

How to Make Your Own Fabric Face Mask

Materials needed

How to make

How to put on and remove

Other face mask tips

Safety tips

Bottom line



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Wearing a face mask is one way we can all help slow the spread of the new coronavirus that causes COVID-19.

Wearing a face mask in public or community settings, especially in situations where you may be near other people, is recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the World Health Organization (WHO)

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, and many state and county health departments. Some cities also require you to wear face masks if you go out in public.

A face mask isn't intended to protect you, the wearer. Instead, the purpose of wearing a face covering, according to the CDC, is to protect the people around you. That's because you may have the disease, but aren't showing symptoms.

If you lack sewing skills or just want a quick way to make a face mask with materials at home, we've got you covered.

Surgical face masks and N95 respirators need to be used primarily by frontline healthcare workers. These masks protect healthcare workers who are caring for people diagnosed with COVID-19. The general public is encouraged to use cloth face masks which will prioritize and reserve the supply for these workers.

What do you need to make a homemade face mask?

Making a cloth face mask is simple, and many patterns don't require professional sewing skills or even a sewing machine.

As long as you have the following, you'll have everything you need to make your own face mask:

- some type of fabric like an old clean t-shirt or other cloth
- scissors

- rubber bands or hair ties
- ruler or tape measure

Step-by-step instructions for making a face mask

The two cloth face masks described below come from guidelines

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set by the CDC. Both masks only take a few minutes to make and don't require any sewing.

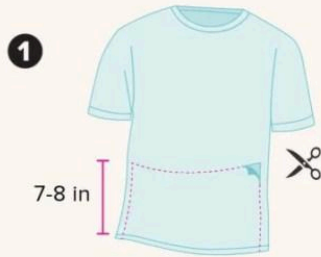
1. Face mask with hair ties

Materials needed

- an old clean T-shirt, or other material
- scissors
- ruler or tape measure
- 2 rubber bands or large hair ties

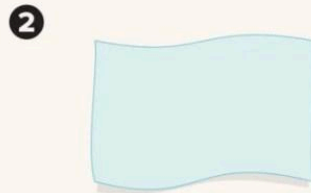
Making a cloth face mask

without filter

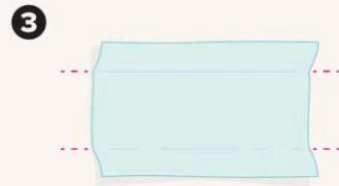


7-8 in

Lay an old t-shirt out on a flat surface. Using a ruler or cloth tape measure, start at the bottom of the shirt and measure up 7–8 inches.



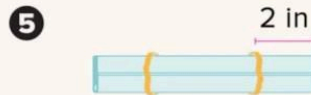
Cut up and across. You'll end up with a big rectangle. This will be the material for your face mask. Place the remaining material from the t-shirt to the side.



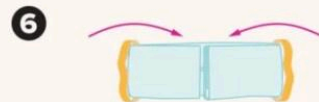
Place the rectangular piece of fabric on a flat surface and fold the material from the bottom to the middle. Then fold the material from the top to the middle.



Fold it again from the bottom to the middle, and the top to the middle. This will be your mask.



Loop a rubber band or large hair tie around each end of the fabric, about 2 inches in from the end of the fabric.



Fold the right side in towards the center, then the left side in towards the center. The two should meet.



Grab the mask by the rubber bands or hair ties and place over your mouth, securing each side by wrapping the band or hair tie around your ear. This should be tight enough to keep the mask in place.

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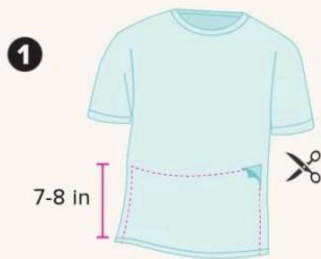
2. Face mask with built-in strings

Materials needed

- an old clean t-shirt or other material
- scissors
- a ruler or tape measure

Making a cloth face mask

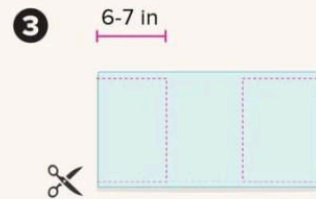
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Place an old t-shirt on a flat surface. Measure 7–8 inches from the bottom of the shirt and cut across.



Lay the cut fabric rectangle on a flat surface and discard the rest of the shirt.



Measure about 6–7 inches in from the side of the fabric rectangle and cut out the material, leaving about a half inch of material at the top and bottom. These are the strings to tie the mask behind your head.



Cut the string fabric in half.



Tie the strings around your neck, and then around the top of your head.

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For extra protection with this method, add one to two extra layers of fabric, the same size as the mask, between your mouth and the mask.

How to put on and take off a face mask

How you handle a mask can be just as important as wearing one out in public.

Before putting on a mask, wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water aren't available, rub your hands together thoroughly with alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

When putting it on:

- hold the rubber bands or ties while securing it to your face
- avoid touching the fabric
- be sure it fits snugly

When taking it off:

- first wash your hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer
- use the straps (rubber bands or ties) to unhook or untie the mask from your face
- avoid touching your mouth, nose, or eyes
- drop the mask into the washing machine so it's clean the next time you need it

Wash your hands immediately after removing the mask.

How to wear and care for a fabric face mask

- Regularly wash your mask. Ideally, wash it between each use in hot water with regular detergent. Then dry the face mask on a high-heat setting. Having more than one mask will minimize daily laundry.
- Make sure the mask covers your nose and mouth. Measure the mask on your face before you cut it out.
- Keep the mask on at all times when out in public. Don't remove the mask or lift it up to talk to someone or adjust the fit. One tip is to check the fit before leaving your car. If the mask needs to be adjusted, make the appropriate adjustments, secure the mask, then leave your vehicle.
- Avoid touching the mask once you have it on your face. If you need to touch it, make sure your hands are clean by washing with soap and water or using hand sanitizer.
- A face mask does not replace physical distancing. You still need to maintain at least 6 feet of distance between yourself and other people.
- A cloth face mask isn't safe for children younger than 2 years of age or anyone who's experiencing trouble breathing, is unconscious, or otherwise incapacitated, according to the CDC
- Trusted Source
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Other coronavirus safety tips

Besides wearing a face mask, there are other important steps you can take to help prevent the spread of SARS-CoV-2:

- Whenever possible, stay home. Avoid going out in public, especially for unnecessary trips and errands.
- Practice physical distancing if you need to leave your home, and always wear your mask if you're near other people.
- Avoid touching your face when out in public and always cover your mouth and nose when you cough and sneeze.
- Wash your hands with soap and water often, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water aren't available. As soon as you get home, rewash your hands before doing anything else.
- If you have symptoms, call your doctor or local health department. Remain at home until you get clear instructions on what to do about testing.

The bottom line

Taking appropriate steps to slow the spread of the new coronavirus is something we can all do.

Wearing a fabric face mask when out in public is one way you can help slow the spread of this virus. You can easily make one for yourself and others with just a few basic items. You don't even need to know how to sew.

Besides wearing a face mask when you need to go out, you can also help yourself and others stay safe by staying home as much as possible, following physical distancing guidelines, and washing your hands often.

Last medically reviewed on April 23, 2020