



THE GREAT BRITISH
SEWING BEE
SUSTAINABLE
STYLE

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QUADRILLE



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FOREWORD BY

Patrick Grant

I have in my wardrobe many pieces of clothing that are over half a century old – jackets from my grandfather, overcoats from my godfather, and various suits that I inherited from my father, including a dinner suit that dates back to 1935. They are special to me. Use and the passage of time have only increased their value. They have been made malleable and been moulded by use, while wear and the odd repair have added character to their once uniform appearance – all of which, in my eyes, only serves to increase their beauty. Their very fibres are infused with the history of the places they have been and the events at which they have been worn.

Every piece of clothing deserves to be cherished; worn, repaired, passed on and eventually recycled. A century ago we'd have paid a week's wages for a dress and worn it for years. When an item of clothing was worn out, the precious textile would have been reclaimed and something new would have been made from it, and the cycle would have started all over again. And it wasn't just clothing that we cherished: anything that was made from textiles, from bed linen to curtains, was treated with respect. Repurposing was commonplace. Everything we owned was valued.

But today, when it's more important than ever that we slow down our consumption, the amount of clothing that we buy and throw away has never been greater. Rampant consumption tied to ever-lower prices means that we are fast depleting the earth's natural resources and our industrial activities are polluting our planet on a scale never seen before. A great many of the people who labour to create our clothes are treated with a lack of human decency.

But we can all choose to act differently. As individuals we have the power to encourage and enact positive change.



If you watch *The Great British Sewing Bee*, then it's likely that you know more about textiles and clothing than the average person. You are very well placed to be an actor in this change. Make the simple decision to slow down your consumption, buy fewer but better pieces, invest in clothes made from the best natural fabrics, made by people paid a fair wage. Repair your clothes, learn to love a darn and a patch, alter them, pass them on. And when they wear out, take that precious fabric and make something new from it.

Waste nothing. Value everything.

I sincerely hope that this book can inspire you, and give you practical help in achieving this aim.

FOREWORD BY

Esme Young

Even though I've spent my working life in the fashion industry, I never cease to be amazed by the contestants on *The Great British Sewing Bee*. They epitomize everything I love about sewing – great technical skills, tremendous creativity, a love of beautiful fabrics and a willingness to learn from and share their ideas with others. They are amateurs in the truest sense of the word – people who love what they do and who put their hearts and souls into their creations – and I think that's what resonates with the viewing public.

The Great British Sewing Bee is also a testament to the huge renaissance in sewing in recent years. Once seen by many people as something that you only did if you couldn't afford to buy ready-made clothes, sewing is now viewed as an empowering and creative craft. Master a few basic techniques and you can not only make clothes that fit you perfectly but also create totally individual garments that express your personality and style.

Hand in hand with this is a growing awareness of the importance of sustainability in fashion. People are turning away from the 'throw away' culture of fast fashion that's prevailed for so long. Instead, they're looking for clothes that will last and that will have a minimal effect on the environment, whether that's in the way the fabric is produced or by refashioning 'pre-loved' garments into something new and exciting.

The Great British Sewing Bee has embraced this philosophy wholeheartedly. For me, one of the highlights of the series has always been the 90-minute transformation challenges – and boy, have we given our contestants some weird and wonderful challenges over the years! I relish their inventiveness and the way their individual styles shine through, even when they're up against the most severe of time constraints. So, in addition to a wide range of projects, from a simple wrap skirt to a '50s-style tea dress, or a versatile jumpsuit to a man's linen jacket, this book also includes a number of 'transformations' that turn battered old



jeans or vintage household linens into new garments or accessories. I hope that, like the challenges on the television series, they'll encourage you to repurpose items from your wardrobe, or even search out secondhand treasures online or in charity shops, in order to give new life to items that might otherwise be destined for landfill.

So whether you're an experienced sewer or completely new to this wonderful craft, I hope you'll find both inspiration and a host of useful tips and techniques in this latest addition to the *Sewing Bee* canon.

Introduction

Since the first season of *The Great British Sewing Bee*, the individual, solitary activity of sewing has turned into a hobby that connects our sewing nooks all over the world. The show, and also the rise of visibility of sewing on social media, has done great things to promote sewing. *The Great British Sewing Bee* brought sewing back into the spotlight as a hobby for everyone and dusted off the image it had in previous years. When someone tells you, 'I love your dress', you can now proudly respond, 'thank you, I made it'.

