

How to Sew a Face Mask

You will need:

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 $\frac{3}{4}$ " wide

OR

- 4 flat, clean shoelaces

OR

- Two flat ($\frac{1}{4}$ ") sewing elastics that are 7" long each
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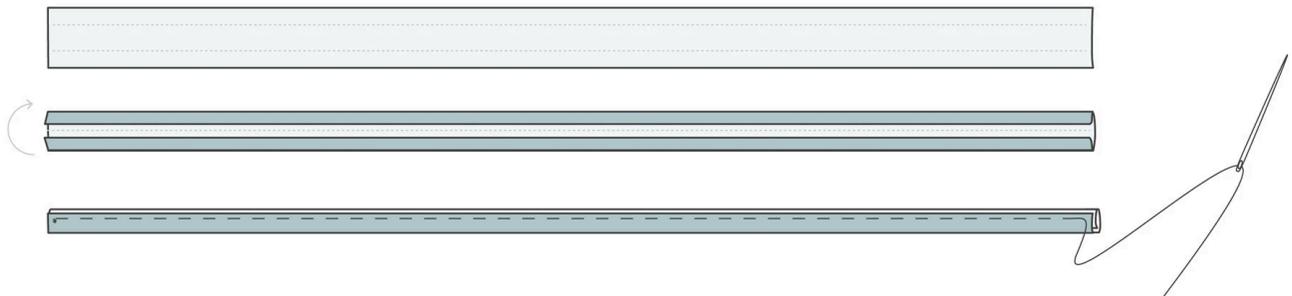
Prepare your materials

Step 1

Choose your piece of cotton fabric, prewash it on the warmest setting and dry it on high heat. (Tea towels are better to use than T-shirts or linens.)

Fold the fabric in half. Measure and cut out a 9.5" by 6.5" rectangle to create two identically sized layers. This is your mask base.

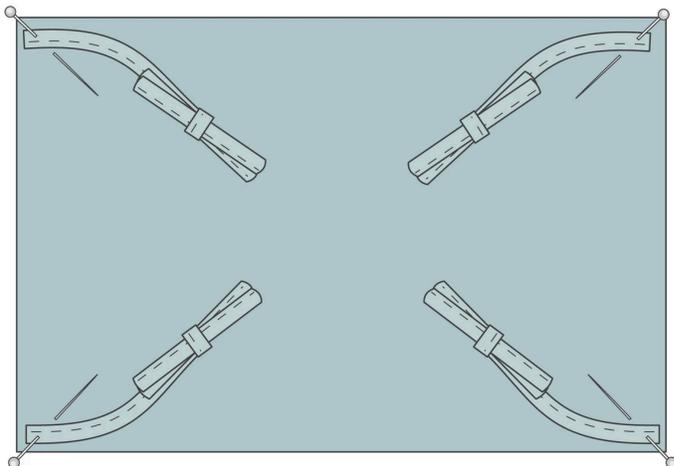
Now it's on to the fabric ties.



Cut 4 thin pieces of material, about 18" long and $\frac{3}{4}$ " wide. 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.

Adding the ties

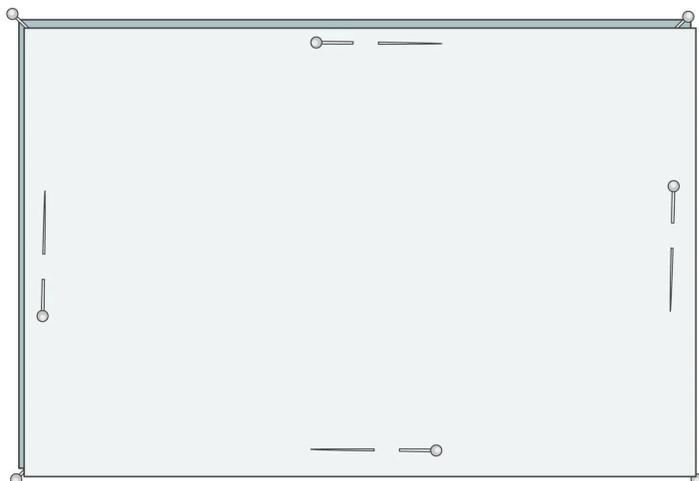
Step 2



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.

