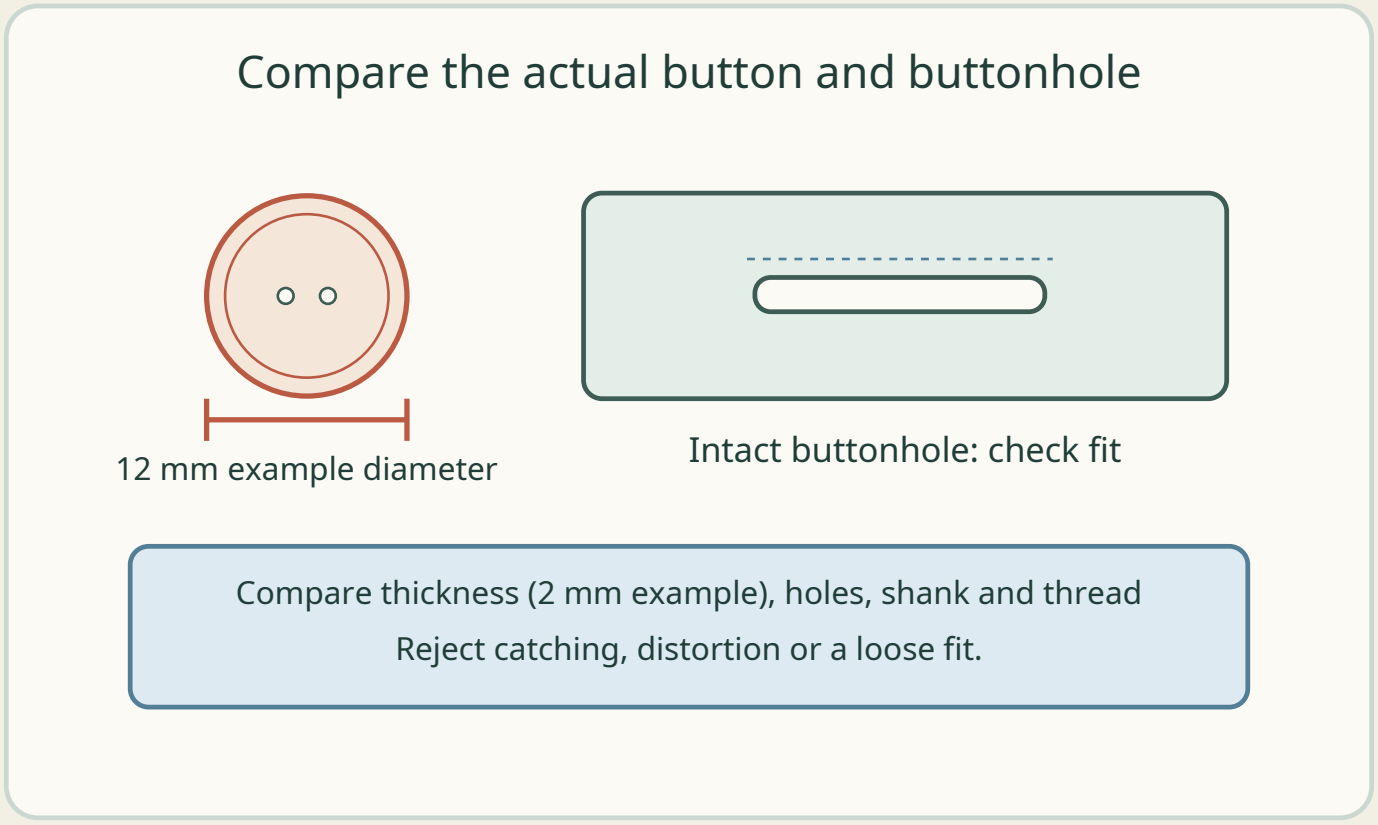
# Replace a Missing Shirt Button with the Right Size




Select and attach a compatible replacement button without changing the shirt's original closure.