This book is aimed at confident home sewers. We will assume you have basic skills and will not go through the basic techniques, although you will find information on more advanced or specialist techniques, such as shirring and inserting a fly zip, where necessary. It contains 20 full-size garment patterns, some of which you may be familiar with from the television series and some of which are brand new. All are classic, timeless designs. Several can be adapted so that you can make different garments from the same pattern: you can make the top half of the summer dress on page 88 as a blouse, for example, or sew the sleep set (page 62) as an all-in-one romper. We've also created the patterns in a wider range of sizes than most sewing books - UK sizes 8 to 22 for women, and 34 to 44 for men - and on page 30, you will find details of how to alter the patterns to create a perfect fit.

At a time when people are increasingly aware of the impact their actions have on the environment, it's crucial that sustainability is entwined with your sewing. Caring more for the garments we make, and those we already own, is a small step we can take towards a more considered wardrobe.

Throughout the book there are lots of tips and tricks that you can introduce to make your sewing more sustainable, whether that's by choosing fabric produced in an environmentally friendly way, using offcuts to minimise waste, re-using buttons, zips and other haberdashery items from clothes that really are too far gone to save, or even the way you launder your clothes. Amongst the projects, we've also included a number of quick-and-easy transformations that will hopefully inspire you to recycle garments and even household linen that you already own.

Sewing has become a popular pastime for people of all ages, wanting to create something with their hands, desiring to sew what they can't find in the shops, or interested in making sure they know where something comes from. We want to have creative control of what we make and, most of all, we sew to suit our bodies and our individual personalities, rather than what society or trends tell us we should wear. With the rise of fast fashion and 'throw-away' culture, makers of today are concerned more than ever with the ethics of fashion, wanting to make stylish clothes that will last and be cherished.

Throughout the book you will find different techniques for the same thing (such as setting in one-piece sleeves in two ways) and more specialist insights (such as a detailed look at button stands). We would like to encourage you to try these different techniques, as there are many ways to get the same result, so that you can judge for yourself which techniques are suitable in which circumstances, or simply which ones you prefer!



How to use this book

PATTERNS TO ACCOMPANY THE BOOK

This book comes with 20 full-scale patterns nested in multiple sizes on pattern sheets. The women's patterns come in sizes UK 8–22 and the men's patterns in UK 34–44. In addition, every pattern can be downloaded as a PDF at hardiegrant.com/uk/quadrille/sustainable-style for you to print at home or at a copy shop.

The pattern pieces are layered on top of each other ready for tracing. Trace them onto dressmaker's tracing paper, making sure you follow the lines for your size, then cut out following the instructions on page 30. You may find that your actual body measurements fall between two pattern sizes; turn to page 32 for information on how to 'grade' patterns between sizes.

The majority of our patterns come with additional cutting lines for different sleeve, skirt and trouser lengths, providing you with more choice when sewing your wardrobe. You will also find information on adjusting patterns to fit your body shape on pages 32–37.

TOP TIP

In the step-by-step illustrations accompanying the projects, the right of the fabric is shown as a dark tone and the wrong side as a light tone.

LAY PLANS

The lay plans included in this book indicate how each project should be cut out – where the grain line on the pattern should be placed, whether pieces should be cut on the fold or not. Although fabrics come in widths ranging from 115 to 150 cm/45 to 60 in. (see page 47), wider widths are generally best for dressmaking. However, where the pattern pieces will comfortably fit on fabric that is 115 cm (45 in.) wide, we've included lay plans for two fabric widths. Lay plans are designed to help you cut the fabric in the most economical way possible, to minimise wastage. We have provided the lay plans for the patterns to be cut on the fold, to give you an estimate of how much fabric you need; however, it's worth noting that cutting on the fold isn't always the most economical: cutting all pieces on a single layer of fabric can sometimes save you fabric.

Check each lay plan when pinning your pattern pieces to your fabric.

The majority of the projects in this book are to be cut with the fabric folded in half right side to right side, with the selvages together. This is so that, when you cut out your pattern pieces, you have two perfectly matching pieces. It also ensures that any pattern markings are on the inside of your garment.

