile in on the table. Ok, if you MUST, you can organize them.

Lay a section of the jacket out flat and select random pieces of cut fabric. Spray the pieces lightly with a temporary adhesive and place them on the jacket. I start in the front at the bottom, but there is no particular reason to do this. Do try to get the pieces pretty close to the edges, even hanging over is ok, you can trim them later. Resist the urge to make everything straight!



Now for thread. You need lots. I used nearly 600 meters on the brown jacket. The variegated was very nice, but I'm using one of my big embroidery spools this time so I don't have to worry about running out.

Bobbin thread: The bobbin thread will show anytime the jacket is open, so keep that in mind. I am sewing on a dark blue sweatshirt and I don't want to have to keep winding blue bobbins so I am going to use black prewounds.

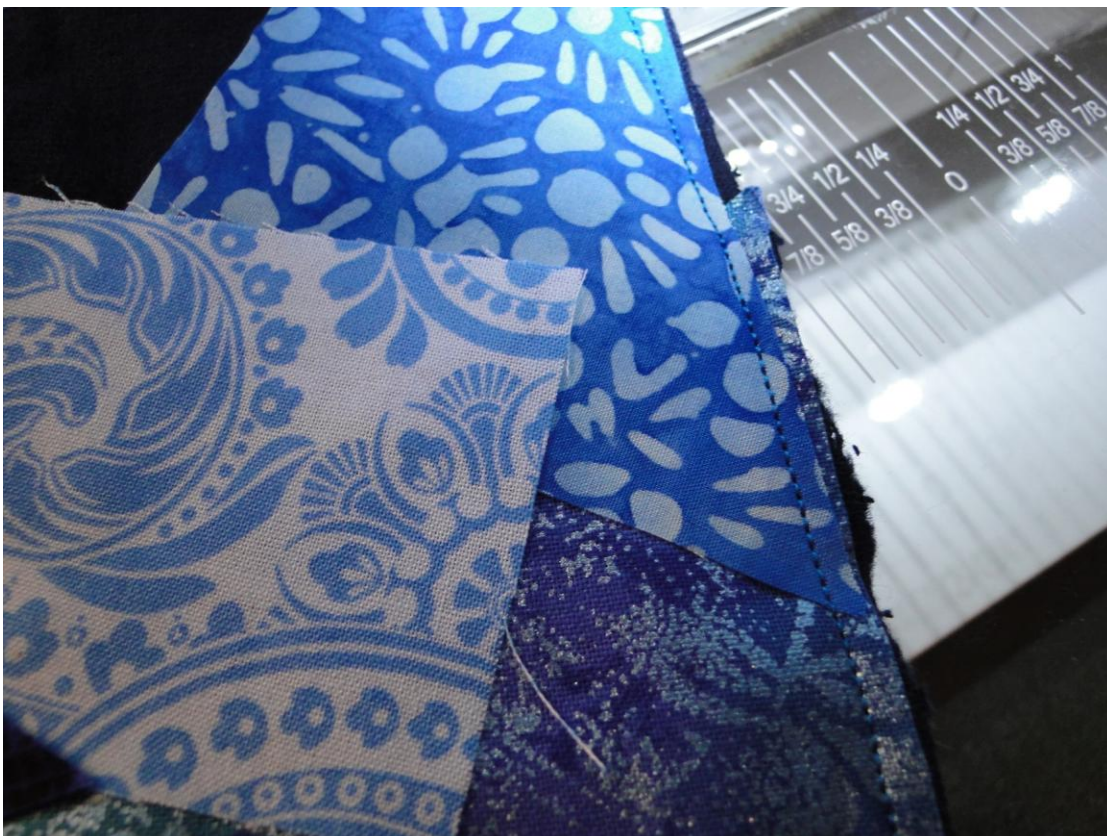
You can stitch the edges with a simple zig zag, or you can use decorative stitches. I did my very first jacket using an iridescent thread (which broke often) and lots of fancy stitches. You really couldn't see the fancy stitches very well and it was quite hard to maneuver around all of the corners so now I just stick with a zig zag.



Ok, I decided on the medium blue thread. I set my zig zag stitch length at 1.0. There will be some fraying so I wanted the stitching to contain it somewhat.

I start by running a straight stitch around the outside edges, there's no need for zigzagging since those edges will be either in the seam or under the binding.

Be careful not to stretch the sweatshirt while you are stitching the pieces on.



Now, just keep adding pieces and sewing them on until the entire jacket is covered.

