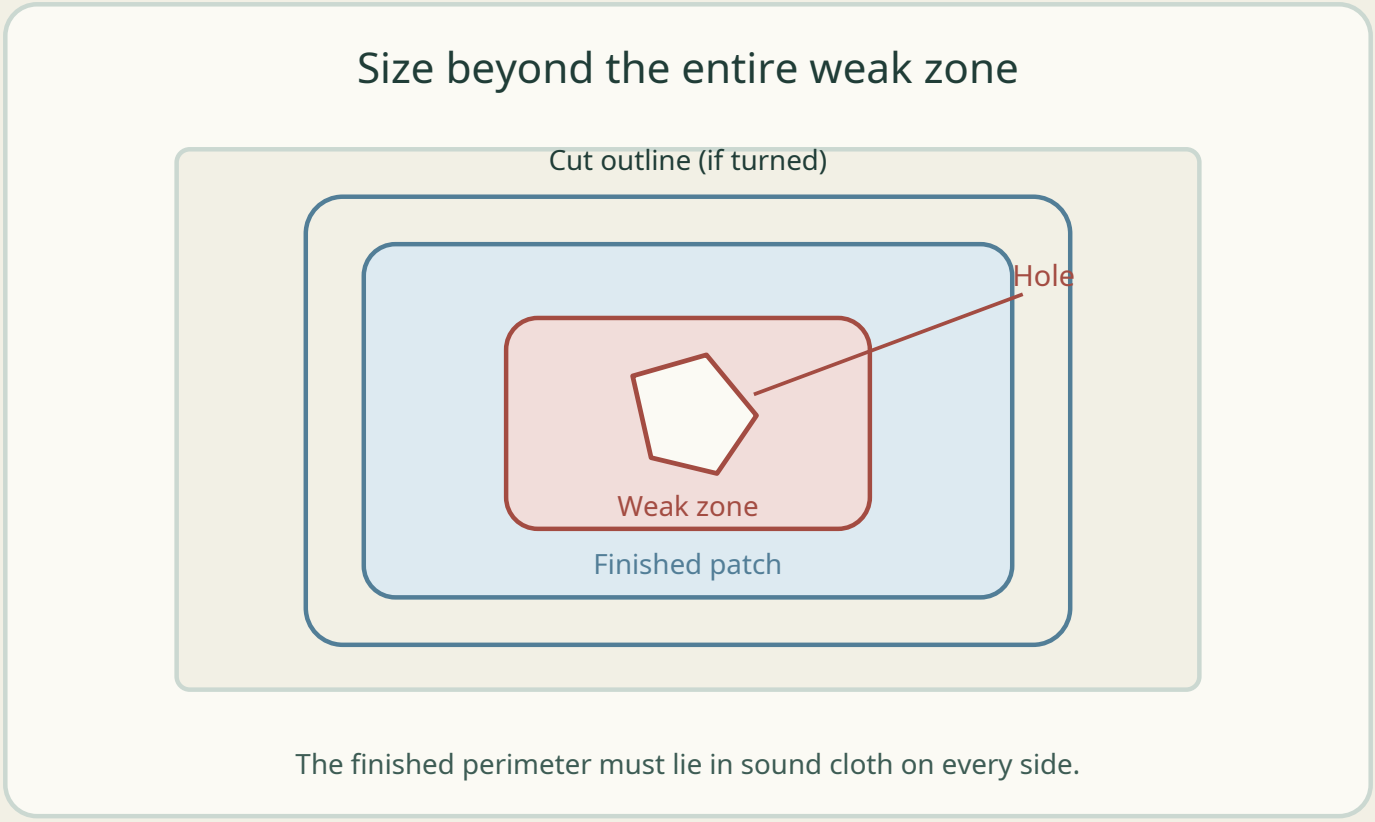
Patch a Shirt Hole from the Inside



Size and insert a compatible backing patch that extends beyond a small hole into sound shirt fabric.

14 practical steps • Original diagrams and repair records

Illustrative repair plans — not physical test results

Before you start

A backing patch supports a hole from the inside while keeping the original face visible. Use this guide for an ordinary unlined, non-stretch woven adult shirt with a small localized hole and sound surrounding cloth. It is not for extensive thinning, stretch knits, coated fabrics, or a hole at a complex seam or closure. The hole may remain visible; the goal is support, not an invisible restoration. Work off the body.

