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Clothing for Independent Living – Undercover Convenience
Michigan State University Extension Service
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CLOTHES FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

Undercover Convenience

Underclothes and outerwear should be comfortable and easy to put on and take off. Larger sizes will help if they are not too bulky. Cotton and cotton blend underclothes are also more absorbent and comfortable. Here are a few ideas for altering underclothes.

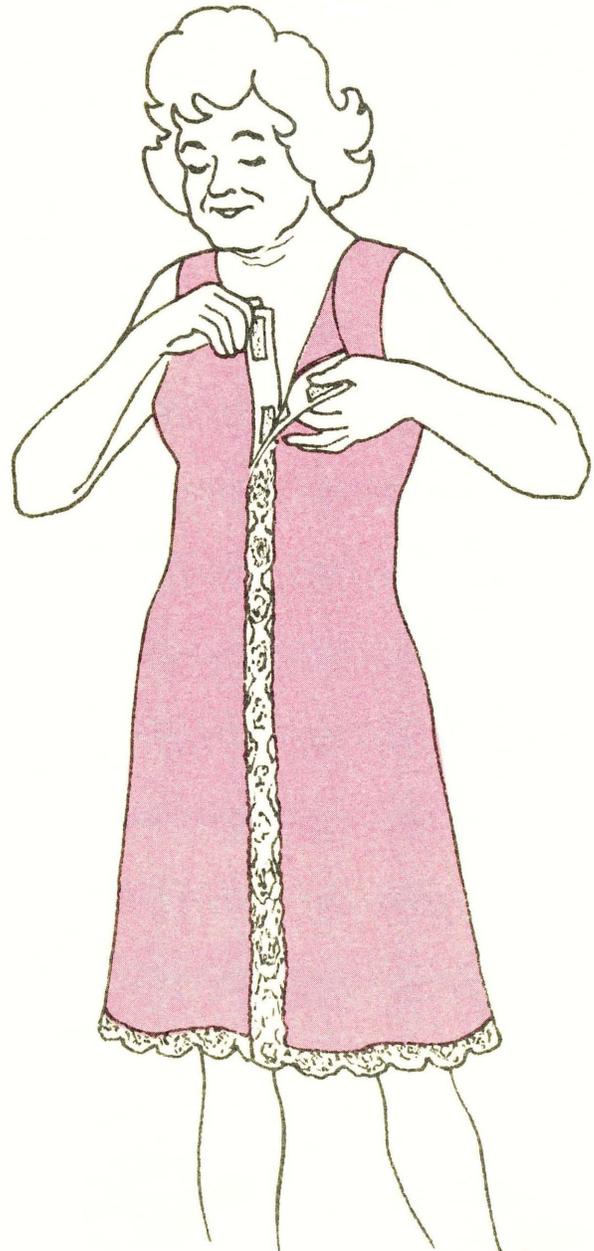
Altering Slips to Wrap Style

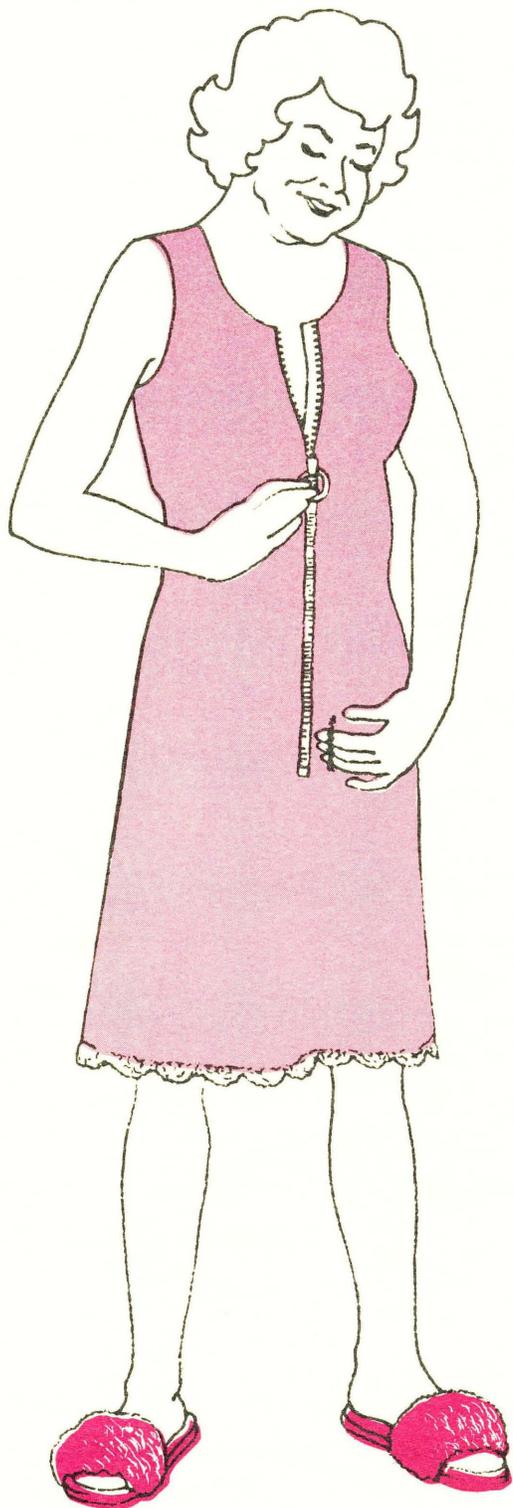
A full length slip will be much easier to put on and take off if it wraps instead of slipping over the head.

