For this project, try a time-saving experiment and do at least two of the following:
1. Think of an idea for increasing the amount of time you have to sew, then carry out that idea.
2. Plan and reorganize a sewing area.
3. Choose and use a time-saving pattern or one that features a unique technique.
4. Practice using most of the sewing attachments on your machine.
5. Evaluate eight sewing, pressing, or cutting aids new to you.
6. Make two pressing aids.
7. Practice using at least five different pressing aids.
8. Compare fusible and sew-in interfacing.
9. Learn to thread, adjust tension, and stitch on an overlock machine.
10. Collect and try at least six sewing hints new to you.
11. Put together a library of sewing books.
12. Devise your own sewing hint and submit the idea to a magazine.
13. Teach another member or group a time-saving technique.
14. Create an educational game or teaching aid that will help others learn to sew, press, model, etc.

Sometimes it’s hard to find enough time to sew. For this project, you’ll try out ways to save time and come up with ways of your own. You’ll practice new sewing techniques, try new sewing tools, and organize a sewing area to keep your eye off the clock. Sewing will be easier and more fun.

You can take this project over again by choosing other activities.
Warning: Some of the ideas given here will not work for you the first time. Some may not work at all—you may still end up ripping things out! Some skills take a lot of time to learn, but once learned, they will greatly speed your sewing and increase your sewing options.
Hints to Help You Save Time

If you aren’t sure how to use a tool (like a rotary cutter), ask your leader or parent. It’s much better to spend some extra time sewing than to risk being hurt.

Practice new techniques on scrap fabric several times before trying them on the garment you are making. Though this takes time, it will save you many anxious moments. It will also give you confidence when you sew your final project.

Evaluate what you try. Remember, a time-saving method is not so time saving if the result doesn’t look right.

One thing you can do to save time in your work area is to make sure you have clean hands and surfaces before you start.

Keep a clear pathway between the sewing machine and the ironing board. Keep all your supplies handy. Try to be well rested. Many garments have been ruined by someone who was too tired or in too much of a hurry with a seam ripper, scissors, or iron. If you do have a problem, think it through clearly first. Take a break and find someone to help you.

There are hundreds of tools, techniques, and organizational ideas you can try. Catalogs and fabric stores sell new sewing tools, and many stores hold classes or demonstrations to show you how to use them. Magazines and sewing programs on television often give hints. Check your local public television listings for sewing programs.

There are also numerous newsletters and videotapes on sewing. Some are available at video and fabric stores. Others may be found at a public library.

Ready-to-wear clothing can give you ideas, too. Check in your closet and open your eyes while you shop. Catalogs and closet organization businesses may be helpful for any organization project, but there are many things you can do for little or no cost to make your space workable. Don’t forget how much you can learn from reading your sewing machine owner’s manual. It often provides time-saving ideas.

Caring for your machine will also save time in the long run.

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Time-saving: Sample Sewing Plan

**MONDAY**
- **1 hr:** Buy pattern, fabrics, thread, interfacing, and buttons
- **15 min:** Preshrink and dry fabric
- **15 min:** Iron wrinkles out of fabric and pattern
- **Total:** 1 hour 35 minutes

**TUESDAY**
- **10 min:** Prepare and adjust pattern
- **20 min:** Cut out top
- **Total:** 30 minutes

**WEDNESDAY**
- **45 min:** Baste straps, press; staystitch; stitch straps; finish neck edges

**THURSDAY**
- **45 min:** Finish hem, topstitch
Using the Serger
In this project, you may decide to learn more about using an overlock machine. An overlock machine, also known as a serger, stitches seams, overcasts them, and cuts off the excess fabric all in one step.

The serger has some parts that are different from those in a sewing machine. A serger usually uses large cone thread on several spool pins, and this looks complicated because there are many threads working through the fabric at one time. One of the biggest differences between a sewing machine and a serger is that a serger uses a knife to trim the seam, so safety is very important.

When do you use a sewing machine and when do you use a serger? There are many ways these machines can be used safely, and improvements are always being made to them. Some of the sewing books and videotapes on the market can help you tell when to use each one.

