

# How to: Darn a hole

Mrs Smith's Cottage Craft Worksheet  
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Frugality and make-do-and-mend were central to Mrs Smith's long and happy life. She finally accepted having a cold tap indoors in her 80s but continued to heat her water on the coal-fired range. Hilda re-used old clothing to make rag-rugs, but only once they had been mended a few times.

Our artist-in-residence, Nicki Jarvis, is a devoted darter, describing herself as a 'visible mender' so that each darned hole is celebrated in bright colour for all to see. You can be more subtle if you wish, but darning is great for extending the life of woollens such as jumpers and socks. It's also a very calming activity in these challenging times.

**To darn a hole:**      **You will need:**



- A pair of scissors
- A needle
- Some yarn/thread (ideally same thickness as the item to be darned)
- A 'darning mushroom' or other flat/firm object (e.g. plastic bottle) that can be inserted underneath the hole. Or you can just use your other hand.



1. Take your garment and insert your darning mushroom or other device (if using) and ever-so-slightly stretch your fabric over the surface so that you can see the raw edges of the hole.

2. Insert your threaded needle (with knot at the end) through the hole and poke the needle through the fabric a little way from the raw edge of the hole.

3. Do a line of running stitch (in-out-in-out through the fabric, nothing fancy) along the 'healthy' fabric surface, reaching a little beyond the size of the hole.



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4. Come back in the opposite direction with your running stitch. These lines of stitch will reinforce the edges around the hole.



5. When you encounter the first raw edge of the hole, simply bring your needle through to the top of the fabric. Ideally so that the stitch will lie over the top of the raw edge.

6. Now create a long stitch (don't pull tight) to lie over the hole and then go back into the fabric, flattening down the raw edge as you go.



7. Work back and forth across the hole, doing a couple of stitches either side of the gap, to act as reinforcement. Then finish this part by doing a couple more lines of running stitch the other side of the hole. So far, so good.



8. Turn your garment round so that you can work in the opposite direction (east/west as opposed to north/south) and then repeat the lines of stitching across the hole.



10. This time though, you will do a bit of needle-weaving. When you get to your hole, run the yarn over and under the first set of long stitches. You are creating new fabric to replace the worn section. I'm using a different colour to make this more clear.



11. When you get to the end just turn your garment inside-out, do a couple of stitches into your existing work to hold the thread and cut it off. Time for a cuppa, you're done!