

Information on Handsewn Face Masks

Notes from the Author

Hello! Thank you so much for wanting to help in this time of crisis. I wanted to note at the top of this document that there is a lot of information going out about handsewn facemasks, and hopefully, we can help share resources to clarify things.

Handsewn facemasks are not a direct replacement for surgical masks or N95 masks. However, before you get discouraged, there are still a number of uses for them and most importantly they are better than nothing. This New York Times [article](#) and this Philadelphia Inquirer [article](#) list many of the uses across the country some including hospitals that are truly out of face masks moving to handsewn ones, doctors wearing them over their surgical masks to prolong the life of their medical-grade masks, and high-risk environments like funeral homes using them to keep their staff safe. The CDC has [guidelines](#) for how hospitals can optimize facemasks if you are interested.

As noted in the [research](#) below, the way face masks are most effective is in preventing spread from the person wearing the mask. If you are showing any symptoms wearing a mask that you change every two hours can significantly decrease the spread in your household ([source](#)).

There are tons of groups and resources out there that I encourage you to seek out, but if you have any direct questions please feel free to reach out to me at amandabaschnagel@boisestate.edu. Also, information is changing daily, so I will do my best to keep this document as up to date as possible.

Best,
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Patterns

- The Most Effective Masks will have:
 - A pocket for a filter
 - An adjustable nose piece made with some thin wire
 - Two different fabrics so user know which side is clean
 - This one works well and uses bias tape (or long strips of fabric)
<https://sweetredpoppy.com/how-to-sew-a-bias-tape-surgical-face-mask-with-flexible-nose/>
 - Here is another pattern approved by Great Falls Clinic:
<https://www.gfclinic.com/wp-content/uploads/Approved-Pattern-Info-for-Great-Falls-Clinic-Homemade-Masks.pdf>
- For personal use/non-medical use:
 - There are way more options that are effective if you are using them yourself or if you intend to donate them to a non-medical facility.
 - This one does not use elastic:
https://www.joann.com/on/demandware.static/-/Library-Sites-LibraryJoAnnShared/default/dw4148ae36/static/landingpage/assets/Mask-Instructions_V2.pdf
 - Neither does this one: <https://www.deaconess.com/How-to-make-a-Face-Mask?fbclid=IwAR1IPdFi9Tnpr8qhv43Yc2H9-7XdrUU0IGJ-wdiqY09wSu3UbRd6zzTzDTI>
- If you have elastic:
 - Some patterns will even use [hair ties](#) to replace the elastic!
 - Try this one out:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VgHrnS6n4iA&feature=emb_title

Sterilizing

- Some [research](#) indicates that you need to change your mask every two hours. If you are using them for personal use you may want to keep about 12 on hand.
- When you are washing your masks, use a color-safe bleach and hot water to sterilize them. You should also pretreat your fabrics this way before you begin sewing.
- If you have put a metal nose bridge in your mask, you will want a way to remove that before washing so that the metal does not rust.
- Do not wash your mask with the filter inside.

Materials

- Materials you may need (not all of these will be necessary for every pattern)
 - Fabric

Sources

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"Saint Alphonsus on Twitter: 'We Are so Grateful to the Treasure Valley Medical Mask Group That Is Working Hard to Produce Masks for Use at Saint Alphonsus. We Greatly

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