Covid-19 Masks Sewing Recommendations

Fabric Recommendations

- **100% cotton only.** DO NOT use polyester or poly blends. They will not provide the protection to healthcare workers that is needed. Polyester is not absorbent and not breathable. Polyester is a petroleum by-product and will not provide comfort and protection to healthcare workers. This is the one thing that all of my resources agree on. I understand we need masks now and fast, but we can do this.
- Muslin
- Quilters cotton
- Use parts of old t-shirts without the screen printing
- JoAnn Fabrics, order online, they will give sewers precut masks to sew – these are 100% cotton.
- **DO NOT** preshrink (wash) fabric before cutting and sewing the masks. All masks will be sanitized before use.

Styles

- CDC has a contour mask pattern available. This is a very easy mask design to make for even a novice sewer. The average production time on these masks is lower than the pleated version.
- Pleat design – it’s possible to provide a different color on each side of mask as CDC is requesting, however, some patterns show a fabric fold over technique, a little quicker production, I don’t believe anyone would turn these away, especially if made with 100% cotton.

Elastic and Woven ties

- Elastic is gone everywhere right now. I checked with all of my wholesale vendors and there just isn’t anything available and won’t be for a very long time.
- Elastic alternative. You can make something equivalent to elastic loops with any type of stretchy fabric: lycra, a thin old sweater, anything stretchy. Cut on the bias, cut strips ½” double over and serge open edges together. If you don’t have a serger, use a wide zig-zag that is not too close together to maintain stretch. Use same as elastic.
- Woven ties – Cut fabric 1” thick, 40” long, fold in half, turn each side into center fold to create a tie that is 1/8” thick. Same as making home-made bias tape, but **NOT** on a bias. Cut with grain of fabric. Top stitch or zig-zag down the middle, back tacking on each well. String through elastic casing; string through the top of one side, coming up from the bottom of the other side – tie “loop” will go around neck and tie on top of head. If you need to piece your tie together, piece it using two angled cuts together or it will be bulky in one spot and could rub and cause abrasions on worker.

Other instructions, but don’t get too hung up on them to the point you are not sewing.

- Sz 12 sharp needle is best, but with all of the shortages of sewing supplies everywhere just do your best. Try to use the smallest needles possible.
- Machine tension is important. If tension is too tight a little pulling will break the thread. If tension is too loose the fabric layers could separate. Tight tension you will probably see some fabric puckering. Loose tension you will see stitches not laying flat on fabric, but loopy.
• A 3 – 3.5 mm stitch length is fine. This is a little longer than the 2.5 mm many home machines are set at. This will give many of you on home machines a little faster production time.
• Make sure that your presser foot pressure isn’t too much or too little, or you won’t have a consistent stitch length. Too much and fabric could pucker. Too little and fabric won’t feed through well.

Other supplies sewers will need:

• Wire – could be from a floral industry. That’s what I am using. 22 gauge, but as it says in the CDC video, get creative, pipe cleaners, twisty ties, etc. Ask people to save and donate their twisty ties from bear etc. Craft people, do you have pipe cleaner? Floral companies can you donate wire?
• Coffee filters make an incredible filter for in the mask pockets and I’m told are breathable and comfortable. Please consider donating coffee filters. Kleenex tissue can also be used, but coffee filters are preferable.
• If anyone is no longer sewing and has thread or Cotton fabric or any other sewing supplies, please donate.

I don’t mind calls or emails to help anyone trouble shoot.

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