

# What's in your Closet?

## Up Cycling takes fashion to a new level



### “Recycling” and “Up Cycling” What's the difference?

Well, recycling is treating or processing a used material so as to make it suitable for reuse. This type of recycling is done with plastic, glass, and paper, and it's something everyone is doing these days. It is an effort toward the movement of “going green.”

“Up Cycling” is something you do with what is in your closet. According to Barbara Crawford of Crawford Designs, closets are a treasure chest of wonderful pieces of clothing that

people have spent hard-earned money to purchase. When those clothing items become “last season” or just don't fit anymore, they oftentimes just get pushed to the back of the closet.

Well, Barbara says it's time to dig those clothes out of the back of the closet and Up Cycle them! That might mean taking one denim jacket, removing the sleeves, adding a striped cardigan sweater to it and sewing on the bottom of a crinkled shirt to make a brand new top!

Barbara explains it as “simple math” of adding and subtracting parts of clothing pieces to construct something new.

She explained, “This is the chance to express yourself and stretch your creativity beyond the norm. It's where, gloves become pockets, belts become closures instead of buttons and zippers, shower curtains become rain coats, tablecloths become a new summer dress or skirt, ties become accents, closures, or even entire pieces, and sweatshirts become dressy jackets. And, you can add finishing touches such as appliqué and needle felting to embellish those new fashions!”

Up Cycling is something that Barbara has always done for herself, but right now, considering the country's economic situation and the fact that people really need to use what they have, she found it was time to share the idea of Up Cycling with others.

“Mixing pieces of clothing and patterns is a wonderful way to express yourself, and it is also pleasing to the eye and brain,” said Barbara. “Take a look around -- there is no real trend to follow right now, so at this point everything and anything goes! You can Up Cycle shirts, blouses, sweaters, blazers, jean jackets, pants, scarves, ties, belts, gloves, shower curtains, table cloths, linens, and more. You just use pieces of clothing that you thought you would never use again, and it gives you the opportunity to size it down or size it up and make something new to wear.”



A great example is Barbara's "Treasure Hunt" jacket. It is an Up Cycled jean jacket, even though no longer visible, it utilizes ties, a prom dress, buttons, blouses, fabrics, vintage jewelry, and even wool felt appliqué.

"It is one of our most popular patterns," said Barbara.

Another example is Barbara's quite posh-looking raincoat and bag made from an old shower curtain. The bag is lined with red wool felt and the raincoat is trimmed in the wool felt also!

We have included instructions in this article for one of Barbara's projects to give you some inspiration. If you would like to share the idea of Up Cycling with your customers, Barbara is available to present Up Cycling workshops and would love to come to your store to teach some classes based on this new twist on fashion.

To get in touch with Barbara for complete details on her programs/workshops, you can contact her at 1-816-462-5305.

"I hope this inspires guilds, quilt shop and show promoters to bring us in for workshops!" said Barbara. "We provide boxes of clothing and accessories and patterns, and the students can bring in one item of clothing they would like to Up Cycle. The workshop includes appliqué and needle felting as well. It is a fun and eye opening experience that has somewhat of domino effect -- as you finish one project, the leftover pieces will inspire the next piece and so on!" 🧵

**Barbara Crawford** is a nationally recognized instructor for dolls, appliqué and needle felting. Barbara teaches at guilds, quilt shops, expos, and on television (The Creative Living show). She is one of the leading experts in the U.S. and Canada in needle felting and in creating jackets and coats using sweatshirts and wool felts. Barbara started out as a doll designer and has a popular "Sculpt a Santa head in a Day" workshop. She is self published with her line of patterns and books on needle felting, dolls, and appliqué. She has published the first two books written in the United States on needle felting wearables. You can visit her Web site at [www.crawforddesigns.net](http://www.crawforddesigns.net).

## "Up Cycling" a Crinkled Jean Cardigan



Begin by opening the sides of the older jean jacket and removing the sleeves. Save them for another project. Then slip in a striped cardigan and sew down the sleeves at the shoulders to the jean jacket shoulders.

Pin down the jean jacket center fronts to the cardigan and stitch about 3" from the buttons.

Pin and stitch the collar of the cardigan to the inside collar of the jacket at the sewn line of the jacket. Now they are one piece. Pin the sides of the jacket back and use the sewn seam of the jean jacket and just topstitch it closed using those wonderfully comfortable crinkled skirts or

broomstick skirts. (They are so long that there is a lot of use that will come from them.)

Cut off the bottom about 4" to 5" wide and fold down the raw edge a couple times. Begin at the center front left or right side and make small folds and pin. It makes for a more flattering ruffle this way. Pin all the way to the end of the other center front and stitch down. There is no raw edge on the jean jacket because the waistband was kept in place.

Now, open the sleeve ends of the cardigan about 6" and repeat the ruffle. You should have plenty of that piece left. Stitch down the raw edges of the ruffle ends, pin the cardigan wrists and 6" opening and stitch down catching the ruffle.



**"This is the chance to express yourself and stretch your creativity beyond the norm."**

**—Barbara Crawford**

That's it; now add a belt and you have a wonderful new jacket. You can just button the cardigan closed and the stripes are visible, or you can button both the cardigan and jean jacket part way up and have it both ways. Pair it with a pair of jeans, slacks or leggings!

There are really wonderful advantages to using clothing rather than fabric to construct a new garment. The hems are already there, and on the jean jackets, the finished seams are already sewn in so you are just using the pieces. A lot of the time the lining is there, saving you the trouble of lining. The shrinkage has been taken out already, so it turns into a couple of hours of work rather than tracing and cutting out patterns and then sewing the linings, etc.

