

How to make a mask



1. Print out the template (at 'actual size' - do not 'shrink to fit'). If you have an A3 printer, print the A3 file. Alternatively, print the two A4 files on A4 paper, and glue/tape the two halves of the template together. Cut out the outer perimeter of the template, indicated with a solid line.

If you do not have a printer, you can draw the template yourself, using the measurements given on the A3 file.

2. Cut a rectangle of 100% cotton fabric, the same size as the template. It should measure 36 x 20cm.

3. Use a pencil and ruler to transfer the lines from the template onto the fabric. There is no need to transfer the centre line (which you may have used to align the two template halves) but you should transfer the letters A, B, X and Y. (They are intentionally inverted.)

4. Let's call the side of your fabric with all of your markings the 'back'; the unmarked side will be the 'front'. When folding your fabric in the steps that follow, dotted lines on the template should be folded with the fabric 'back-to-back'; dashed lines should be folded 'front-to-front'.

5. Beginning at one end, fold the fabric along the first dotted line (so 'back-to-back') and press with your iron. Fold along the second dotted line and press again. Use a straight stitch to sew along the edge, through all three layers of fabric, to create a hem. (The double fold avoids an exposed cut edge, which may fray. If you're in a hurry, you can just fold the fabric once, at the second dotted line.)

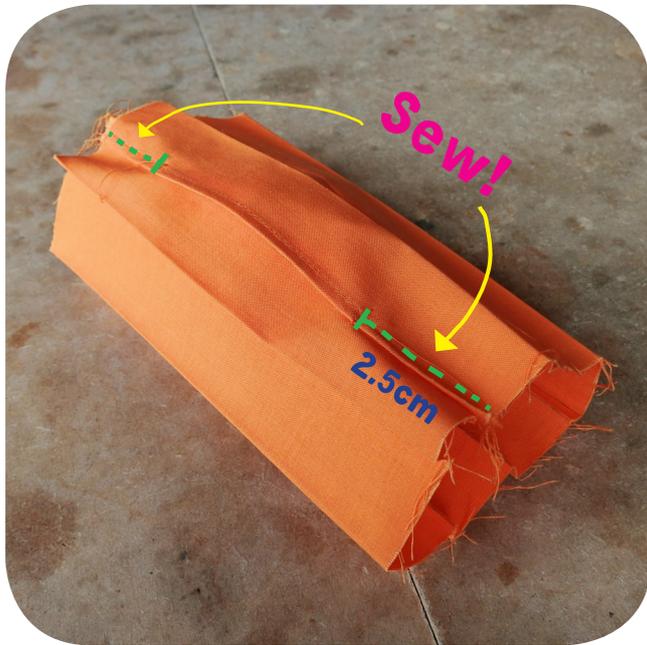
6. Repeat at the other end.



7. Fold and press all other lines - 'back-to-back' for dotted lines, 'front-to-front' for dashed lines.

Press the fold down with your fingers first, to create a crease in material. This makes it easier to iron the fold.

8. With all folds completed, the two hemmed edges should meet, overlapping. The edge marked X should sit on top of the edge marked Y.



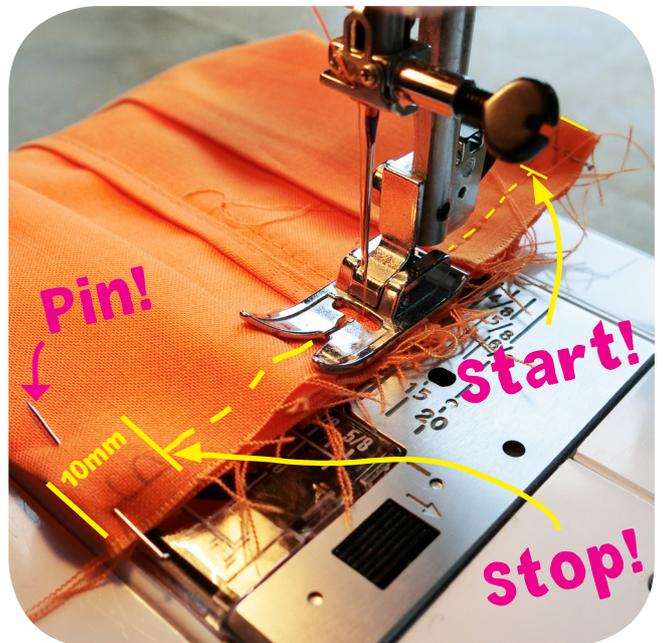
9. Starting from the outer edge, sew the two hems together, sewing in a distance of 2.5cm from each edge, and reinforcing at the end of each 2.5cm stitch with a locking stitch. The central 15cm of the overlapping hems should remain un-sewn.

Make sure not to sew the front side too! You should have created a tube.

10. Turn the mask inside out, ensuring that all folds are neatly flattened. To help to define the inverted top and bottom folds (marked A and B, respectively) whilst the mask is inside out, pin each of the four corners.

11. Sew the short edges, allowing a 5mm seam. In each case, start and finish 10mm in from the folded edge to allow elastic to be inserted.

12. From the central opening, turn the mask the right way out, pushing out all four corners.





13. Cut two lengths of elastic. Try a 35cm length for the top, and a 25cm length for the bottom. The specific length will depend on the strength of the elastic and the size of your head. It is easier to cut it too long and shorten it, than vice versa. Quarter-inch elastic is recommended for this design, where the elastic goes around the head and neck. You may prefer the elastic to loop behind either ear: in this case, use shorter lengths, and an elastic cord might be more comfortable.

If you're making the mask for someone else then you could make the elastic a bit longer, allowing them to tie it to shorten it to a length appropriate for them.

14. Take the longer length of elastic, and insert 5mm into the seam immediately beneath the fold, at one of the points marked A. Insert the shorter length at point B on the same short edge, and pin in place. Sew the full length of that edge, 2mm in, fixing the elastic securely. Ensure that the elastic is not twisted, insert the other ends at the other corners, and sew that edge too.

15. Cut all loose threads.

16. The mask is now complete! But be sure to wash it before use.

To improve the mask's effectiveness, cut a piece of tissue paper, or a tissue, slightly smaller than the mask and insert it via the opening at the back of the mask. This adds an extra layer of filtration. You could also insert a surgical mask, using your fabric mask as a holder and extending the surgical mask's longevity.

Remember to remove any inserts before you wash the mask again, which you should do regularly.



IMPORTANT! This is a DIY mask. It is not as effective as a medical-grade mask, and should not be used as a replacement for one. Outside of health and social care settings, most people are advised not to wear a medical-grade mask. A mask is NOT a replacement for social distancing. It can, however, help to protect you from airborne virus particles or, more likely, protect others from any that you are unwittingly transmitting.

100% cotton fabric is recommended. Cotton is good for a DIY mask, having been shown to filter a reasonable percentage of virus-sized particles, while remaining breathable. For research on this, see:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/258525804_Testing_the_Efficacy_of_Homemade_Masks_Would_They_Protect_in_an_Influenza_Pandemic

Or for a less academic explanation:

<https://smartairfilters.com/en/blog/diy-homemade-mask-protect-virus-coronavirus/>
<https://smartairfilters.com/en/blog/best-materials-make-diy-face-mask-virus/>

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2020

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