Occasionally you are required to cut the fabric flat, and not on the fold. This is the case when a pattern piece is wider than the folded fabric. This is shown in the lay plan if applicable.



DIFFICULTY LEVELS

Each project in this book is given a difficulty level – beginners, intermediate or advanced. If you are a beginner, we recommend that you start with a project such as the Sleep Set (page 62) or the Midi Wrap Skirt (page 74).

PATTERN MARKINGS AND TERMINOLOGY

The pattern sheets included with the book are marked with indications such as how many of each piece you need to cut out for your project, bust darts, waist darts, grain lines and notches.

Once you learn what each symbol or lines means, you will find dressmaking so much easier. When you have cut out your fabric pieces, but before you remove the paper patterns, you will need to transfer the markings to your fabric – see page 23.

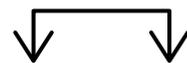
General information

Each pattern piece includes the pattern number, sizes on that particular piece, what the piece is (e.g. FRONT), and simple cutting directions such as, 'CUT 2 FABRIC, CUT 1 INTERFACING'.



Grain line arrows

Usually these will have arrowheads at one or both ends. These lines are pinned parallel to the selvedge to ensure the pattern piece is correctly angled and cut out.



Angled grain line

'Place to fold' lines have a right-angled arrowhead at either end to indicate that the pattern piece should be put on the fold of fabric.



Notches

These are short, straight lines on the cutting line extending into the seam allowance. They are used to match up seams, fronts to backs, sleeves to armholes. Cut these notches outwards from the cutting line and into the seam allowance, so that you don't cut inside of where the finished seam will be.



Lengthen or shorten lines

These are two parallel lines that indicate where the pattern can be made longer or shorter without distorting the garment shape.



Solid lines within the pattern

These indicate buttonhole positions and may also indicate the location of bust line, waist line and hip line.



Circles

These are used to mark the ends of openings such as zips, or the end of stitch lines such as gathers. They also mark placement of details such as darts, tabs, belt loops and pockets.



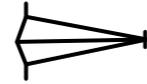
Cross

This symbol can mark the point of a dart, highlight the start and end of a particular feature such as a smocking line, or indicate the centre of a button.



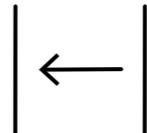
Zigzag line

This line shows where to gather.



Darts

Are shown as V-shaped lines extending from the cutting line into the garment. To sew, match the two lines of the V, folding the fabric with right sides together, and stitch along the line from the widest point to the tip. Darts shape fabric to fit over body contours.



Parallel lines with circles and an arrow line at the bottom

These lines indicate the position of tucks and pleats. One line is the fold line, the other the placement line. The arrowhead indicates which direction to take the fold. To make pleats, fold the fabric from the fold line to the placement line, then press. Tack across the top of the pleats to hold them in place.

Cutting lines

The outside lines on the pattern pieces are the cutting lines. Different sizes have different line types such as solid, dotted or dashed, which are also numbered by size. In some areas the lines merge, so it is advisable to go over your size line with a coloured pencil before tracing.

Women's sizing

—————	8
.....	10
- - - - -	12
- . - . - .	14
- - - - -	16
- . - . - .	18
- - - - -	20
—————	22

Men's sizing

—————	34
.....	36
- - - - -	38
- . - . - .	40
- - - - -	42
—————	44

Sewing kit

Sewing is a wonderful activity that requires lots of different tools. The tools you need depends on what kind of sewing you end up doing: a small set of tools will be sufficient if you are mending and repairing only, whereas dressmaking from scratch will require significantly more. There are many varieties of most tools, so don't be tempted to buy everything at once because you may not like all of them or end up using them. After a while you will know what you like and you will have established your own basic kit. If you are doing a technique that requires a specialist tool but you don't think you would get enough use out of it in the future, see if you can borrow it from someone rather than buying your own for a single occasion.

Basic sewing kit

These are what we consider to be the essential tools for dressmaking. There are other, more specialist pieces of kit available and, if a project requires a piece of equipment that's not mentioned below, we've listed it separately in the project instructions.

MEASURING TOOLS

Careful measuring is essential at every stage. In fact, the saying goes 'measure twice, cut once'!

Tape measure

Used to measure yourself as well as your sewing projects, this is one of the most essential items in your sewing kit. A tape measure becomes less accurate over time as it stretches, so it's a good idea to replace it every once in a while.