Sergers can sew much faster; they lessen the time it takes to make seam finishes. But seams are more difficult to rip out and restitch using a serger, because there is so much thread and very little of the seam is left over once it is cut off. For those projects and patterns that you make over and over again, a serger can be very helpful.

To use a serger, you need to recognize good tension and know how to correct the tension using the owner’s manual as a guide. Skills are needed in tying up loose ends at the end of the seam and in turning corners.

To increase the amount of time you have for sewing, try one of these ideas:

1. Block out a half hour each day just to sew.
2. List the fabrics you have and the projects you need to complete by how long they take. When you have a few minutes, tackle one.
3. Keep track of the time you have to sew now, and look for ways to increase that time.
4. Time yourself to see how long it actually takes to do a step (like sewing in a zipper), and work to improve your time.
5. Develop a plan for sewing a garment. Decide how long it will take and the materials you’ll need at each step.

FRIDAY
10 min: Finish side seams, press
and . .
30 min: Finish armholes, attach straps
Total: 2 hours 10 minutes

Experiment 1
Question: Will hand sewing with a longer thread save more sewing time?
Approach: Find two hems of the same length. Measure out an 18-inch length of thread and a 22-inch length of thread. Thread each into a needle and secure the ends. Have someone time the stitching of both hems.
What did you find out?

Experiment 2
Question: Will using this “handy dandy” attachment lessen the time it takes to make a patch pocket? Will using it make a patch pocket look better?
Approach: Make one patch pocket using a method described in a sewing book and one patch pocket using the handy dandy attachment. Use the same fabric for each test.
What did you find out?

Experiment 3
Question: Does making a seam finish really matter?
Approach: Take four pieces of the same fabric. Sew a seam with a seam finish using two pieces of fabric; on the other two, sew a seam without a finish. Wash both sets several times and check the result.
What did you find out?

More EXPERIMENT examples on back page
What I learned in this project (new skills, new words)


What I shared with others (presentations, helping other members, community service)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOPIC OR SKILL</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>NO. OF PEOPLE WHO WATCHED</th>
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Did I participate in Fashion Revue? ___________
Where? ___________ When? ___________

Experiment Summary
Choose one of the experiments that you did and write about it below. Include a photo or drawing of your final project.

Question: __________________________________________

Approach: _________________________________________

Findings:  _________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

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________________________________________________________________________
**Time-saving Sewing Project Record**

Name

Address

Age as of January 1

Club

Number of years in this project

Number of years in Textile Science projects

Leader’s signature

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**What I made for my project**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>FIBER CONTENT</th>
<th>COST</th>
<th>HOURS TO MAKE</th>
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Total number of garments made this year ____________.

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**People who helped me and resources I used for this project**

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________________________
**Question:** Does it matter if you use fusible or sew-in interfacings?

**Approach:** Make an experimental shirt. Use the same weight of fusible and sew-in interfacing. (You can use different weights in different areas as long as you have the same weight in similar places in the shirt.) Use a fusible interfacing in one collar, cuff, front, and pocket. Apply sew-in interfacing in the other collar, cuff, front, and pocket. Complete the shirt. Wash and wear for at least one month.

**What did you find out?**

**Question:** Yikes! You spilled mustard on a garment you were wearing. How can you get it out?

**Approach:** Look at several resource books on stains and call your county extension agent. You find four different answers! Make four similar mustard stains on scraps of your fabric. Try each approach to see which removes the stain. (That way you don’t hurt the garment trying to get the stain out.)

**What did you find out?**

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**Want to Learn More?**

Many books and pamphlets have been written on time-saving sewing. Check your library and county extension office for information on these information sources. PENpages also lists ideas and resources for this project.

**Exhibits and Fashion Revue**

Depending on what you make in your project, you may or may not be able to model it in the fashion revue. Ask your leader for information on exhibit listings and fashion revue guidelines. Leaders will need to check with their county extension office each year, as exhibits and guidelines sometimes change. Don’t forget to attach a fabric label to your exhibit. Include your name, age, 4-H club, and county.

**Taking the Project Again**

You may take this project again if you make a different garment and choose different activities to help you learn new skills.

---

**Name**  
Kelly Tarce

**Age**  
12

**4-H club**  
Socks and ties

**County**  
Snippet

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Prepared by Jan Scholl, associate professor of agricultural and extension education.


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