- 1 Cut a woven fabric slip down the center front.
- 2 Add a double fold strip of fabric to each side to make a 1-2 inch overlap.
- 3 Fasten with spaced strips of hook and loop pressure tape.
- 4 Wide nylon lace hem tape can be stitched down the overlap to add a decorative touch.

A half slip can also be changed to a wrap style.

- 1 Cut the slip apart lengthwise down the center front or slightly off to one side.
- 2 Add a wide fabric extension to one side for an underlap.
- 3 Finish off the other edge with a narrow hem. Sew lace along the edge if desired.
- 4 Fasten with strips of hook and loop pressure tape at the waistline to make the slip adjustable.





Undercover Convenience

Zippering a Full-length Slip

Set a lightweight zipper into the slashed center front of a slip. This method is very suitable for knit slips. Use a soft, flexible nylon or polyester coil zipper which is at least 20 inches long.

- 1 Sew the zipper in with a very small seam so that it is exposed. Then the slip will not be made smaller in size.
- 2 Add a fabric facing (can use wide twill tape) underneath the zipper to protect the skin.
- 3 Make a thread chain loop at the zipper pull tab to make it easier to grasp.
- 4 Add another thread chain (about 1½ to 2 inches long) down along side the bottom of the zipper. The wearer can slip several fingers into the loop to hold down the fabric for easier zipping.

Slip Straps

Slips with built up straps are often more comfortable to wear because they don't bind or slip off the shoulders as easily. Narrow straps can be made more comfortable by sewing them on to a wider ribbon or tape.

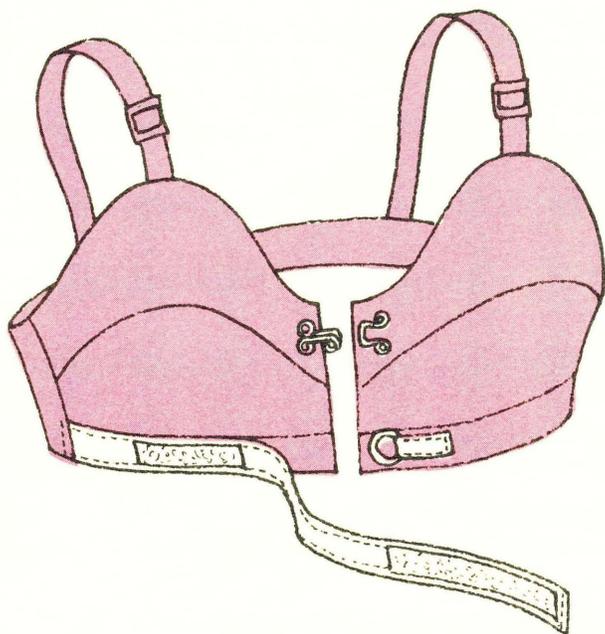
Opening Bras in the Front

Some front-closing bras can be purchased. Regular back-closing bras can be altered to open in front, but they must be the kind that can be taken apart at the center front. The method will depend somewhat on the style of bra.

METHOD I—Supplies Needed:

A 24-inch strip of twill tape (1 inch wide)
3 to 4 inches of white hook and loop pressure tape (1 inch wide)
One large tailor's hook and eye
One plastic curtain ring (1 inch in diameter) or metal belt ring.

- 1 Remove stitching which holds center front of bra together.
- 2 Sew the edges of the twill tape together to make a 12 inch long strip.
- 3 Insert into lower right bra seam and machine stitch.
- 4 Attach plastic ring to lower left side of bra with a strip of material about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch wide when finished and 2 inches long, looped over the curtain ring and sewed to bra (as illustrated).
- 5 Place tailor's hook and eye (as illustrated) making sure the bra is brought over to the original stitched position. Hook on right—eye on left.



- 6 Put bra on; bring strip through plastic ring and fold to determine placement of hook and loop pressure tape strips. Then attach pressure tape, stitching all four sides.
- 7 Remove hooks and eyes from the back of the bra and sew it shut.

Note: If a person is left-handed, the above steps should be done on opposite sides.

METHOD II

- 1 Open up the center front of the bra.
- 2 Sew in a bra repair package which can be purchased.
- 3 Sew the hook section to one side and the eye section to the other so that they join without adding any width at the center front.
- 4 Remove the hooks and eyes at the back and sew the back opening shut.

T-shirt Tricks

All cotton or cotton blend T-shirts are more absorbent and comfortable to wear. When altering T-shirts, launder the shirts and all other materials such as braids, tapes, zippers, etc. that will be used *before fixing them*. This will prevent differences in shrinking when the T-shirt is washed regularly.

Open shoulder seams will make it easier to slip T-shirts over the head. Polo shirts with raglan sleeves can be fixed the same way.

- 1 Open up the shoulder seams, being careful not to stretch the edges of the open seams. (Stitching along each side of the seam before opening it up will prevent stretching.)
- 2 Bind the seam edges with twill tape (1 inch wide) so that the edges will overlap.
- 3 Cut narrow strips of hook and loop pressure tape and sew onto the bound edges.

A **separating zipper** can be used to completely open up a slip over T-shirt. Use an open-end zipper about 22 inches long, depending on the size of the T-shirt. The zipper should end at the waistline so that the remaining shirt can be tucked into pants.

- 1 Cut open the T-shirt, beginning at the neckline rib seam and continuing at a slight slant, down through the bottom of the shirt.
- 2 Stitch the zipper into the opening, beginning the zipper at the neck.
- 3 Turn under the remaining edges and edge stitch.
- 4 Sew a strip of wide twill tape underneath the zipper to protect the skin.



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