

Wash Your Hands . . . and Wear a Mask

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With the COVID-19 pandemic dramatically changing daily life, we're all looking for ways to help "flatten the curve" and diminish the spread of the virus. Face masks are one way.

Wearing a face mask may not keep a healthy person from contracting this or any other virus, but it can help cut down the spread of disease by reducing the distribution of droplets that lead to infection. Unfortunately, commercial masks are currently in short supply. It makes good sense, then, to create your own washable, reusable masks. They're easy to make, are a great scrap-buster project, and you can use fun and colorful materials.



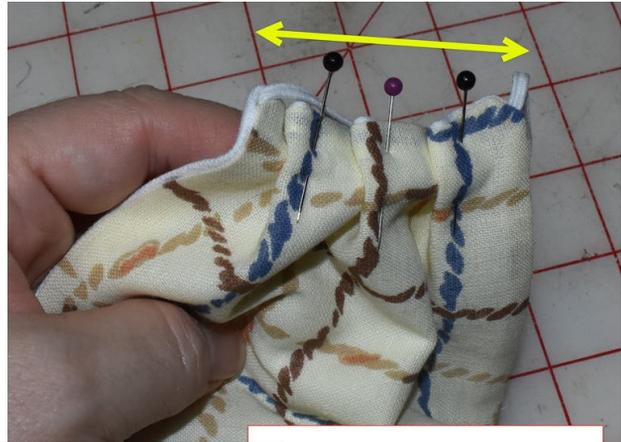
My mask is made of two 6x9" pieces of fabric-- a cotton outer piece and a flannelette lining piece -- and two 5 1/2" strips of 1/8" elastic.

The construction is simple --



stitch the two fabric pieces together all around the edge, sandwiching the ends of the elastic between the two pieces, just at the corners, and leaving a small opening to turn the mask right side out.

Turn right side out through the opening and press flat. Pin two or three tucks in each short end of the mask, bringing the total length of the side to approximately 2".



ends should measure 2" when tucked



Once the tucks have been pinned on both ends, topstitch all around the edge, closing the opening as you go. A second row of topstitching finishes the edge nicely.

Just as an experiment, I tried a mask using my T-shirt knit string, which has a bit of stretch to it, in place of the elastic; it worked just fine.

I also lined one of my masks with a T-shirt knit that I had on hand, rather than flannelette, and found that it worked out well too.



These are simple to construct and obviously useful. Come Christmas, they'll make great stocking stuffers for nearly everyone on my list. If COVID-19 has receded by then, the masks will come in handy for the *next* pandemic.



I found several how-to videos on line, including one by The Turban Project, a charity that produces not only masks but also head gear for chemotherapy patients. A quick search on youtube will bring up at least a dozen instructional videos, including one with an extra piece of flannelette inside to act as an additional filter, which I may make next.