**14 practical steps • Original diagrams and repair records**

Illustrative repair plans — not physical test results

# Before you start

A missing button is a compatibility problem before it is a sewing problem. This guide covers an ordinary adult woven shirt with sound button fabric and an intact buttonhole. It is not for riveted jeans buttons, stretch-dependent or protective garments, children's clothing, or a torn button position. If the cloth is weak, reinforce it appropriately before adding hardware.

## Materials

Shirt off the body, intact matching button or spare if available, ruler or calliper used without squeezing, two or three replacement candidates, compatible thread, hand needle, scissors, removable marker, and a scrap of comparable fabric. Keep needles and small hardware away from children and pets.

# Plan the repair

Measure the diameter, thickness, hole spacing and attachment type of a sound neighbouring button. For example a 12 mm two-hole button, about 2 mm thick, is a candidate only if the existing buttonhole admits it comfortably and the placket lies flat; a 12 mm diameter does not guarantee compatibility. Compare the number of holes, raised or flat back, and thread clearance. Mark the original button centre from surviving stitches and align with its closed buttonhole. For a flat sew-through button, leave a small thread shank appropriate to the actual overlapping placket thickness; a manufactured shank already provides clearance. Do not enlarge the buttonhole to fit a candidate.

# Steps 1–2

## 1. Confirm the garment and position

Lay the shirt flat, unbuttoned and off the body. Identify the missing button location; inspect the remaining closures and fabric around the missing attachment. If yarns are torn or thin, defer attachment.

## 2. Identify the original attachment

Examine a sound button nearby. Determine whether it is sew-through with two or four holes or has a built-in shank. Record the hole pattern and stitch direction.

# Steps 3–4

## 3. Measure a sound button

Measure diameter across the widest face, thickness and approximate hole spacing. Record the values without squeezing or removing a sound button. The 12 mm example is not a standard.

## 4. Inspect the existing buttonhole

Check its relaxed length, stitching and surrounding fabric. Compare the adjacent functioning closure. A torn or stretched buttonhole needs separate repair; do not cut or enlarge it.

# Steps 5–6

## 5. Compare replacement candidates

Choose a matching spare if available. Otherwise compare diameter, edge shape, thickness, holes and shank construction. Reject sharp edges, cracks or tiny holes that will abrade thread.

## 6. Check the actual fit

With the candidate loose in your hand and the shirt supported, pass it gently through the intact buttonhole without force. Remove it again. Reject a button that catches, distorts the opening or slips out too readily.

# Steps 7–8

## 7. Match thread and needle

Choose compatible thread that passes freely through the button holes and a suitable hand needle. Consider the shirt care label and match visible thread colour when possible.

## 8. Mark the original centre

Align the two plackets naturally as they sit when closed. Mark the button centre opposite the original buttonhole, using the old stitch marks as a reference. Check the line against neighbouring buttons.

# Steps 9–10

## 9. Plan the clearance

Compare placket thickness and the height of a sound button. For a sew-through button, use a removable smooth spacer of suitable thickness if helpful. A built-in shank needs no added thread shank.

## 10. Anchor the thread

On sound cloth, secure the thread within the button attachment area using small anchoring stitches. Hold the button at the marked centre, keeping unrelated layers clear.

# Steps 11–12

## 11. Sew through the holes

Pass through the chosen holes and underlying placket several times, matching the sound button's stitch arrangement. Keep the button stable without compressing the placket. If using a built-in shank, sew through its loop instead.

## 12. Finish the attachment

For a sew-through button needing a thread shank, remove the spacer and wrap the thread neatly around the thread bundle beneath the button, without tightening the cloth. Secure the thread on the reverse and trim the tail.

# Steps 13–14

## 13. Observe the closure

Account for all tools. Close and open the button gently off the body. Verify that the plackets align, the button passes comfortably, and the cloth neither puckers nor twists. Stop if it catches.