Materials

Clean shirt, compatible preconditioned washable woven patch cloth, fine needle and thread, ruler, paper and pencil, small fabric scissors, pins or clips suitable for the material. Use a removable support to keep the other shirt layer out of the stitch path.

Plan the repair

Map both the hole and the full weak zone. Select a backing that matches the shirt’s weight, drape, grain and care requirements. The patch must reach sound fabric on every side with room for attachment and its own edge finish. Draw a paper sizing outline using actual garment measurements, rather than cutting to a universal size. Smooth the backing behind the hole without stretching the shirt. Secure its finished edge to sound shirt cloth with small relaxed stitches, then stabilize loose hole edges against the backing where the original cloth can hold stitches.

Steps 1–2

1. Map the damage

Inspect both sides under good light. Record the visible hole and any surrounding thinning. If the cloth is brittle or the weak zone is widespread, seek advice rather than putting a small patch into weak fabric.

2. Check the location

Confirm that the back is accessible and that the hole is not beside a buttonhole, pocket opening, lining or reinforced seam that requires another construction method.

Steps 3–4

3. Select matching cloth

Choose a flexible woven backing of comparable weight and similar care needs. Avoid a stiff patch on lightweight shirting. Use prewashed or otherwise suitably preconditioned cloth where care instructions permit.

4. Identify the grain

Compare the lengthwise and crosswise yarns of the shirt and patch. Mark corresponding directions on paper. Matching grain reduces the risk of mismatched movement.

Steps 5–6

5. Size the repair

Measure the full weak zone, not just the visible hole. Mark a finished patch perimeter that extends onto sound cloth all around and allows a stitch to enter both sound layers.

6. Allow for edge finishing

If the patch edges will be turned under, add the fold allowance outside the finished outline. If a compatible low-bulk overcast edge is used, plan the actual finished size. Do not subtract from sound overlap.

Steps 7–8

7. Prepare the backing

Cut the patch cloth, not the shirt, to the planned outline. Round corners if appropriate for the finish, and secure the patch edges without making a thick ridge.

8. Isolate the shirt layer

Turn the shirt inside out and place a smooth removable support under the affected panel. Keep the opposite front, back, pocket and other layers clear.

Steps 9–10

9. Position the patch

Centre the backing over the damage with the intended face toward the hole and grain aligned. Check from the right side. The patch must cover the full weak zone without forcing the hole edges together.

10. Hold without distortion

Use suitable fine pins, clips or temporary basting in stable fabric. Lay the shirt relaxed on the table. Ensure the backing remains flat and reaches sound cloth all around.

Steps 11–12

11. Attach the perimeter

Anchor on the wrong side and use small, relaxed hand stitches through the backing and sound shirt cloth around the prepared perimeter. Work through the affected panel only; remove pins as you reach them.

12. Stabilize loose edges

From the right side, secure loose but sound yarns beside the opening to the backing with small discreet stitches as needed. Do not cut the hole larger or pull its edges closed. If the edges crumble, refer.

Steps 13–14

13. Inspect the backing

Remove all temporary aids. Look at both faces for loose patch edges, puckers, caught layers or a rigid patch. Correct only new stitches if the shirt remains sound.

14. Record and review

Record the finished patch dimensions, cloth and attachment. Observe after normal wear and permitted laundering; if the patch shifts, the weak zone spreads or the shirt distorts, seek another method.

Fix, care and preserve

The patch shows through

This is possible with thin fabric or a contrast colour. A lighter compatible backing may help; do not cut the shirt to disguise it.

The patch edge lifts

Check that the stitching passes through both sound layers and the edge finish holds. If sound cloth remains, correct the affected stitch line.

The shirt puckers

Check grain, tension and patch bulk. Remove only the problematic new stitches and realign the backing in the garment’s relaxed shape.

Weakness extends beyond the patch

Do not keep enlarging the repair into fragile cloth. Assess the entire panel and consider replacement or referral.

