

# Darning Mushroom

## 1 INTRODUCE

**What is this object called?**  
**Think: What does it look like?**  
**(mushroom)**

A Darning Mushroom

**What job did this object do?**  
It is used when darning socks and jumpers. Darning means mending.



## 2 INVESTIGATE

Let the children feel the Darning Mushroom.

## 3 DESIGN/MATERIALS

**What is this object made out of?** Wood

**Why isn't it made out of plastic and metal like many objects today?**  
Plastics are a relatively recent invention and did not exist in the late 1800s early 1900s.

**Where would the lady hold it?**  
Long handle at the bottom. They would hold the mushroom by the stalk (long handle) then push it through the item they were darning such as a sock.

## 4 HOW DID IT WORK?

**How did it work?**  
When repairing socks or jumpers, the person using the darning mushroom would push the mushroom into the item of clothing until the hole they were trying to mend was sitting on top of the mushroom cap. They would gather the loose part of the sock in their hand and hold it around the mushroom stalk. This would keep the sock in place. They would then mend the sock by sewing threads across the hole to join the two sides of the hole together.

**Who used it?**  
The women in the household. Darning was a skill mothers would teach their daughters.



## 5 LEARN MORE...SAY...

*In the past the darning mushroom was an essential tool in every house. Today if we need a jumper or a pair of socks we go to the shop and buy them. Clothes are easy to find and relatively cheap to buy but this wasn't always the case. In the past women had to knit socks and jumpers and make all their own clothes. This took a long time and these items were precious. Therefore when an item of clothing got a hole in it, it wasn't simply thrown out, it was mended.*



## 6 COMPARE IT TO TECHNOLOGIES TODAY

**Why don't we mend holes in our clothes today?** Because clothing is so cheap today we don't tend to mend things, instead we throw them out.

**Sometimes we do mend clothes. What item of technology do we use to do this?**

People often still mend clothes by hand or they use the sewing machine.

**Do you think we should mend our clothes instead of throwing them out when they get a hole in them? Why?**



## 7 THINK

**What does this item tell us about life in the past?**

That people made their clothes themselves. That clothing was considered precious and was not easily thrown away.

**How would your life be different if you had to mend your clothes every time you got a hole in them, rather than throw them away?**