## 14. Record and monitor

Record the replacement size, type, thread and fit observation. Inspect after ordinary permitted laundering and use. Refer if the buttonhole or cloth begins to fail.

# Fix, care and preserve

### Button is the same diameter but will not pass.

Compare thickness and shape; choose a better-fitting candidate rather than stretching the buttonhole.

### Button stands too far from the placket.

Compare the original clearance; remove and reattach with appropriate ease.

### Thread abrades in the hole.

Reject a rough-edged button or select suitable thread and needle.

### Fabric tears around the button.

Stop and assess the damaged cloth before fitting replacement hardware.

# Originality and evidence boundary

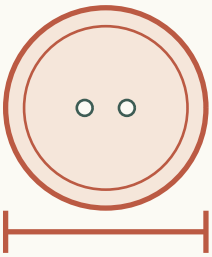
Original Steadleaf English prose, design, artwork, diagrams and records. Follow actual item, material and tool instructions. No physical repair, durability, load, strength, washing or compatibility testing was performed by the publisher. Adult ordinary clothing mending only; no safety or performance certification.

Print the following pages separately if desired. Measured schematics are not full-size cutting patterns. Record only actual observations.

# Pattern 1

Compatibility card: compare 12 mm example diameter, 2 mm thickness, two-hole sew-through or manufactured shank, thread passage and actual buttonhole fit. Size is a candidate, not a guarantee.

## Compare the actual button and buttonhole



12 mm example diameter



Intact buttonhole: check fit

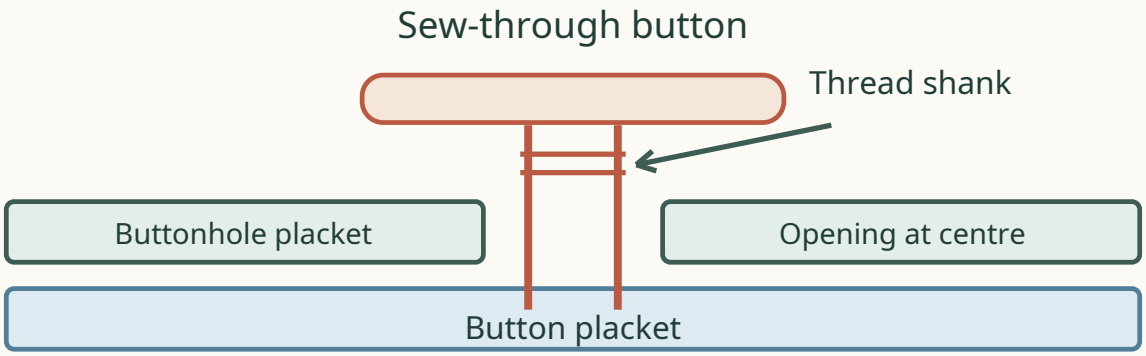
Compare thickness (2 mm example), holes, shank and thread

Reject catching, distortion or a loose fit.

# Pattern 2

Placket cross-section: original centre, overlapping buttonhole placket, sound button placket, thread bundle clearance matched to cloth; built-in shank is an alternative, not an additional thread shank. Schematic.

## Keep the original centre and clearance




Match the clearance to the overlapping cloth.

Built-in shank: no extra thread shank.

# Record 1 — Materials and repair plan

Record actual observations only. Use UNKNOWN or NOT CHECKED for anything you have not established.

**Shirt / care / intended use**

**Original position and cloth condition**

**Original button diameter and thickness**

**Hole pattern / attachment type**

**Candidate dimensions and edges**

**Thread and needle**

**Buttonhole relaxed fit**

**Chosen candidate / clearance**

# Record 2 — Finish and follow-up

Record actual observations only. Use UNKNOWN or NOT CHECKED for anything you have not established.

**Actual attachment position**

**Hole / shank method**

**Thread and reverse anchors**

**Tool count**

**Closure alignment**

**Buttonhole movement / cloth shape**

**Decision: USE / CHANGE / REFER**

**Date / next observation**