

Better than Better Than Nothing / The Data-driven Fabric Mask

Fabric Mask Sewing Instructions

For more information on how this pattern was put together check out the about section. For local mask donations Lekwungen and W̱SÁNEĆ lands (Victoria, BC) please email hrist.vindertaker@gmail.com. Thank you and take care!

Materials

1. **Fabric**– Medium weight cotton or cotton linen blend (like medium thick flannel or high quality tea towels) NOT terry cloth, corduroy, velvet/een or sheets
2. **Ties**– Anything long and skinny that will grip and hold for a long time (clean shoelaces, bias tape, fabric strips, grosgrain ribbon, seam tape)
3. **Wire** (optional)– About 2 inches of 20-24 gauge wire (like twist ties or pipe cleaners) can be sewn into the top seam (over the bridge of the nose) to help with fit.

Instructions for sewing

Prep

Shrink the fabric as much as possible by washing and drying on high heat. This is crucial for the mask to be effective.

Ties

1. Cut 2 pieces 2 inches wide and a minimum of 40 inches long.
2. Fold the strips in half lengthwise.
3. Fold the edges into the centre line.
4. Sew lengthwise to secure.
5. Finish ends.

Mask

1. Cut 2-3 pieces of mask pattern, depending on the thickness of your fabric. Use at least 2 layers.
2. Mark fold lines.
3. Sew the pieces together around the outside, leaving a 2-inch gap between the start and end of your stitches.
4. Turn inside out.
5. Stitch all the way around the outside, leaving a narrow strip.
6. Fold according to pattern (makes 3 deep folds).
7. Sew sides to secure the folds.

Assembly

1. Centre the tie strips along the side.
2. Sew the tie strips on with a double row of stitches.
3. Wash masks with hot water and laundry soap and transfer to a clean bag prior to donating.

Tips for using fabric masks safely

- A fabric mask is an imperfect barrier. You still need to break the chain of infection by washing your hands often and avoid touching your face, eyes, nose, or mouth. Maintain social distancing when possible.
- Pull the facemask up over your nose and down over your chin.
- Avoid touching your mask.
- Do not let your mask hang down and then pull it up again. Once a mask is on, keep it on until you're ready to take it off or replace it.
- Change your mask on a regular basis, or when it becomes moist or dirty.
- Place a discarded mask directly into a plastic bag and wash your hands before donning a clean one.
- Wash your masks with hot water and laundry soap and add bleach if you have some, dry on hot. We do not have data on what safely cleans a mask for re-use, this recommendation is based on hand washing.

About Fabric Masks

Fabric masks are not a substitute for medical equipment, but some studies show that with the right fabric and construction, and when used properly, they're better than nothing¹⁻³. While fabric masks may not always be the best choice for the general public, the CDC recommends their use for care workers in crisis situations when no facemasks are available⁴. This guide was written on Lekwungen and W̱SÁNEĆ lands (Victoria, BC) where service closures and the withdrawal of system supports including masks and other supplies have left volunteers, frontline workers, and community members in the inner city in crisis and working without protection. The pattern in this document is based on the one used in the study by Davies et al¹. We are hoping that with your help, and the help of as many sewers as possible, we can create a rotating supply of washable masks to try and reduce the spread of the covid-19 virus.

References

1. Davies A, Thompson K-A, Giri K, Kafatos G, Walker J, Bennett A. Testing the efficacy of homemade masks: Would they protect in an influenza pandemic? *Disaster Med Public Health Prep.* 2013;7(4):413-8.
2. Dato VM, Hostler D, Hahn ME. Simple respiratory mask. *Emerging infectious diseases.* 2006;12(6):1033-4.
3. van der Sande M, Teunis P, Sabel R. Professional and home-made face masks reduce exposure to respiratory infections among the general population. *PLoS One.* 2008;3(7):e2618.
4. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Strategies for optimizing the supply of facemasks [updated March 17, 2020]. Available from: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/ppe-strategy/face-masks.html>



Seam **A**

Seam **B**

Seam **C**

- Stitch along this line
- Fold forwards
- Fold backwards

Seam **B**

Seam **A**

Fabric size 8.5 x 10.5 inches / 215.9 x 268 mm



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