PUTTING IT TOGETHER

Step 3



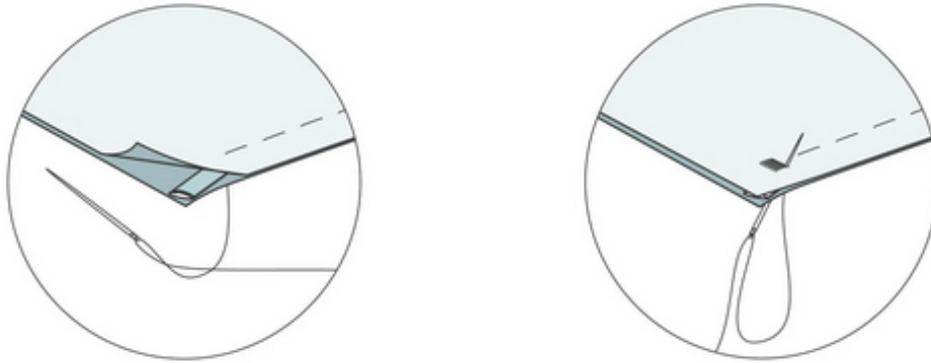
Take the second layer of fabric and line it up with the first. The “right sides” (or patterned sides) of the fabric should be facing each other, sandwiching the fabric ties or elastics. Secure the fabric sandwich together with pins.

START STITCHING

Step 4



Eyeball a midway point. From the middle, sew a straight line across the mask, about $\frac{1}{4}$ " 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.