French curve and/or pattern master

A French curve, which is a ruler with a curved end as well as a straight edge, is used for drafting sewing patterns and adapting printed sewing patterns, particularly for grading in between sizes or trueing pattern lines. A pattern master is extremely useful if you draft your own patterns, as it has everything you need for pattern making in one tool.

Seam allowance gauge

This little contraption will help you achieve perfectly even hems and seams. It's like a mini ruler with specific measurements that you can use to achieve an even seam allowance, a neat hem, or perfectly positioned buttonholes.

MARKING TOOLS

You will need a selection of marking tools to transfer marks from patterns to fabric. There is a large variety available, and it's very much a matter of personal preference as to which ones to use.

Tailor's chalk or dressmaker's chalk pencils

This is the traditional choice, as the marks can be easily brushed out. Both chalk slabs and pencils come in a range of colours (white, blue, yellow), so choose the one that will show up best on your fabric.

Air- and water-soluble pens

Marks made with an air-soluble pen simply disappear after a while. Water-soluble pens are a more recent innovation and have the advantage that the marks cannot be brushed off accidentally. Please note that these will only be useful on projects that will be washed.

Dressmaker's carbon paper and tracing wheel

Dressmaker's carbon paper comes in a variety of colours and is used to transfer pattern outlines and indications such as darts, pleats and notches onto fabric. It is used in conjunction with a tracing wheel; you can get very spiky wheels, medium wheels and wheels with no spikes at all.

CUTTING TOOLS

Sharp cutting tools are essential – not only will they produce neater lines, but they will also be gentler on your hands. Look after your scissors. Blunt scissors don't achieve clean cutting lines, so make sure to sharpen them if they have reached that stage. You can have this done for you or purchase a scissor sharpener.

Dressmaking shears

A pair of good-quality dressmaking shears will last you for years if you take care of them. Use dressmaking shears that are at least 20 cm (8 in.) long for cutting out your dressmaking projects. Have your scissors sharpened once a year.

Snips

A pair of snips, or embroidery scissors, is great for cutting loose thread ends, so keep them next to you as you sew.

Rotary cutter

This tool is great for cutting out fabrics that are trickier to handle, such as very fine fabrics and stretch fabrics, as you don't have to disturb the fabric once you have laid it out. Make sure your blade is sharp. You can get different sizes of blades depending on whether you are doing lots of curved lines (you will need a smaller blade) or straighter lines (you'll need a bigger blade). Always use a rotary cutter on a self-healing cutting mat.

Paper scissors

Keep a separate pair of scissors for cutting out your paper patterns. Never, ever use your dressmaking shears on paper, as they will blunt.

Pinking shears

Pinking shears were a traditional cutting tool and often used for neatening seam allowances. However, they are not very practical: once they go blunt, you cannot sharpen them.

PINS AND WEIGHTS

To stop your pattern pieces from slipping out of position as you cut them out, you need to secure them to the fabric.

Dressmaking pins

Good-quality pins are a must. You have a choice of glass-headed pins, regular pins, plastic-headed pins and even novelty pins. Be sure to replace your pins when they become blunt or start to snag your fabrics.

TOP TIP

Opt for glass-headed pins rather than plastic-headed pins. Not only are they a more sustainable choice, but they don't melt if you iron over them.

Pin magnet

A modern alternative to a pincushion, a pin magnet makes it easy to gather up loose pins from the floor and your work desk.

Pattern weights

Pattern weights hold down your fabric and pattern, and are a quicker and easier solution than pinning. They are great to use on delicate fabrics such as silk if you want to avoid pin marks and they work well with stretch fabrics such as jerseys if you are using a rotary cutter to cut out. Weights are not suitable if you are going to use scissors.



SEWING EQUIPMENT

It goes without saying that you'll need a sewing machine. They range from simple models that do little more than straight and zigzag stitch and maybe an automatic buttonhole, to elaborate machines with lots of fancy embroidery stitches. The projects in this book can all be made with a relatively simple machine, although there are a few essential accessories.

Show your sewing machine some love by regularly getting rid of any fluff or thread caught up inside the machine and by oiling the internal parts surrounding the bobbin. With experience you will be able to hear when the machine is dry and needs some oil, but it's best to not let it get that far. A new machine will typically come with a small bottle of machine oil and after that has finished you can easily buy some more. Make sure you run some scrap fabric through the machine after you have oiled it to catch any excess oil before you start on a new project.

