With online and IRL shopping slowing in order to meet essential needs, it’s the perfect time to revisit and renew some of your older garments. Explore Sashiko, taking inspiration from the work of WorkshopSF artist Hayley.

Learn about this beautiful, ancient Japanese embroidery technique which was originally developed to strengthen quilts and kimonos, and lengthen the life of textiles. Sashiko, which translates to “little stabs”, traditionally uses white cotton thread on dark blue indigo dyed fabric. A single running stitch is used to create lovely geometric patterns that can be used to decorate fabric or reinforce ripped denim.

Visit Hayley’s Instagram for examples of sashiko stitches on different denim areas - worn places have never looked so beautiful.

More About Hayley: Hayley has over 30 years of fiber arts experience. With sashiko being a long-running staple she can keep her clothing in rotation for what many have called “too long”. You can follow her sashiko journey on Instagram @pretzelegant_sashiko where you can see many tips, tricks, past and present works and watch the progress on her famous sashiko pants. You can also learn the art from her in her class she teaches at WorkshopSF.

RECOMMENDED AGE/SKILL LEVEL:

Participants must be comfortable handling a needle, and fine motor skills required.

SASHIKO AT HOME

Use small stitches, or “little stabs,” to mend and beautify your clothing. These stitches can also be used on decorative patches. Remember, your work won’t necessarily be perfect the first time around. This is an art that refines with practice.
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SASHIKO MENDING

MATERIALS

• Cotton fabric (often denim). TIP: We recommend beginning sashiko practice on a cotton patch rather than the worn fabric itself.
• A pattern - simple geometric lines are ideal. Seigaiha wave patterns are one pleasing option. Use a ruler to trace out a grid if you prefer.
• Needle - a sharp needle with a larger eye is best.
• Thimble
• Sashiko thread or embroidery floss. TIP: you can also peel off three threads of embroidery floss for a thinner, slightly easier practice.
• Tracing tools: tracing paper and chalk pencil work excellently
• Ruler
• Sturdy scrap fabric to use as a patch, if fixing a hole
• Safety pins to secure your patch, if fixing a hole.

INSTRUCTIONS

• Trace your chosen pattern onto your denim or other cotton surface. You may not have tracing paper; creating a grid with a ruler will work. Numerous free patterns are available online for adventurous crafters.

Here at home, chalk pencil is in short supply, and a white colored pencil is called up for use. An old canvas scrap will be rounded to cover the hole (and it likely could have been larger).
If you will be using a patch under a hole (disregard if you are practicing sashiko on the patch itself!),
turn your frayed material inside out. Secure the patch of scrap material, using pins along the edges of
the scrap. **TIP:** If you do not have enough pins, use a thin thread to make stitches along the outside
of the patch (this will define the edges of your patch), and secure it in place.
If you are making sashiko stitches on a patch, you may simply trace your design on to the patch. The
patch will be attached to fabric later.

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patch will be attached to fabric later.

Turn the frayed material right side out. Thread your needle with white thread, tying a knot at the end.
Ideally the knot will be hidden in between your two layers: begin sewing from the inside of your fabric,
starting your stitch in between patch and fabric.
Sashiko technique uses a running stitch: bunch the fabric together as you create multiple stitches at
once in a straight line. If you are new to sewing, be easy on yourself and take it one stitch at a time
as you practice. **TIP:** If you are mending, keep checking to make sure your needle is penetrating the
correct layers of cloth.

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Rows of stitches going in one direction are completed, but evidence of the first time trying
sashiko mending is showing in the uneven
stitches. Ideally, sashiko stitching will be even
and show a controlled, small amount of white
thread.

My stitches cross as desired, but they are more like a constellation than a grid. To be continued.
I want a handmade look, but less obtrusive stitches.
Museum of Craft and Design x WorkshopSF
Sashiko Mending

- If you have right angles in your design (see image below), make sure a stitch ends on corners to define your pattern. If you are making cross shapes, once you’ve completed one direction, go back through your pattern. This might involve diagonal lines, smaller stitches, or other shapes depending on what pattern you’ve chosen.

- Tie a knot on the back side of your fabric once your design is finished. Remove your pins or thin thread to release the edges of the patch.

![Experimenting with a zigzag mountain pattern](image)

**Experiment!** Your designs will be striking in whatever form they take. Sashiko practice is a craft form you can return to again and again.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### CONNECT SOCIALLY

Facebook & Instagram: @MuseumofCraftandDesign | @WorkshopSF | Hayley: @pretzelegant_sashiko
Twitter @SF_MCD @Workshopsf

### RELATED MATERIAL AND RESOURCES

- [Tutorial](#) by Rikumo Journal
- [Video tutorial](#) by MCD Design Council members and local DIY organization Creative Bug.
  Now is a great time to sign up!
- Gain some Sashiko background with Upcycle Stitches [here](#).
- More techniques can be found [here](#), and a detailed deep dive into materials [here](#).