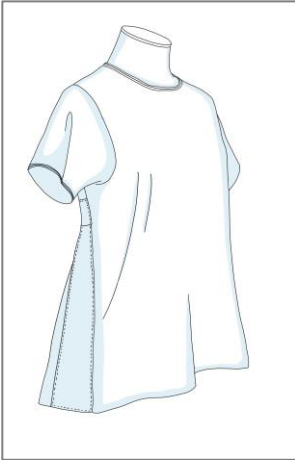# Paganoonoo™ Upcycle sewing made simple.

IT'S SEW EASY Series 1500, Upcycle Sewing: Unisex T-shirt to Feminine Top

Michelle Paganini
Upcycle Guru & Owner of Paganoonoo
www.paganoonoo.com

> **Upcycle (up-si-kel) To improve existing goods (such as clothing) through the use of labor, materials, and creativity**
>
> *Good for the planet, good for your budget!*

Unisex t-shirts are classic, like jeans, and have become a wardrobe staple. We will look at some easy methods for upgrading a favorite unisex t-shirt into a more feminine top. Designers experiment with embellishing and modifying classic T's and you can too! Some of the techniques are possible because t-shirt knits do not run or fray when cut, so raw edges can be

used vs. having to hem.

Soften the neckline
The neckline can be softened by cutting open the ribbing and grading it to two heights. Start cutting at the back of the neck. Cut the ribbing open at the very edge, working all the way around. Carefully cut the front layer down to ½ height, ensuring that the cuts are smooth and do not leave jagged edges. Trim the inside layer down by ¼.

Soften the sleeve hem
Follow the same process as the neckline, using the technique on the sleeve hems.

Lower the neckline
Use a temporary marker to mark a lower neckline placement position on the t-shirt, no more

than ~2" lower than the original. This marking will be used to reposition the front of the ribbed collar. The back of the neck stays the same, only the front is lowered.

Fold the front of the shirt in half and mark the center of the neckline and then center f the repositioning line. Cut the *front neckline* (only) away from the shirt, cutting **⅓**" under the

ribbed collar. Pull the neckline down, matching the center marks and pin. Gently and evenly stretch out the neckline so that it can be positioned along the marked line and pinned in place.
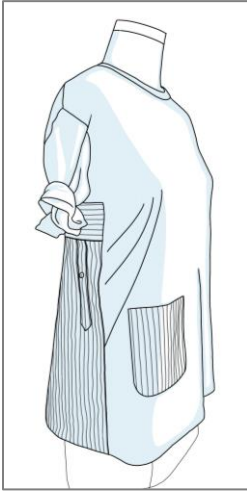

MATERIALS & SUPPLIES
FABRICS: Any t-shirt with standard neck ribbing, a dress shirt sleeve
SUPPLIES: Thread, iron and ironing boards, pins, sewing machine, sharp sewing scissors.

Changing hip width

Unisex t-shirts are built in a square shape that doesn't always accommodate our hips and bellies. I am a "pear" shape, so t-shirts that fit me in the bust are always too tight at the hips. Too tight clothes are not comfortable or flattering for me. Perhaps you have a similar experience.

Cutting open the sides and adding panels *is one solution.* Consider if you would like the panel to be a highly visible feature or less noticeable. Find a dress shirt in colors according to your preference.

Harvest a sleeve from the dress shirt: cut off one of the sleeves, removing the shoulder seam. Cut away the underarm seam, continuing the cut directly through the cuff. Button the cuff, and cut the sleeve exactly in half along the middle. Turn the sides of the sleeves under ¼" and press. One half will have a cuff piece with placket and button.

Open up the t-shirt sides. T-shirts are almost always twisted off grain, so be sure to *try on* the shirt and mark the side seams before starting. Laying the shirt out flat to determine the side seams may not match up to how it actually sits on your body. Cut open the sides stopping about 2" shy of the underarm seam.
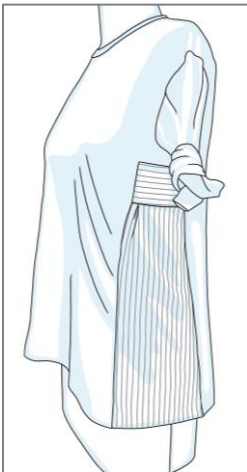
Add the panels. Center the cuff of the sleeve panel just below the underarm and pin in place. If the panel contains the sleeve placket, position the placket closer to the front of the t-shirt. Try on the shirt and pin the sides of the panels so that they lay smoothly on the t-shirt. Stitch across the top of the panel and then down each side, starting at the top. Stitch at least 1" beyond the end of the t-shirt hem.

Hem the panels. Trim the panel bottoms to 2" below the t-shirt hem. Make a rolled hem that matches the t-shirt hem. Trim away the excess t-shirt.

Alternatively a full panel can be added to the back of the t-shirt to create even more hip and belly room. Full directions are available in my commercial pattern (instructions) the "Ellie" pattern. www.etsy.com/shop/paganoonoo

Happy upcycling!

Sew up these Paganoonoo designs & more! www.etsy.com/shop/Paganoonoo/