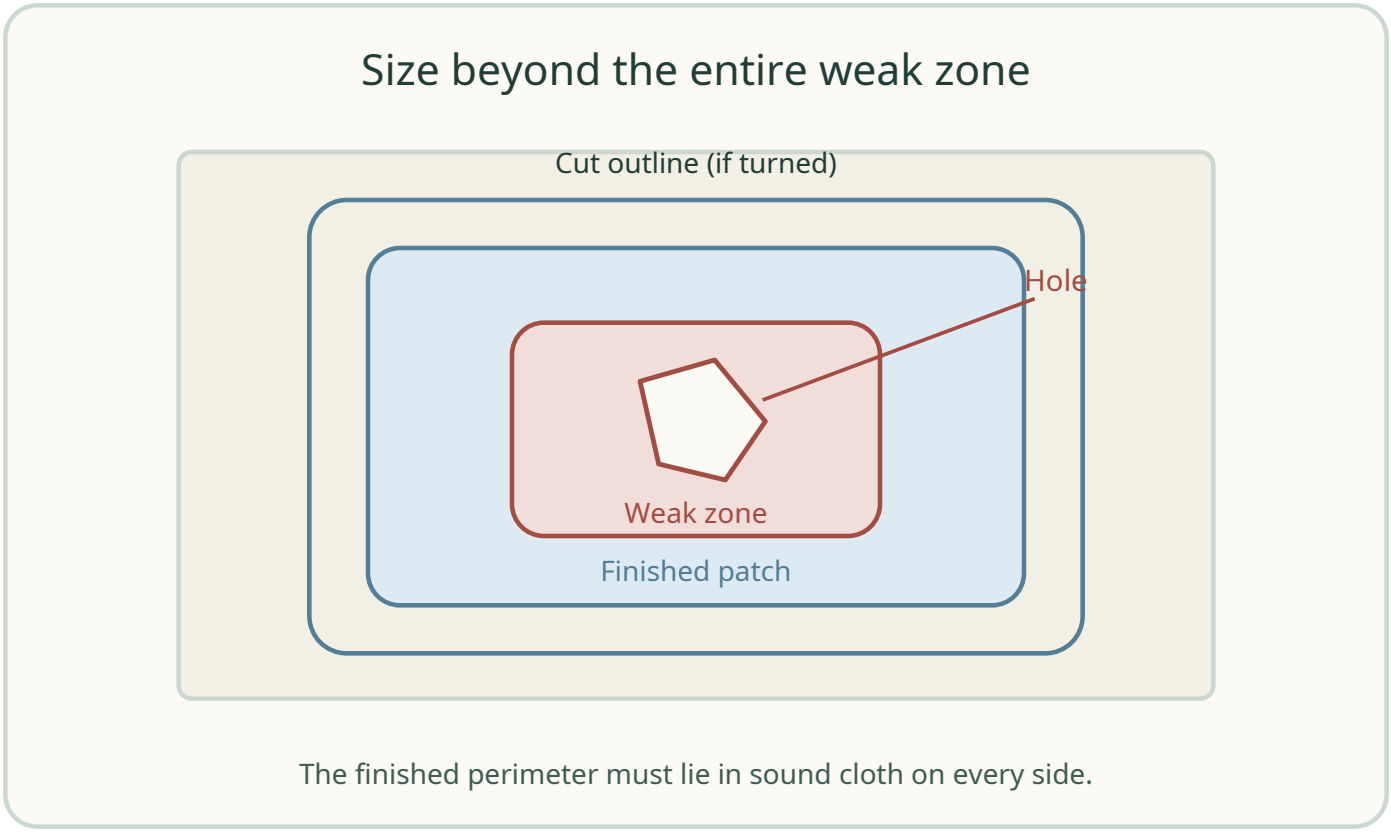
Originality and evidence boundary

Original Steadleaf English prose, design, diagrams and records. Follow the actual item, textile and tool instructions. No physical repair, durability, load, strength, washing, flame-resistance or compatibility testing was performed by the publisher. Ordinary adult garments and non-technical household textiles only; no safety or performance certification.

Print the following pages separately if desired. Schematics are illustrative, not full-size cutting patterns. Record only actual observations.