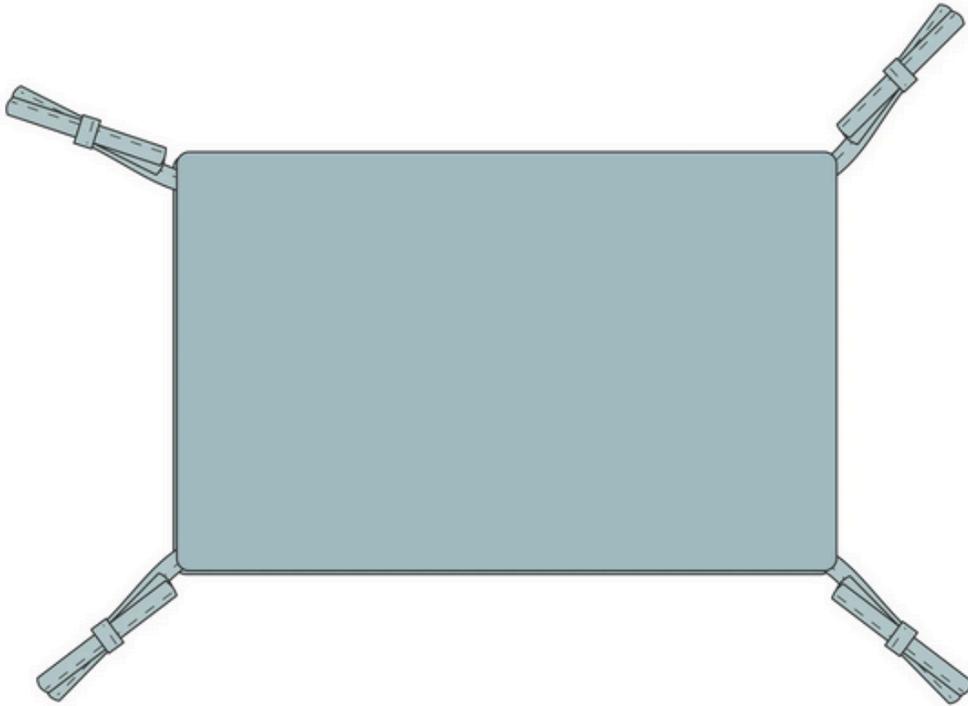
Stitch all around

Step 5



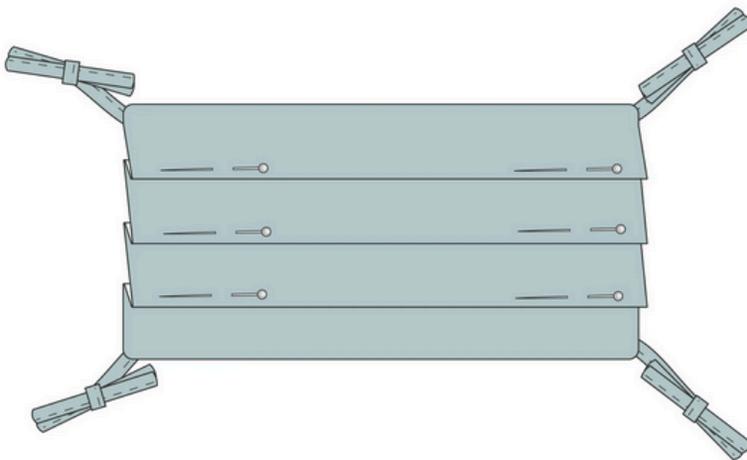
Stitch all around the perimeter of the fabric layers, repeating the forward and backward motion at each corner to secure all the elastic ends or fabric ties. Continue to stitch your way toward the starting point, but stop to allow for a 1 ½” gap.

TURN OUT
Step 6



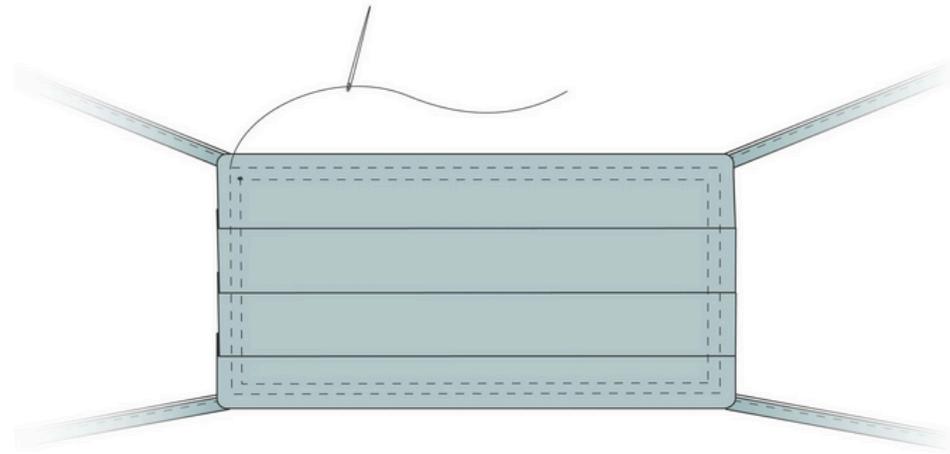
Turn your project right-side out from the little 1 ½” gap. Your fabric ties or elastics should now stick out, like little legs.

Pleats please
Step 7



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.

finishing up Step 8



With your pleats held in place by pins, stitch around the perimeter of the mask, $\frac{1}{4}$ " 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 $\frac{1}{4}$ " in from the first round of stitching. Now you have a completed mask.

How to Put the Mask On

1. Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Dry your hands with a clean paper towel and throw the paper towel away.
2. Check the mask for any defects such as a tear or missing tie or ear loop. Throw away any that are defective.
3. Make sure the exterior side of the mask is facing out, away from your face.
4. Place the mask on your face with the blue side facing out and the stiff, bendable edge at the top by your nose.
5. If the mask has ear loops, put one loop around each ear.
6. If the mask has ties, pick up the mask by the ties and tie the upper ties behind your head with a bow.
7. Once the mask is in place, use your index finger and thumb to pinch the bendable top edge of the mask around the bridge of your nose.
8. If the mask has a lower tie, then once the mask is fitted to the bridge of your nose, tie the lower ties behind your head with a bow.
9. Make sure the mask is completely secure. Make sure it covers your nose and mouth so that the bottom edge is under your chin.
10. Wash your hands.

Removing the Mask

1. Wash your hands before removing the mask.
2. Do not touch the inside of the mask (the part over nose and mouth). It may be contaminated from your breathing, coughing or sneezing.
3. Untie or remove the ear loops and remove the mask by the straps.
4. Throw the mask in the trash.
5. Wash your hands.

Please Note: If you are using a reusable cloth mask, at the end of the day, take the mask off from the straps (not touching the front), place in a pillowcase to keep the ties with the mask. Wash it in the washing machine with hot water and completely dry on medium or high heat.