



Sew a Cotton Face Mask

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<https://learn.adafruit.com/sew-a-cotton-face-mask>

Last updated on 2024-03-08 03:45:25 PM EST

Table of Contents

Overview	3
• Materials	
Sewing	5
Donation Resources	11

Overview

Keep folks safe and stylish this spring by making your own cotton face mask. This guide details how to make a double layered face mask using a dish towel and part of a t-shirt. The mask is held on using two hair elastics.

The only other things you'll need are a pair of scissors, a marker, and a needle and thread. If you have a sewing machine, it's easy to use that instead of hand-sewing -- but nobody should be lacking a fancy new mask because they don't have fancy machine, so we've focused this guide on making the mask by hand.

Hand-sewing can be quite relaxing, so pull up your chair by the fire, thread your needle, and make masks for everyone in your family.

We've also included a few resources for places to donate your handmade masks.

This mask will help keep your coughs and sneezes from others, and also may help keep you from touching your face. It's machine washable and should be washed every day -- and of course, never shared!

[Deaconess Hospital has published the following: \(https://adafru.it/JSD\)](https://adafru.it/JSD)

While fabric masks are not to be used in the care of COVID-19 patients, according to the [CDC, \(https://adafru.it/JSe\)](https://adafru.it/JSe) [fabric masks are a crisis response option \(https://adafru.it/JSe\)](https://adafru.it/JSe) when other supplies have been exhausted. Fabric masks can also be helpful in other areas of patient care as supplies of PPE are depleted.



Materials

- [Breathable cotton dish towel \(https://adafru.it/MD2\)](https://adafru.it/MD2)
- T-shirt
- 2-4 hair elastics
- Needle & Thread
- Scissors
- Iron (optional)



Sewing

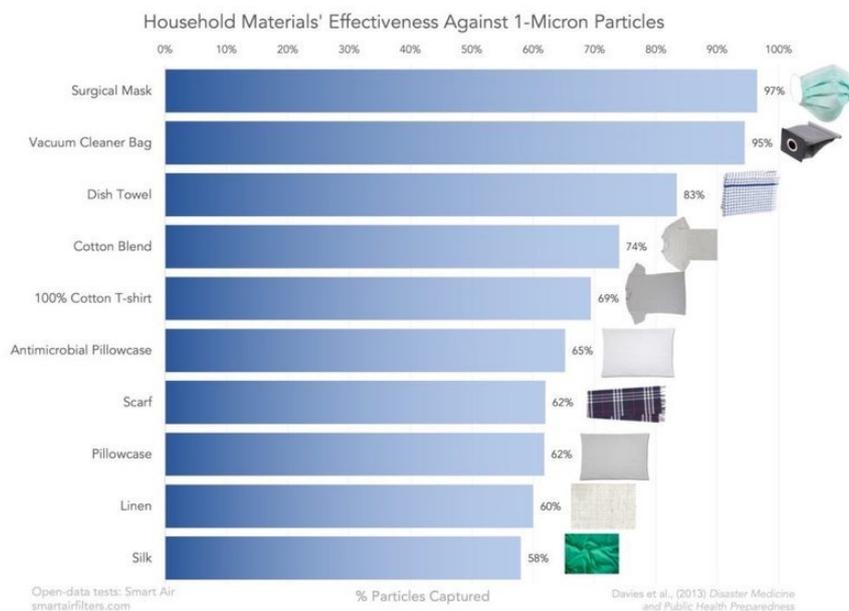
We'll make a two-layer mask with elastic hair ties sewn to the edges for attaching to your face.



It's not hard to find materials around your house that will work perfectly for your mask, even if you don't have a giant closet full of fabric. I used a holiday dish towel someone gave me for Christmas for the liner layer, and a t-shirt with unicorns on it for the outer layer.

The important thing is to use fabric that breathes -- cotton or other natural fibers are your friend here. Hold it up to your face and try breathing through it before making your final decision.

And, use tightly-woven cotton fabric on both sides - so no gauzes.

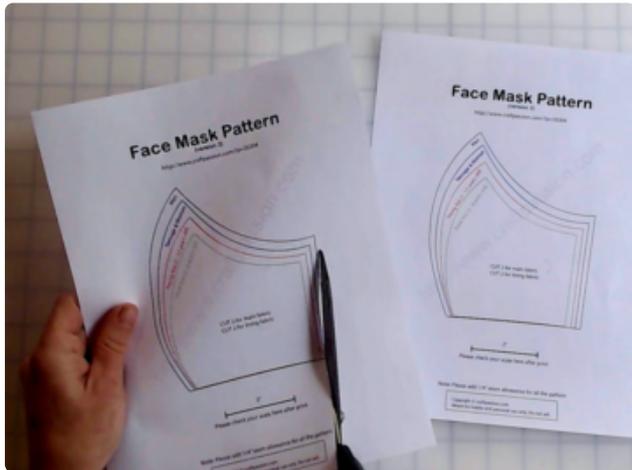


If you're not sure what a fabric is made of, try a burn test -- pull out one thread and **carefully** catch it on fire with a lighter. If it burns up to ash, you've got natural fibers. If it melts, it's a polyester-type manmade material.

I'm using a pattern posted by [CraftPassion.com \(https://adafru.it/JSf\)](https://adafru.it/JSf). She gives great instructions for a very well-made mask that uses a sewing machine and lots of other sewing accessories. But you don't necessarily need all those tools -- the pattern works great for hand-sewing too.

