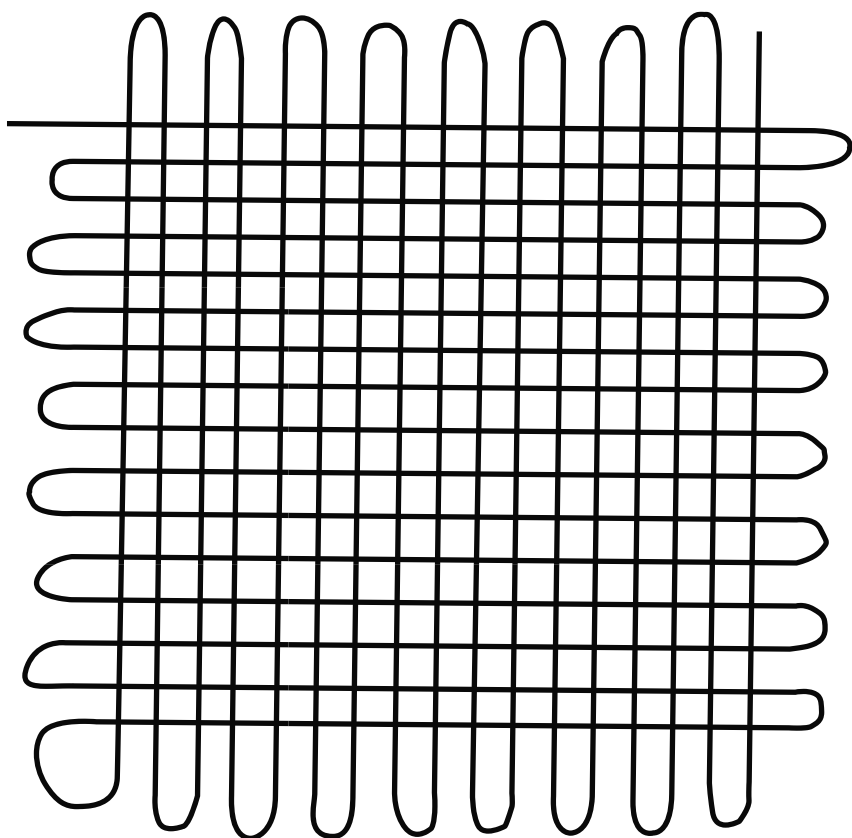


# HOW TO DARN YOUR CLOTHES



A DO-IT-YOURSELF GUIDE FROM IFEX BOOKS



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# **Darning is a technique for mending holes in fabric with a needle and thread. It's easier than you think, and it looks really cool.**

How many pairs of socks have you thrown away in your life, just because one of them had a hole? How many pairs of jeans have you ruined because a small hole turned into a bigger one?

You should darn it! Darning is a form of mending using a needle and thread. You're essentially making a new piece of cloth to fill in a hole in your garment.

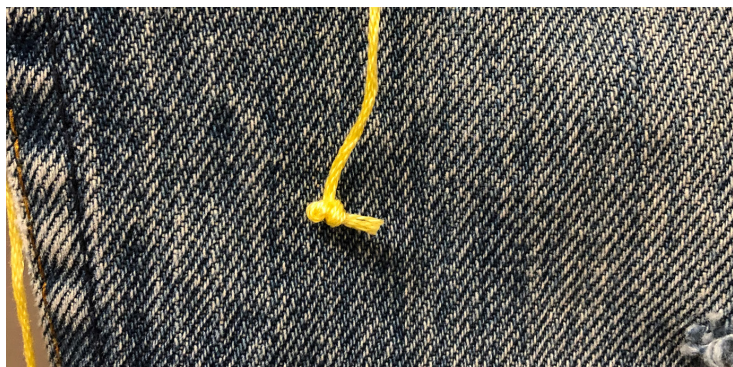
Don't worry too much about getting the details perfect; the best way to learn is by trial and error. Your first few darning repairs might look messy, and that's OK.

This tutorial demonstrates repairing a hole in a pair of jeans, but the steps are the same if you're repairing a sock. For a less visible repair, turn your garment inside-out before you start. To show off your handiwork, keep it right-side-out.

