Sewing Face Masks for the 2020 Pandemic v.2 3-23-20

We all want to help with the current COVID-19 crisis. Many of you may be wondering how you can help. Sewing face masks could be one way. Here is a compilation of the best information I have found.

Do-it-yourself face masks are NOT the TOTAL answer, as they are not as safe as manufactured surgical masks. However, some protection is better than none, right? Here is an interesting article on the best fabrics to use. https://smartairfilters.com/en/blog/best-materials-make-diy-face-mask-virus/ My takeaway is to use prewashed, fine quality, 100% cotton quilting cotton. The closer the weave, the better. Knit cotton T-shirt fabric has been mentioned a lot, too. Use natural fibers only so it can be sterilized or laundered in hot water. Include a pocket so additional filtration can be added instead of adding interfacing or another filter yourself. **NOTE: There is a shortage on elastic. Consider using bias tape or self fabric to make ties. Center 33-36" strips on each of the short sides of the masks**. Extend the length on the styles with side bindings.

Where to send masks
- Places close to you: Health care providers and nursing homes. Public safety personnel. Friends who are at risk or have any respiratory illness. Anyone who works with the public or wants some protection when going out.
- Sewing & Craft Alliance website for mask distribution. https://www.weneedmasks.org/
- Facebook page set up by quilt shops: @ForYourQuiltingCommunity. In Kansas City, Harper's Fabrics accepts donations
- Joann Fabrics https://www.joann.com/make-to-give-response/

Here are some other tutorials and patterns I found on making two types of face masks. I selected those I thought were clear and concise.
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BCJcE-r7kcg This video shows a clever way to make a **pleated** facemask with pocket for filtering material plus a channel for a nose clip.
- https://buttoncounter.com/2018/01/14/facemask-a-picture-tutorial/ **Pleated** face Mask with bound edges. Extend side bias to be 33" long as mentioned above to create ties if you don't have elastic
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4kwFaRFHKhY The queen of tutorials, Jenny Doan of Missouri Star Quilt Company shows the easiest to make **pleated** mask.
- https://www.unitypoint.org/cedarrapids/sewing-surgical-masks.aspx is a website by a hospital in Iowa. This appears to be the closest to a medically approved mask, and includes a **shaped** mask pattern and video PLUS they will add the elastic, filters and metal pieces themselves.
- https://www.craftpassion.com/face-mask-sewing-pattern/ **Shaped** face mask, instructions. Includes 4 sizes but I think they seem small, plus you have to add your own seam allowances.
- https://www.instructables.com/id/DIY-Cloth-Face-Mask/ **Shaped** mask with or without pocket. Very informative links.

There is much discussion about these face masks not being good enough for hospital use. That is correct. Do-it-yourself masks are NOT as protective as those made to PPE standards. However, hospitals are asking for masks to use as covers for their regulation masks or to have on hand as last resort if they run out. Meanwhile, many other people can use masks, and DIY masks that are 50% effective are better than NOTHING! They are also better than using a bandana, one of the suggestions offered by the CDC.

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/ppe-strate-gy/face-masks.html Note: this link refuses to work. Please type it if you wish to see CDC information.

In addition, my favorite patternmaking software company has given me permission to share their patterns and instructions, or you can download their program to make many medical garments and accessories for charity. http://www.wildginger.com/icare/default.htm

Please note that all of these patterns and directions are shareware and not to be used for selling masks.
I would also suggest you include a note that the hand-made masks are not made to medical standards, such as
"I make no claims to the effectiveness of this face mask, but only wish to help someone in need. Nothing homemade will ever compare to medical grade surgical mask. This face mask is for last resort or nonmedical persons only. "
Prewash fabric before making, and wash after and place in a Ziploc bag.

Pleated Face Mask

Pattern Pieces:
  • Mask: Cut 2 in fashion fabric or disposable non-woven fabric
  • Bias binding
  • Purchased or self made ties or narrow elastic
Assemble the Face Mask
1. With RIGHT sides together, stitch the two face mask pieces together along the two long sides.
2. Trim the seams and turn right side out and press.
3. Match the markings for the three pleats on each short side and baste pressing the pleats down.
4. Stitch bias binding along each short end securing the pleats and turning in the ends of the bias binding.
5. Attach ties to the top and bottom of each short end or attach an elastic loop to the top and bottom of each short end.

For more information or other methods, see the videos mentioned in the handout. Since learning users want a pocket for additional filtering and a nose clamp, My favorite method is shown in https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BCJcE-r7kcg

Pattern: Pleated Face Mask

Shaped Face Mask

Pattern Pieces:
  • Mask: Cut 2 in fashion fabric, two of lining
  • Two pieces of thin elastic, about 7" long

Assembling the Face Mask:

1. With RIGHT sides together, pin the face mask pieces together matching the circle markings and stitch along the outward curved seam. Repeat for the lining.

2. Cut two pieces of thin elastic to the desired length.

3. Attach one end of the elastic to the top rectangle and the other end to the bottom end at the rectangle. Repeat for other side of the mask.

4. With RIGHT sides together, pin the lining to the face mask and stitch around the entire perimeter leaving an opening at the bottom for turning.

5. Trim the seam allowances, turn right side out and press.

6. Stitch all edges to close opening and reinforce elastic

OR Extend the straight sides half an inch and sew a casing for elastic or ties.

For more information or functions, see the videos mentioned in the handout.

Pattern: Face Mask