

THE CORONAVIRUS

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WHY YOU SHOULD MAKE AND WEAR A FACE MASK

On Friday, Pennsylvania officials said residents should all wear a mask when we leave the house. The CDC issued similar guidance later the same day, reflecting a rapidly growing consensus that covering our faces can help slow the spread of the coronavirus.

While high-quality N95 respirators and disposable surgical masks should be left to health-care workers who desperately need them, officials now recommend cloth masks that can be made at home with some fabric and basic sewing materials.

Because the virus is primarily transmitted through respiratory droplets — such as from sneezing or coughing — homemade masks might help catch those droplets when we're around others. Wearing a mask is more about protecting other people from you than protecting you directly. (Many people may have mild or even no symptoms even if they are infected and contagious, so habitually wearing a mask could keep you from unknowingly passing the virus along to someone else.)

WHAT TO DO IF YOU DON'T HAVE SEWING MATERIALS

Remember, homemade masks aren't perfect. So don't worry about doing everything exactly as we suggest — the point is to create a covering that goes over your nose and mouth. Instead of sewing, you can use safety pins or clips to keep the fabric and ties together. Staples also work in a pinch.

Don't have any way of connecting the fabric and ties? The CDC has no-sew options at bit.ly/2UJMOD3. Or scrap the mask and use something else. A scarf or bandanna can be used if you can't make or buy a mask, the Pennsylvania Department of Health said.

SOME THINGS TO REMEMBER ABOUT YOUR HOMEMADE MASK

Disinfect the mask between every use. The easiest way is to wash it with the rest of your laundry, in hot water and with soap or detergent, and then run it through the dryer. You may want to make more than one mask, depending how often you go outside.

Masks don't provide perfect protection.

Wearing a mask does not give you more freedom to come in contact with others or otherwise engage in risky behaviors. Continue to stay home as much as you can and maintain physical distance from others when you do go outside.

The mask should fit snugly around your nose and mouth.

Do not touch the mask when in use, which risks transmitting the virus to your face.

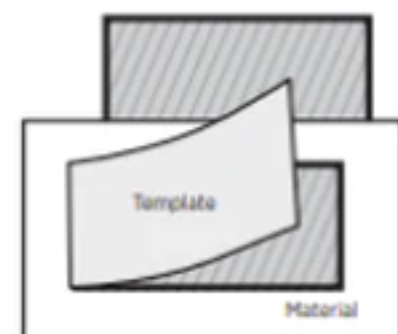
How to make a face mask

By Jonathan Lai

Illustrations: Cynthia Greer

Here's a template (on page two and three of this pdf) and a step-by-step guide to making your own mask, based on the guidance from the Pennsylvania Department of Health. And if you don't have materials like a needle and thread, we have options to help.

Here are instructions:



1 Measure and cut two pieces of fabric in a rectangle pattern to fit snugly around the face. (This template is 12 inches by 6 inches, standard for adults).



2 Place the template on top of the two fabric layers and tightly sew everything together along the dashed line.



3 Cut fabric ties or elastic to the appropriate length. Shoelaces work, too.



4 Sew the ties to the inside of the mask in the marked boxes in the corners.



5 Resew the sides, along the dotted line, to ensure a tight seal between both pieces of fabric and the ties.

SOURCE: Pennsylvania Department of Health and Centers for Disease Control

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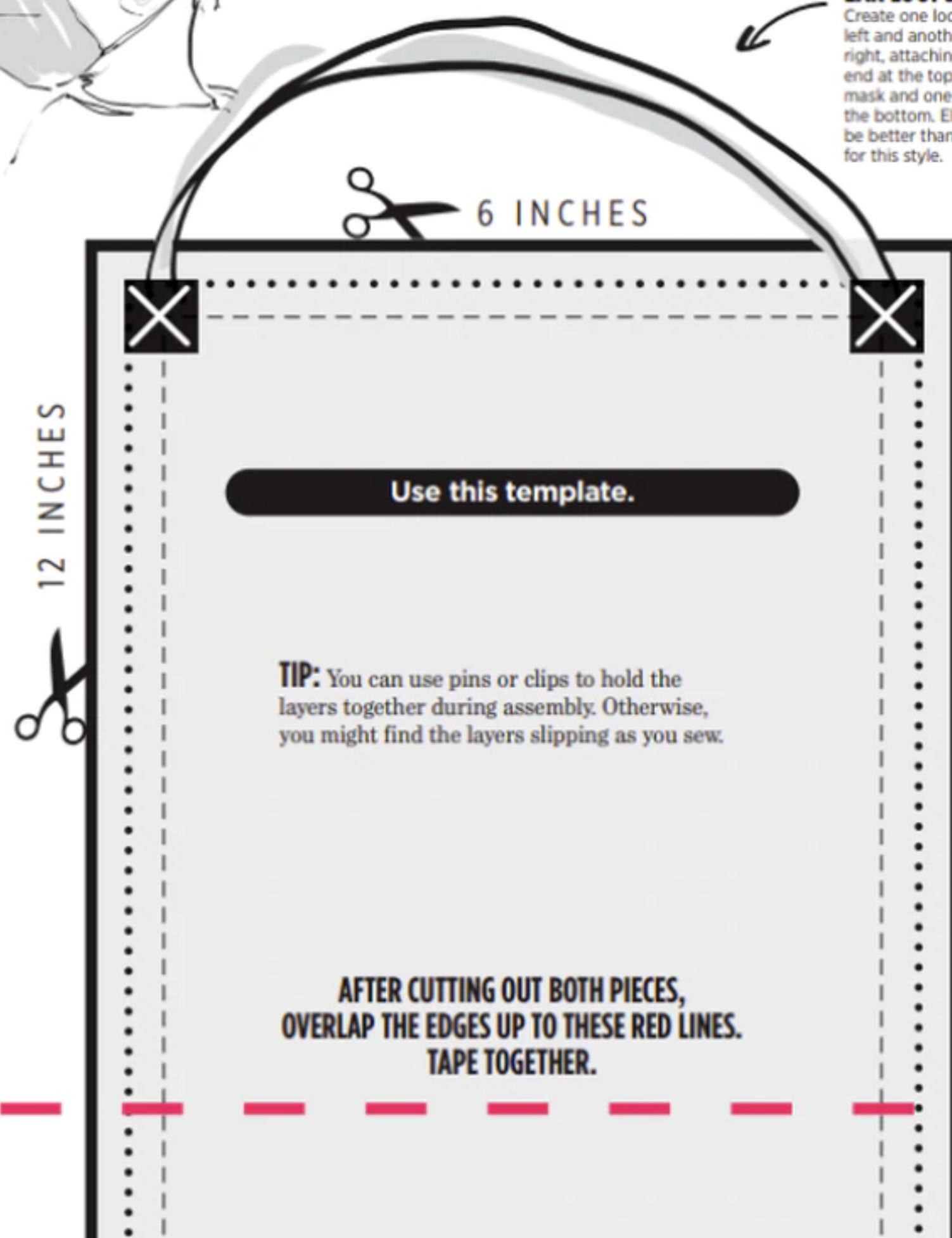


TIES OPTION: TIES BEHIND YOUR HEAD

Connect the ties horizontally, so the upper corners are connected to each other and the bottom corners are connected to each other.

TIES OPTION: EAR LOOPS

Create one loop on the left and another on the right, attaching one end at the top of the mask and one end at the bottom. Elastic may be better than fabric for this style.



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