

## HOW TO UNRAVEL A JUMPER TO RECLAIM THE YARN

### Things to consider when choosing items to unravel:

- Does the knitwear have good or bad seams?
- Good seams are where the pattern piece shape has been created through knitting.
- Bad seams happen when the pattern piece shape is made by directly cutting a rectangle of knitted fabric.
- Some items such as jumpers and cardigans can have a mixture of good and bad seams.
- Side seams are often 'good'.
- Sleeve caps, button holes, collars and other embellishments are often 'bad'.

### You will need:

- A jumper
- A stitch un-picker
- A large box or similar to wrap the yarn around so it doesn't tangle during the unravelling process
- Patience!

1. Find a jumper made from a fibre you like that has seams that allow it to be unravelled (see next step). Natural fibers lend themselves better to being unravelled than synthetic ones as they have more elasticity. Then, 'However, please experiment!'

2. The following instructions will help you to identify whether a jumper has appropriate seams.



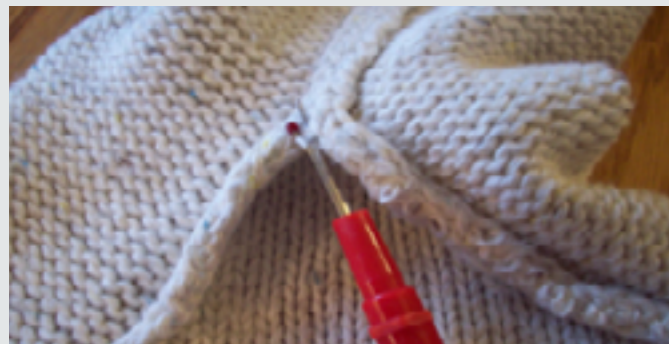
#### Good seams:

- End with a neat chain of knitted stitches.
- Are bulky.
- Are sewn together using a straight stitch often in the same yarn as the jumper is knit in.

#### Bad seams:

- End abruptly.
- Are more streamline to the garment.
- Are sewn together using an over-locker and sewing thread.

3. Once you have found a suitable jumper, you need to start carefully unpicking the seams. Using a stitch un-picker carefully tear through the bars of yarn joining each pattern piece together. You will find the bar by gently prising open the seam.



4. To begin unravelling a pattern piece you will need to find the end of the yarn. The end is often woven into short stub in the top left hand corner of the piece. You might have to make a snip or two but it should make itself clear. Most jumpers are knitted from bottom to top so to unravel you need to start at the top. If you are struggling to find the end of the yarn turn the piece around 180 degrees and try the other end.

5. Unravel by pulling gently at the yarn. It is helpful to wrap the yarn around a large box as you unravel to stop it tangling.

6. Finally wind your yarn into a ball.

As you unravel you will notice that the yarn is quite crinkled. Once it has been worked into its new form this crinkling should ease out. However, you may find your final piece is slightly more textured than if you were using a brand-new yarn. You may like to play with different stitches that make the most of this feature; in knitting, Moss Stitch, and similar, work particularly well with reclaimed yarns. In addition, since reclaimed yarns tend to have less elasticity than new yarns, before settling on a pattern you should spend some time exploring with swatches on different-sized needles or hooks to find the best results.



## Designing a Sensibility for Sustainable Clothing



Towards Zero Waste



## S4S – DESIGNING A SENSIBILITY FOR SUSTAINABLE CLOTHING

'S4S – Designing a Sensibility for Sustainable Clothing' is a ground breaking collaborative research project funded by the **Arts and Humanities Research Council**. It is co-hosted by academics from the Department of Politics at the **University of Exeter's** Environment and Sustainability Institute (ESI) in Penryn and the Fashion Department of the School of Art at the **University of Wolverhampton** in the West Midlands.

The **collaboration** has involved **community spaces, NGOs, local clothing brands, local designers and crafts people, film-makers and members of the public**. Between February and October 2018, it engaged **fifty members** of the public in **Cornwall** and the **West Midlands** in a series of **workshops** making fabric, and making, mending and modifying clothes.

A range of **innovative social science and arts methodologies** have been used to explore whether these **workshops** have **encouraged people to think, feel and act more sustainably in relation to clothing**. This set of leaflets shows a snapshot of the processes and outcomes from our **workshops**.

## TOWARDS ZERO WASTE

*"We're talking about the sort of actions which try to engage more people and don't make them feel judged – we want to be positive!"*

The second workshop series in Cornwall aimed to engage workshop participants in other methods of constructing cloth from yarn and to reveal some of the complex and difficult environmental and social issues facing the fashion and textiles industries, retailers and citizens alike. The workshops were primarily hosted at the Poly Arts Centre in Falmouth, but the good spring weather allowed some workshops to be held at the nearby local Kimberley Park.

***'It's a deception that we think we feel richer by buying more things - whereas actually that's not what makes us richer.'***

To begin, the group watched 'The True Cost', a documentary which exposes the darker sides of the fashion and textiles sector. The film highlights both the ethical problems of garment workers' rights and environmental damage caused by pollution, over-consumption and waste. This provoked a strong response in the group. This was followed with group discussions that led to the development of a 'project charter'. The charter is a participant-led, co-created series of ideas about how to encourage pro-environmental consumer behaviour change amongst communities. It also included the three core questions asked at the project launch event about how people THINK, FEEL and ACT in relation to clothing.

These questions provide the project with a framework for understanding the emergence of a sensibility for sustainable clothing. The subsequent knitting skills workshops were facilitated Anya Barbieri and followed a second film screening of a documentary called 'Unravel' which described the journey of clothing discarded by charity shops.

Inspired, the group then visited a local charity shop to find used knitwear to unravel. Under the skilful guidance of Anya's expertise, everyone was shown how to unravel existing knitwear to re-use the yarn. The reclaimed yarn was then used in the basic introduction to knitting sessions, which included learning how to 'cast on' stitches, plain knitting, increasing, decreasing and 'casting off' stitches. The group created a series of knitted triangles which were then sent to the West Midlands participant group to be embellished, after which they were returned to Cornwall to finally be made into bunting.

The group were clearly moved by the first documentary and this became a driver for the enthusiastic ideas and commitment to the project and its' message.

Website: [sites.exeter.ac.uk/s4s](https://sites.exeter.ac.uk/s4s) - Twitter: @S4sSensibility - Instagram: s4s\_sensibility - Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/S4sSensibility> - S4S Shropshire and West Midlands: <https://www.facebook.com/S4sStitchedup>