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Recycling Clothes

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With clothing prices continuing to rise and many people having closets full of older, out-of-fashion clothes, clothing recycling can become a hedge against inflation. Extension Clothing Specialist Lois Goering says recycled clothing has become almost high fashion. Recycling started with college students and has become popular among all income groups.

Three things can be done with old clothes that are still in good condition, she says. They can be given away; the fabric can be used to make another item of clothing; or the original garment can be altered by making simple design changes. One way to reuse fabric is to cut an adult's garment into a child's size. Another might be to make hats, purses and even skirts from old clothes. Still another idea is to save old sock tops to use for ribbing or for wristlets for mittens and sleeves.

Restyling an old garment is another matter. Stick to the more classic styles which are not likely to change quickly, advises Mrs. Goering. And look through catalogues and magazines to find something close to the old garment you have. Turn an old T-shirt into a tank top by cutting out the neckline and armholes and adding ribbing. Take a too-tight pullover sweater, split it down the front and turn it into a cardigan. Or leave it as a pullover but add a strip of fabric for width or length. The new strip doesn't have to be the same color. Use a variety of patches attractively applied on to cover holes in old garments.

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