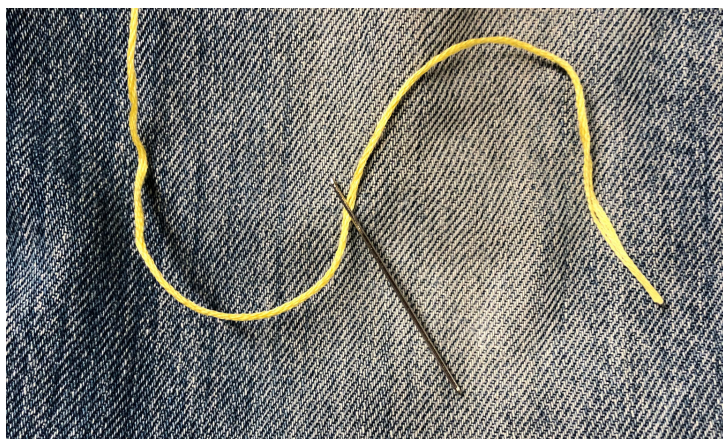
All you need to start darning is a needle and some thread. Blunt-tipped needles are popular for darning, but any needle will do. For the thread, you'll probably want to start with cotton embroidery floss. Embroidery floss is thicker and stronger than ordinary thread.

Cut off as much thread as you think you'll need. The example repair used about 3 yards of yellow thread for the vertical stitches.

Make a double knot in one end of the thread and trim off the excess.



Moisten the other end of the thread and twist the ends together. Thread it through the eye of the needle.





You'll need to put something behind the area you're repairing, to stabilize the fabric while you work. For a large repair, you can use a small pillow or stuffed animal, or simply lay the garment flat on a table. An embroidery hoop would also work.

If you're repairing a sock, you can use a tennis ball, light bulb, or the end of a baseball bat to hold the fabric in place. Or use a wooden darning egg or darning mushroom if you prefer.

In the example, I'm using a beat-up bowler hat to stabilize the fabric.



Here's what it looks like inside the pant leg:



Imagine a rectangle covering the whole area you're planning to repair, with the edges at least half an inch beyond the edges of the hole. If you want, mark the rectangle with chalk.



Starting from the inside, push your needle through the fabric at one of the corners of your rectangle. Pull the thread all the way through, leaving the knot inside.





Pass your needle down and up through the fabric to make a running stitch along the short edge of the imaginary rectangle. Do your best to make a straight line, square with the weave of the fabric.



Make a tiny stitch at a right angle in the direction of the area you're repairing. The stitch below is about 1mm long. Note that it starts directly above the running stitch.



Here's what it will look like when you pull the thread through:



Now do a single stitch, parallel to your previous running stitch. (For a different style of repair, you can make several running stitches at this point instead of just one.)





Pass your needle through the fabric next to the corner where you started, and pull the thread through. You've just created an extra long stitch that runs the length of the area you're repairing.



Adjust the object you're using to stabilize the fabric, and make sure the long stitch is the correct length. It shouldn't be tight, or the area you're repairing will pucker.

Make a tiny stitch at a right angle, then another stitch heading back in the other direction.



Pass your needle through the fabric at the other end and adjust the amount of loose thread as needed.



Keep going back and forth until the damaged area is covered with long stitches.



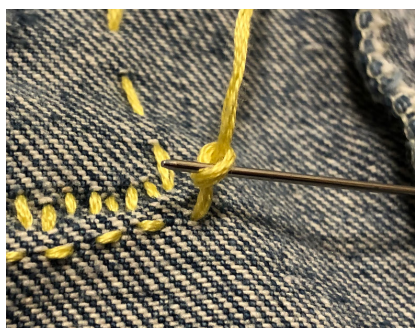


If you make a mistake along the way, it's no big deal. Just undo your stitches and try again. If you run out of thread, attach a new thread with a knot and give it a tug to make sure it's secure. Then trim off the excess thread.

When you get to the end, make another running stitch along the edge.



At the corner, pass your needle through to the inside of the garment. Then turn the garment inside-out and tie a double knot to hold the thread in place. Trim off the excess thread and turn it right-side-out again.



Now it's time to switch colors! Tie a double knot at one end of your new thread and thread your needle. From the inside of the garment, pass your needle through the corner of the rectangle. Pull your thread all the way through



Make a single stitch in the direction of your repair, with the thread emerging very close to the beginning of the first long stitch.