Sewing machine needles

There are many different types and sizes of sewing machine needles you will need in your sewing kit. The chart on the right will help you choose the right size of sewing machine needle for your fabric. Needles for domestic sewing machines are universal, meaning they will fit any sewing machine brand. You will need different kinds of needles for industrial sewing machines, and also different needles for overlockers. In addition to the different sizes of needles in the chart, you might also need to use a ballpoint needle for stretch fabrics, a twin needle for decorative topstitching or finishing hems on knit fabrics, and a topstitching needle.

American needle size	European needle size	Fabric weight	Fabric types
8	60	Very fine	Fine silk, chiffon, organza, voile, fine lace
9	65	Very fine	Fine silk, chiffon, organza, voile, fine lace
10	70	Very fine	Fine silk, chiffon, organza, voile, fine lace
11	75	Lightweight	Cotton voile, silk, muslin, spandex, Lycra
12	80	Standard	Cotton, synthetics, spandex, Lycra
14	90	Medium-weight	Denim, corduroy, multiple layers
16	100	Heavy-weight	Heavy denim, heavy corduroy, leather
18	110	Very heavy	Upholstery fabric, leather
20	120	Extra heavy	Heavy upholstery fabric, thick leather, vinyl

TOP TIP

Be sure to change your sewing machine needle regularly. It simply gets blunt after a while and won't stitch as neatly.

Sewing machine feet

Your sewing machine most likely came with all the sewing machine feet you will need. These are the feet we recommend you start with:

- Regular foot
- Invisible zip foot
- Zip foot
- Gathering foot
- Buttonhole foot
- Walking foot

Overlocker

An overlocker is used to finish and trim the seams of your garment, giving them a neat finish that also prevents the fabric from unravelling. A three-thread overlocker is used for neatening seam allowances, whereas jersey fabrics and sportswear should be sewn on a four-thread overlocker for extra strength. However, an overlocker isn't essential; you can also neaten seams on your sewing machine using zigzag stitch (see page 26).

HAND SEWING EQUIPMENT

Although there isn't a lot of hand sewing in the projects in this book, you will need to do some hemming by hand, as well as sew on buttons and other fastenings or decorations. And when it comes to sustainable sewing, where you want to repair or customise existing garments, basic hand sewing skills are extremely useful.

Hand sewing needles

You will need a variety of hand sewing needles in your sewing kit. Sharps and betweens are the most commonly used ones. Sharps are universal hand sewing needles, whereas the shorter betweens are preferred by quilters and crafters. Slim embroidery needles are great for all kinds of hand sewing, as they have a slightly bigger eye. Avoid very short needles for dressmaking, as they are less practical.

These are the needles most useful for dressmaking:

- Sharps – these are medium-length needles and the most popular for general hand sewing.
- Betweens – these needles are shorter and are useful for quilting.
- Embroidery/crewel needles – these have a longer eye, which makes them very handy for hand sewing with double or quadruple thread, such as fastenings.
- Darning needles – these are generally longer, blunter needles with long eyes, used for darning but also for basting fabrics together.
- Self-threading needle – if you have difficulty threading your hand sewing needle, these ones will be your new friends.

TOP TIP

Cut a length of thread, fold it in half and put the two tails through the eye of your needle. This way you can start your stitch without a knot (you sew through the loop of your first stitch instead), so it's much stronger.

Thimble

A thimble is essential for hand sewing to protect your hands. Wear the thimble on your middle finger and use it to push the back of the needle through the fabric to get a swift hand sewing motion. You can get thimbles with closed tops or open tops (tailoring style). Which one you pick is down to personal preference.

PRESSING EQUIPMENT

Pressing (as opposed to ironing) is essential at every stage of the dressmaking process in order to achieve a neat, professional-looking finish. Whereas ironing is the process of making a material crease free, pressing is done to ensure that all constructional seams and elements are lying flat throughout the making process, to ensure a neater finish.