[Download The Pattern Here \(https://adafru.it/JSA\)](https://adafru.it/JSA)

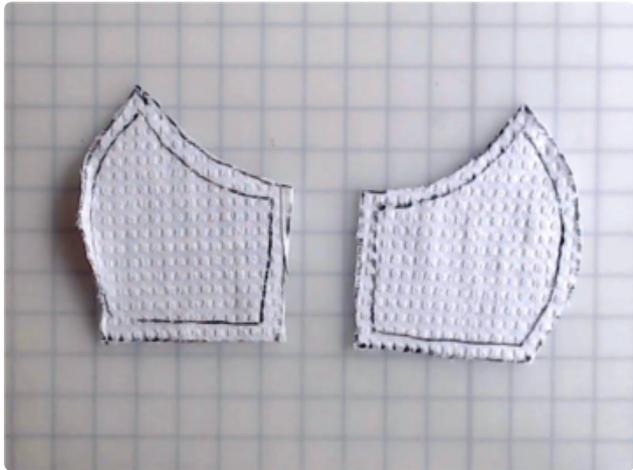
Once you've downloaded, print out two copies.



Choose which size you want and cut both patterns out along the correct line.



Lay one piece face up and one piece face down on your lining fabric. Leave a little space between the pieces. Trace around them with a marker, then draw another line 1/4" away from your first line. This is our seam allowance -- we'll trim it down a bit later, but it's there to give us a little more room to work.



Cut both pieces out along the outer line.



Now repeat with your outer layer fabric. Take a minute to line up the pieces so the design lays out nicely on the front of your mask. Remember to have one piece flipped upside-down so you have a left and right side. And remember that the curved side will be the middle of the mask, so if you want the design to span both sides, keep the curved sides inwards.

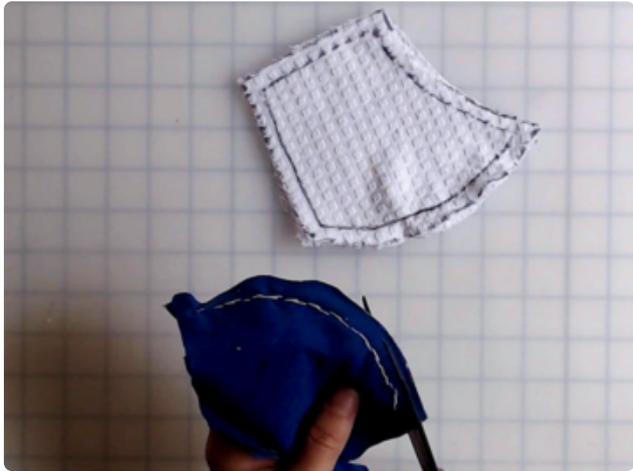


Once you've got all four pieces cut out along the outer cut lines, it's time to sew it all together. Thread your needle with about two feet of doubled-over and knotted thread.



Place the inner liner pieces on top of each other and stitch along the long curved edge (the part in the center in the above photo).

For the outer front piece, stack the two pieces with the picture on the inside (right sides together) and stitch the same front edge.



Trim the front seam allowance of both pieces close to the seam you just made, being sure not to cut through the stitches.



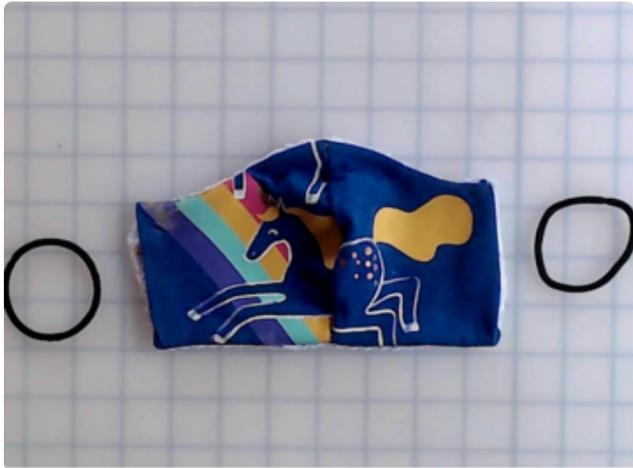
Open both pieces up. Stack them on top of each other with right sides together (so your seams are both on the outside). Sew along the top edges and the bottom edge, leaving both side edges open.



Trim the seam allowances you just made close to the stitching.



Turn the mask right-side out so all your seams are now on the inside. Fold both edges to the inside. Iron it flat. I found it worked better to iron on the towel side rather than the t-shirt side, since I had printed designs on my t-shirt that threatened to melt if I got them too hot.



Slip an elastic hair tie in between the two layers on each side, so it's just barely sticking out. Sew the edge closed around the hair tie, being careful not to actually stick your needle through the elastic -- just sew around it, to minimize pulling the threads when you stretch the mask on.



Try your mask on! If it's too small, you can tie another hair elastic on to each side to make it larger.



Donation Resources

Here are a few links to mask information and to places who need face mask donations:

- [What are the Best Materials for DIY Masks \(https://adafru.it/JSB\)](https://adafru.it/JSB) (article)
- [The Million Mask Challenge on Facebook \(https://adafru.it/JSC\)](https://adafru.it/JSC) has a [wonderful page \(https://adafru.it/JSD\)](https://adafru.it/JSD) listing hospitals that are in need of cotton masks by state.
- Check with your local small business fabric stores. Many of them are making and collecting fabric masks and will handle the donation for you. Call around! Small businesses are being hit hard by closures and are looking for ways to contribute.
- Use the [NextDoor \(https://adafru.it/JSE\)](https://adafru.it/JSE) app to find neighbors who may be in need of masks for grocery shopping trips. This mask is 100% washable, so you can wash all the masks you make and safely donate them to your neighbors.

We're in this together, and helping each other keeps us connected.