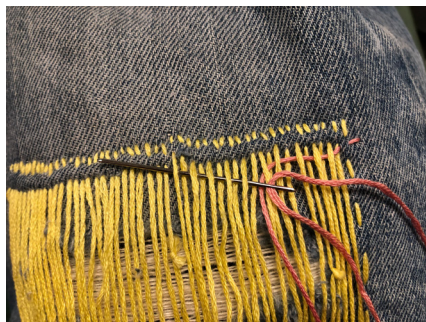




Start weaving your needle through the long stitches, alternating between over and under.



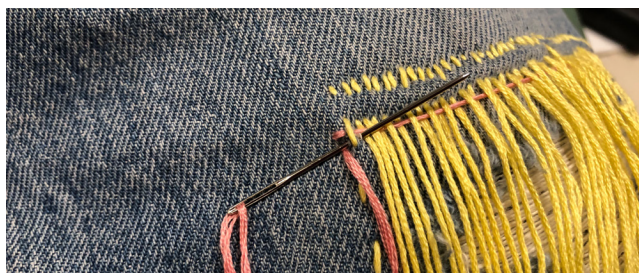
Stop every now and then to pull the thread through, then keep going.



When you reach the end, make a single stitch and check that the thread isn't too tight. Then make another stitch at a right angle.



Make a single stitch in the direction of the area you're repairing. Try to make this stitch very close to the one next to it, so you can squeeze in as many rows of thread as possible. If you aren't careful, you may end up with gaps in your weaving.



Start weaving your thread back in the other direction. If you went over a thread in the previous row, this time you'll go under. If you went under last time, this time you'll go over.



You can use your needle to push the threads close together, to make sure you aren't leaving too much slack.



When you get to the other end of the rectangle, make your stitches and head back in the other direction.



Keep weaving back and forth! It's mesmerizing fun. If you make a mistake (such as piercing a strand of embroidery floss), just unweave and try again.



Every now and then, use your needle to push the previous rows of thread together. This will help keep things tight.





As you get close to the end, keep pushing the previous threads up to make room. Try to squeeze in as many rows as you can.

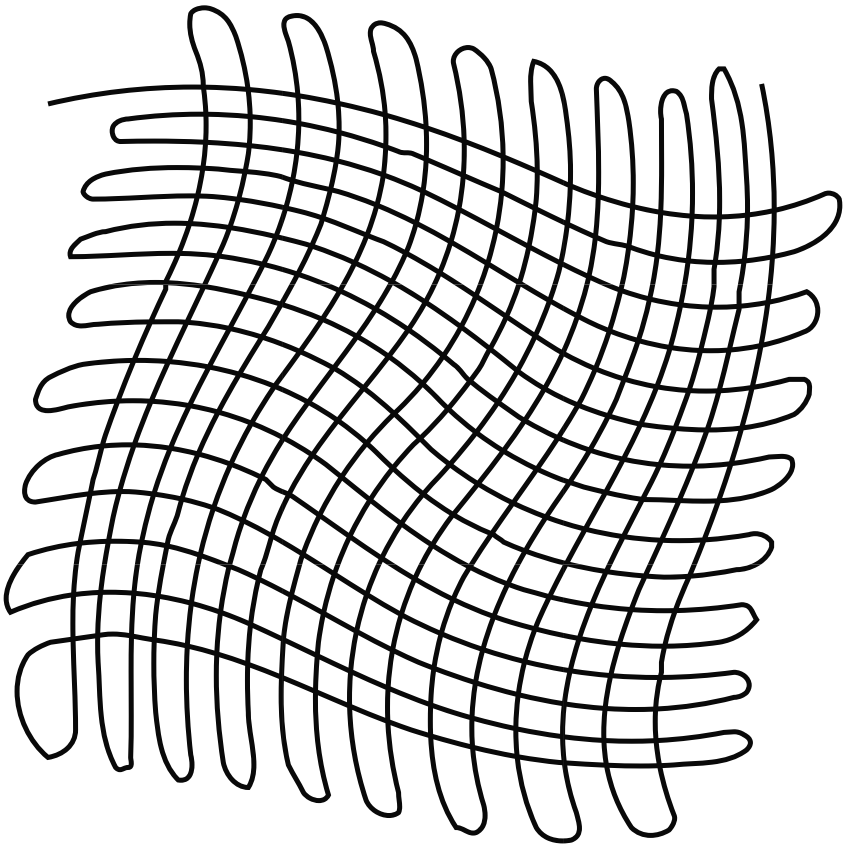


When the repair is done, pass your thread to the inside of the garment and make a double knot.



Here's the finished repair!





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