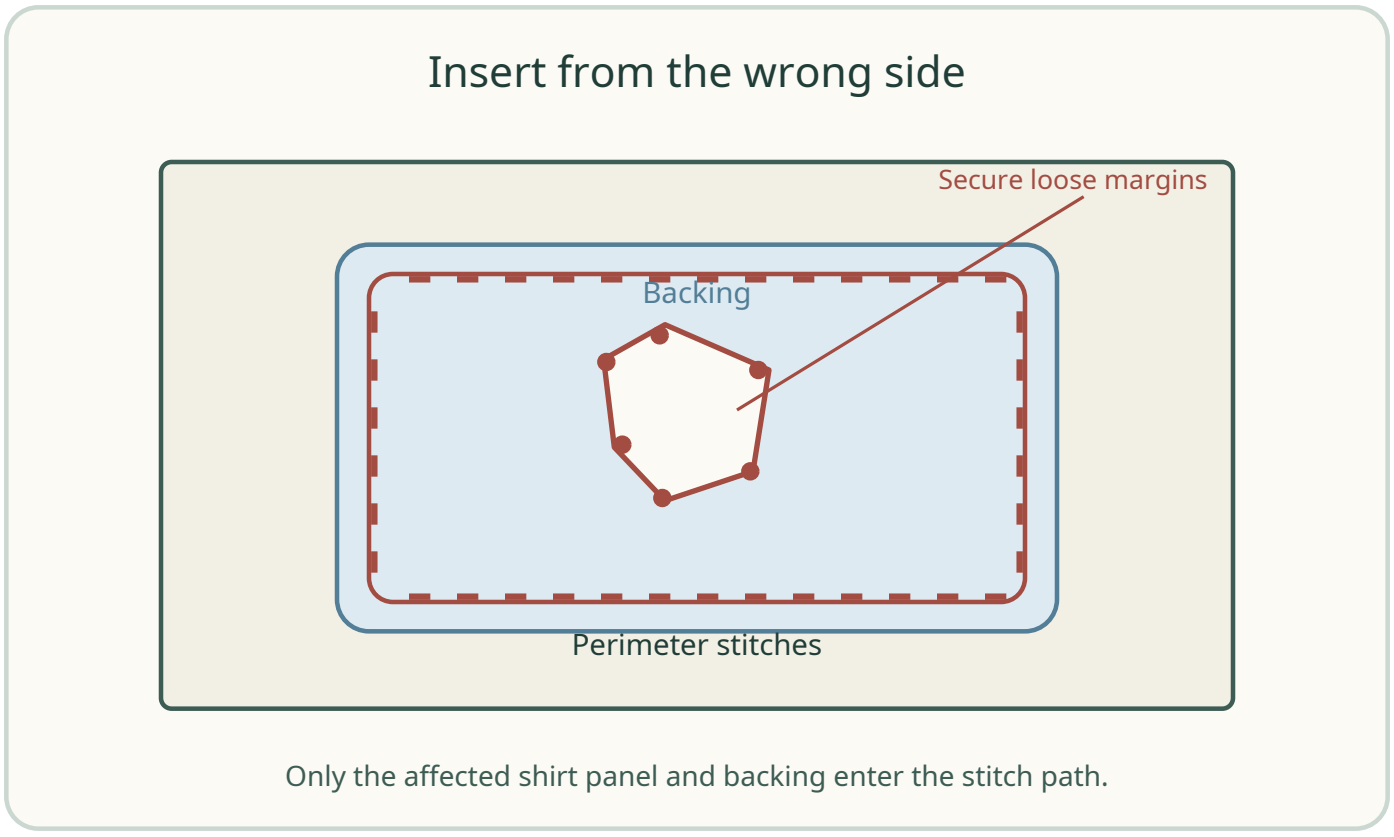
Pattern 1

Backing sizing map: the visible hole is inside the weak zone; the finished patch outline extends beyond that zone into sound fabric. A separate cutting outline includes any turned-edge allowance. These are relationships, not a universal measurement.



Pattern 2

Insertion and attachment diagram: place the patch on the wrong side behind the opening with compatible grain. Attach its perimeter to sound cloth and secure loose original edges to the backing without drawing them inward. Keep other garment layers free.



Record 1 — Materials and repair plan

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

Shirt fabric / care

Hole dimensions / location

Full weak-zone dimensions

Sound margin each side

Patch cloth / grain / care

Finished outline / cut outline

Edge finish / stitch choice

Decision: patch / refer

Record 2 — Finish and follow-up

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

Finished patch size

Full weak zone supported?

Perimeter and edge attachment

Both faces / puckers / bulk

All pins / basting removed?

Ordinary wear / care observation

Decision: use cautiously / refer

Date / follow-up