After all of the pieces are on:

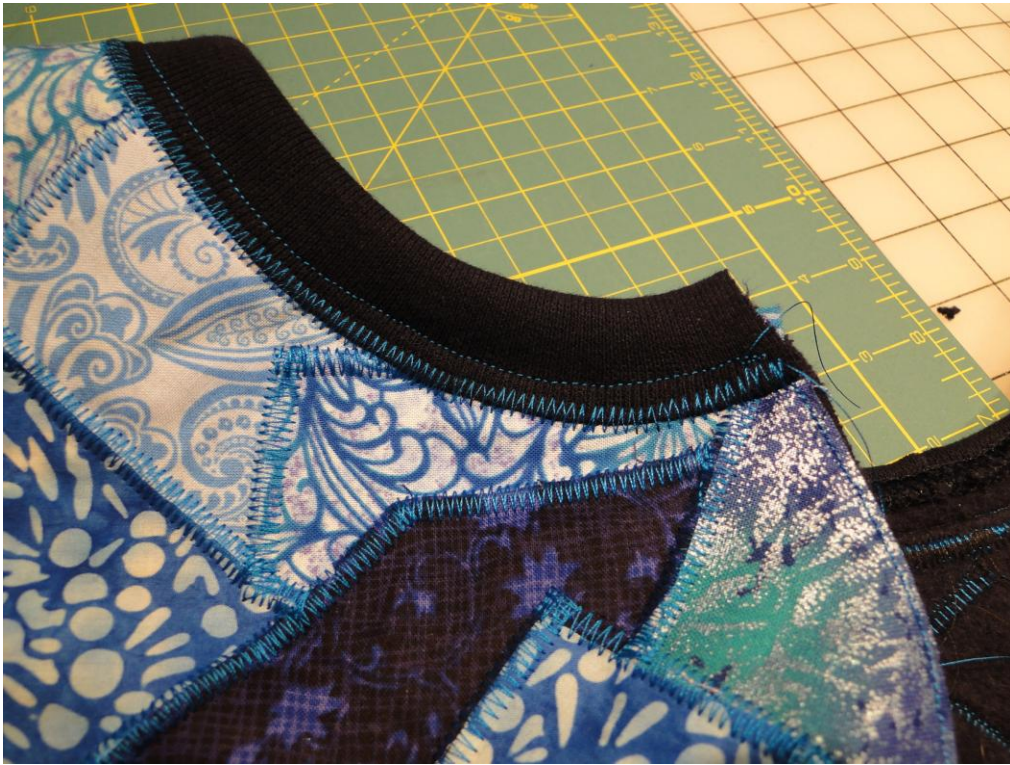
At this point you need to decide how you will finish your edges. You can use packaged binding, make your own binding, or use ribbon, a zipper, or ???

I am going to use a piece of the leftover fabric to make my binding. I will cut 2" strips and press 1/4" over on one side. Four strips, the width of the fabric, should be more than enough. I like to have plenty.

After trimming the wild threads, I sewed the ribbing on the collar down. I simply folded it towards the front, bending it at the seam, and straight stitched it. Since I will have binding running up the front edge, I just needed to get close to the front opening with the collar.

After straight stitching it, I decided I wanted the collar to have the same zig zag stitch I will be finishing the binding with so I added that.





Now, if you are putting your sleeve binding on and then sewing the sleeve seam, it's time.

I am going to put a "seamless" binding on mine, like on a quilt so I am going to go ahead and stitch my sleeves and sides shut.

Start at the sleeve and just stitch all the way up to the arm pit and down to the bottom edge.

I LOVE my serger for this!

(If you are using packaged binding, you might want to put it on the sleeves before stitching them back together)

One thing to keep in mind: this does make a slightly narrow sleeve. If you have large arms, you should measure before you stitch it up. You might want to make yours 3/4 sleeves.

Here is mine all pinned together and ready to be stitched up the sides:



My binding cut and pressed:



Pin the binding around the sleeve and mark with a pin where the ends will be sewn



Slip it back off the sleeve, sew the binding and you end up with a circle like this:



Slip the cuff back onto the sleeve, right side of cuff facing the wrong side of the sleeve. Raw edges together, creased edge away from the opening



I sewed inside the circle, rather than trying to slide the sleeve onto my machine. After stitching the raw edges together, I flipped the pressed edge to the patchwork side and zig zagged it down to match my patchwork pieces





I decided to make the front of my jacket with curved edges so I pulled some plates and bowls from my cupboards and decided that an 8 inch (lunch size) plate worked the best.

I chalked around the edge of the plate and stitched just to the inside of the line to hold the patches in place after I cut



Put the plate back on the line and run the rotary cutter around it



Time to finish the binding!

Placing the front of the binding, unpressed side, to the back of the top edge, leave about a half inch folded over at the top edge. Stitch it down, about 1/4 inch from the edge.



Fold the top edge down like this and then tuck the corner under



and then fold your pressed edge over like this



and then fold the whole piece over to the front and you are ready to stitch it down.



All done!

