

## **BEFORE YOU SEW: DENIM DO'S (AND A FEW DON'TS)**

### **Obviously Not Off the Rack – Blog Series on Future Fashion Designers**

#### **📖 Sewing with Denim: Tips & Tricks for a Seamless Remix**

Whether you're upcycling a beloved pair of jeans or experimenting with denim-look prints, here are essential tips to keep your project stress-free and full of style:

#### **1. Use the Right Needle**

👉 Swap in a denim/jeans needle (90/14 or 100/16). It's built for thick fabric and helps prevent breakage.

#### **2. Topstitch Like a Boss**

👉 Go bold! Instead of using heavy-duty or topstitching thread (which most machines don't love), try a stretch stitch with regular thread in a contrasting color to highlight your design lines and details.

#### **3. Embrace the Fray**

👉 Raw edges? Yes, please. Fray ¼–½" for added texture. To prevent excessive unraveling, stitch a line ⅛" from the edge. Try fraying a swatch first—lengthwise grain (warp) and crosswise grain (weft) can fray differently, sometimes even in color. One may look cooler than the other—test it out for fun effects... or avoid surprises!

#### **4. Press Like a Pro**

👉 Denim loves steam. Use a tailor's clapper (or a wooden block) to flatten bulky seams. Let the area cool slightly before moving on.

#### **5. Sew Slow Through Bulk**

👉 Thick seams can challenge your machine. Slow down and use a "hump jumper" or a folded scrap of fabric to level your presser foot. You can even walk your needle over the hump by hand. This helps prevent needle breakage and machine jams.

#### **6. Harvest the Good Stuff**

👉 Old jeans are full of treasures—belt loops, labels, topstitched seams, cute pockets. Use every bit! Don't toss anything until you've cut it apart and "auditioned" it on your new creation. Leave extra fabric around details so you can fray around them or adjust later. Always leave a little seam allowance—just in case.

#### **7. Wash Before You Stitch**

👉 Prewash everything! Denim can shrink or bleed, especially when you're mixing old and new fabrics.

💡 **Bonus Tip:** Listen to your fabric! Pin pieces in place and take a look before you commit. Sometimes your skirt will tell you exactly where that glitter pocket wants to go.