

How to Sew a Face Mask

A tutorial on how to make your own fabric face mask from common household materials.

TOOLS

- Needle and thread (and a sewing machine, if you have one)
- Scissors
- Pins or clips to hold fabrics in place (safety pins and paper clips will also work in a pinch)

MATERIALS

- At least 20 by 20 inches of 100 percent cotton fabric, such as a flat tea towel
- 4 strips of cotton fabric for ties, about 18" long and ¾" wide

  OR 4 flat, clean shoelaces

  OR Two flat (1/4") sewing elastics that are 7" long each

STEP 1

Prepare Your Materials

Choose your fabric, wash it on the warmest setting, and dry it on high heat. (Tea towels are better to use than

STEP 3

Putting It Together



Take the second layer of fabric and line it up with the first. The "right sides" (or patterned sides) of the fabric should be facing each other, sandwiching the fabric ties or elastics.

Secure the fabric sandwich together with pins.

STEP 4

STEP 5

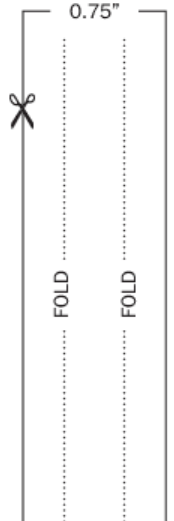
Stitch Around



Stitch around the perimeter of the fabric layers, repeating the forward and backward motion at each corner to secure all the elastic ends or fabric ties.

Continue to stitch your way toward the starting point, but stop to allow for a 1 ½" gap.

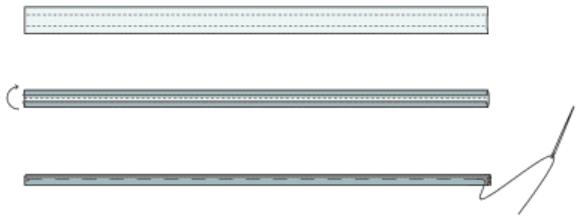
STEP 6



T-shirts or linens, according to the Stanford Anesthesia Informatics and Media Lab.)

Fold the fabric in half. Measure and cut out a 9.5" x 6.5" rectangle to create two identically sized layers **using the sewing pattern below**. This is your mask base.

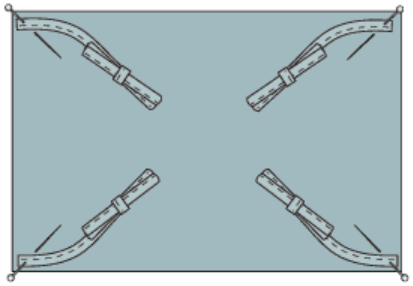
Now it's on to the fabric ties:



Cut 4 thin pieces of material, about 18" long and ¾" wide **using the sewing pattern on the right-hand side of the page**. Fold each piece of fabric twice lengthwise, then once more to tuck the rough edges inside. Sew a straight line along the middle. This will prevent the fabric ties from having frayed edges.

STEP 2

Adding the Ties

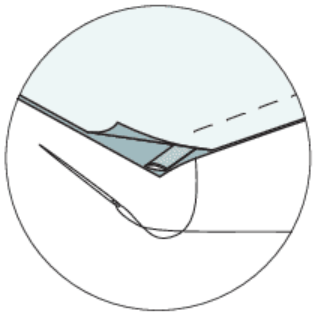


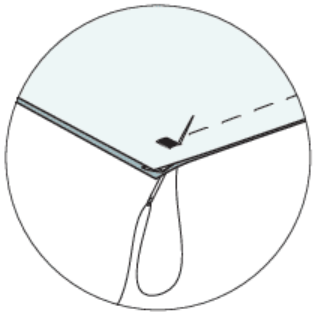
Take one of your rectangular fabric layers. With the "right side" (or the outer-facing side, where the pattern might be) facing you, pin down the 4 fabric ties, one piece per corner. Make sure that the ties are gathered in the center of the fabric layer before advancing to the next step.

You can also substitute sewing elastic for fabric ties, but note that elastic cannot be bleached (and therefore, is not as easy to clean) and that anyone with a latex allergy cannot wear it. (Elastic is also increasingly in short supply.) Attach elastics to the first layer of fabric by securing the ends at the corners, forming little hoops. Make sure the elastic lies inside the perimeter of your fabric.

Start Stitching



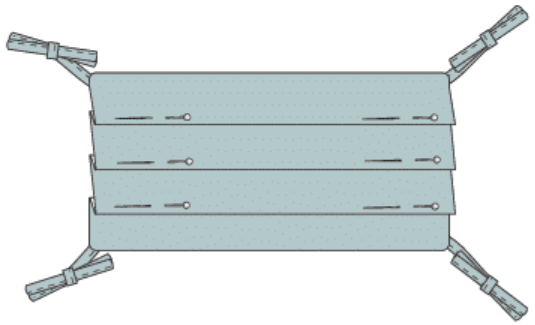




Eyeball a midway point. From the middle, sew a straight line across the mask, about ¼" above the bottom edge of the fabric, toward the bottom left-hand corner. Remove any pins as you sew past them.

Make sure that the elastic or fabric ties are secured in the corners, sandwiched by your two layers of fabric, as you sew over their ends. You want to make sure your needle goes through the three pieces: the top layer, the end of the fabric tie, and the bottom layer. Add a couple stitches forward and backward (in both directions) to secure your ties in place.

Turn Out

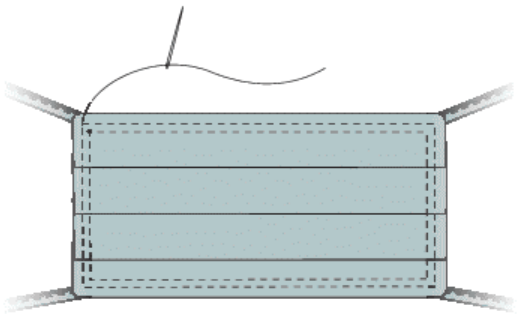


Turn your project right-side out from the little 1 ½" gap. Your fabric ties or elastics should now stick out, like little legs.

Make three staggered pleats lengthwise on the mask, as if folding a paper fan. This helps the mask conform to the wearer's face. Secure each pleat with pins.

STEP 7

Finishing Up



With your pleats held in place by pins, stitch around the perimeter of the mask, ¼" away from the edge of the seam. This is called a top stitch. Take care when stitching over the pleats as the fabric may be quite thick.

Top stitch a second time around, about ¼" in from the first round of stitching. Now you have a completed mask.

18"


9.5"
SEWING LINE
FOLD
TUCK
FOLD
FOLD
TUCK
FOLD
FOLD
TUCK
FOLD
6.5"
0.25"