Steam iron

A good iron with a steam button is essential for sewing: pressing in between each step, and getting crisp seams and darts, will give your makes a professional finish. Always test a swatch of your fabric with the iron to make sure you have the correct heat setting. If in doubt, use a pressing cloth – a piece of folded cotton in between your iron and your material that protects your fabric from direct contact with the iron. This is particularly good for very lightweight fabrics, laces and silks, as direct contact with the hot iron can distort the delicate fibres.

TOP TIP

Turn off your iron between sewing stages in order to save energy.

Tailor's ham

Pressing your garment on a tailor's ham makes it easier to press open curved seams such as sleeves, collars, armholes, French seams and waistbands.

There's a tutorial on how to make your very own tailor's ham using fabric scraps on page 100.

THREAD

Use a good-quality thread while sewing, as poor-quality thread has a tendency to snap when used on a sewing machine. Remember that an overlocker requires finer thread than a sewing machine, whereas overlocker thread on a sewing machine is far too thin.

You can choose from polyester, silk, cotton, organic cotton and recycled thread made from 100% recycled plastic bottles. As a rule, polyester thread is stronger, so we fully recommend you try the recycled polyester threads. You can match the thread type to the fibre used in your fabric, such as cotton thread for a cotton fabric, but as a general rule of thumb you should match the thickness of your thread to the thickness of your fabric's fibres. As an example, lightweight silk is made of very fine fibres and polyester is actually the finest thread. Silk thread would be too thick on lightweight silk and would interrupt the fibres too much to be able to pass through.

TOP TIP

When looking for a thread to match your fabric colour, unwind some of the thread and lay it on top of the fabric to double check the match, as the thread looks more intense in colour when it's wrapped on the spool.

OTHER USEFUL EQUIPMENT

Below are some other useful accessories for your sewing kit that don't fit into a particular category. The unpicker will be particularly useful, regardless of your sewing experience: we all make mistakes and even the most experienced maker will need one of these close by.

Bamboo pointer

This amazing tool is used for creating crisp corners when you turn pieces such as collars or cuffs inside out. Really old-fashioned ones were made of bone and most modern ones are made of wood. These are great to use, as the point is blunt: using a pencil or small scissors will potentially poke a hole.

Pattern paper/tracing paper

These are required for tracing the patterns included in the book and for creating your own sewing patterns. You can choose from the classic dot-and-cross and gridded pattern papers, which help place the pattern on the grain of the fabric, or a plain tracing paper, which is easier to see through.

Quick unpick

A quick unpick, also called a seam ripper or an unpicker, is a small claw-like tool used to unpick stitching as well as to open buttonholes.

TRANSFORMATION

Denim Apron

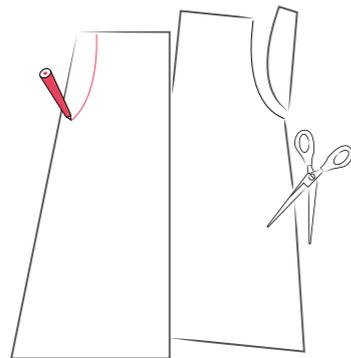
Denim is a great fabric, but it's very labour- and water-intensive to produce, so the longer we can make use of it the better. Here, we're turning a pair of unloved old jeans into an apron, suitable for men and women. We've shown a very simple transformation, but the possibilities are endless: you could add hardware such as rivets for a really industrial look, re-use the pockets, play with the shape of the apron, topstitch in a contrasting colour, or even combine elements from different jeans.

Materials

- Pair of full-length jeans
- Basic sewing kit (see page 14)
- Unpicker or sharp small snips
- Denim needle (size 90)

Note: You may want to use a different material for the waist tie.

- 1** Using both the legs of your jeans to create your apron front: unpick the inside leg seam of both legs all the way up to the crotch and cut them away from your jeans. Pin the longest sides together and sew down the middle. Press your seams open so it lies flat. Mark out the shape of your apron top at the narrowest part of the leg. Cut out, unfold the leg and there is your apron front!



TOP TIP

You need a generous amount of fabric for this project, so skinny jeans might not be the best choice.

- 2** Finish any raw edges. Denim is very thick, which makes it difficult to stitch a double-turned hem, so overlock the edges and press and stitch a single hem.
- 3** Make straps to go around the waist and the neck. We used the denim waistband as the neck strap and made waist ties from cotton tape. Re-use interesting parts of your jeans to create features on the apron - for example, placing the jeans' back pockets on the apron front.

