

# I Love The Fabric, But...

## Adapting Department Store/Thrift Shop Clothing for Square Dancing

The definition of "Square Dance Clothes" today is frequently anything that is both comfortable AND graceful.

For the first time in MANY years, the stores have full, long skirts that are *almost* right for square dancing. And at the "end of the season", whenever that is, they are only a few dollars! And what about recycle sales?

- To avoid trying it on, I hold it (still folded in half) around my waist/chest to see if it reaches from side to side without stretching (if so, it will fit), or if it's long enough.

Sometimes it isn't *quite* right: it doesn't take a designer to make over something into *just* what you wanted.

### Skirts:

- Put an elastic waistband on it: start with a skirt size that goes over the hips without opening the zipper—and sew the zipper closed when putting the elastic on.
- Shorten it, or lengthen it by adding ruffles/lace trim that they sell by the yard at the craft/decorator fabric shops,
- Or make a dress into a skirt—the waistband doesn't even have to match if you put a belt over the waistline.

### Tops/Shirts:

- Leave the collar open if it's too snug—many men don't close the collar button anyway.
- Fold the sleeves back if they're too short to fit the wrist.

### Other alterations:

- Never sew a stitch: *Liquid Stitch* by Prym-Dritz is permanent, washable, dries tacky in 5-10 minutes, and secures EVERYTHING but elastic. (I've hemmed skirts, altered curtains on the rod, and made pillows with it and other similar fabric glues.)
- Use the matching vest to make a tie or yoke for my partner.
- Take that nice buckle off an old belt and put it on a better-colored belt.
- Get some of that new beaded-fringe-by-the-yard—even the decorator trim sections of the stores have pretty ones.
- Re-use that old full petticoat to make it fit under a prairie skirt by cutting 2/3 of it out, and adding a new cotton/nylon top to make it longer (avoid the lamp-shade look at all costs...)
- Use washable fabric paint to embellish it or hide a spot or other defect.

By Rusty Ball, The Sewing Circle Squared