How to Make a Fitted Cloth Face Mask with a Pocket

A few notes before you begin:

We* are working to get ahead of virus and disease transmission in our community and to lessen the demand for materials that front-line medical staff rely on each day as they are at constant risk of repeated exposure.

The face masks we are making are, first and foremost, being used to protect those in need in our community at this time - senior centers and smaller medical facilities, and service people such as grocery workers, or restaurant staff, and most importantly those who are at risk or ill when they have no or limited access to the hospital provided Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

While the hospitals can catch cases one at a time and work backward to contain transmission, we (with the help of a medical team, research people, and industry professionals) are going to help come at things from the other side, too.

In situations where PPE supplies have run low or out completely, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other groups recommend something as basic as a bandana for helping cut down on transmission. In case we get to that level, or even the step before where masks are so limited that reuse is required, our masks are designed with a pocket that can hold a full surgical mask, and straps that leave the ears free for a surgical mask to be worn simultaneously. The materials we have chosen are also able to withstand the sanitizing practices at our local hospitals should the need for them to serve our front-line hospital medical staff arise.

Worn properly (tight to the face, across the nose and covering the chin and sterilized) we calculate** one of our fabric masks alone - no filter and no extra layers, would help cut down on transmission by 75-85%. If we can reduce the strain on our local hospitals by anything near that number, our community stands a chance of weathering this unprecedented time without needing to resort to dire measures.

As you work to make these masks, please remember to make one for yourself and your household. Masks can seem alarmist and ridiculous to some, but if we could get everyone to wear one by normalizing them, we would find success.

A Word on Filters

At this time we are working diligently, alongside many people around the world, to come up with alternative filtration materials. The masks we are making are “future-proof” in that the pockets can easily be modified to fit filtration media and the shape and wearing style enables most filters to be worn in tandem.

We appreciate all that you have done and all you are doing to help our community.

Yours in Service,

Brooke-Ashley Pool and the Staff and Directors of SLO MakerSpace, Inc.

*We are a local group of people at a small community centered business working to help the community do what it can to protect itself. We have done our best to be thorough with research, seeking out advice from authorities, and staying on top of current knowledge and best practices. We are not offering medical advice or prescribing a course of action or treatment. Please exercise caution and prudence, always.

** based on research and materials testing done by industry professionals.

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Materials

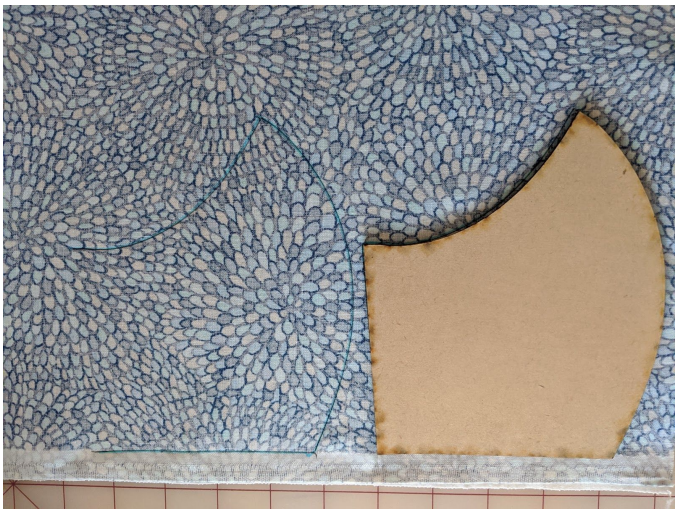
- 1 Pattern to trace
- 1 length of 100% cotton or cotton blend, at least ¼ of a yard.
- 1 pair of scissors or cutting implement
- Thread (Most will do but please no invisible thread or plastic/elastic thread. If you have it, natural fiber is best.)
- Sewing machine
- Elastic bands for attachment or bias tape/spaghetti strap strings. Both are great and needed. Much elastic has latex making strings necessary for some.

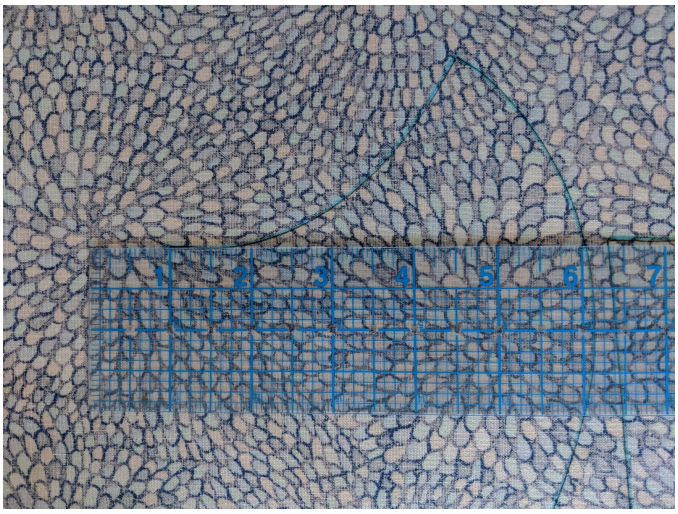
Assembly

1. Fold the fabric right sides together, this will make assembly ever so much faster.

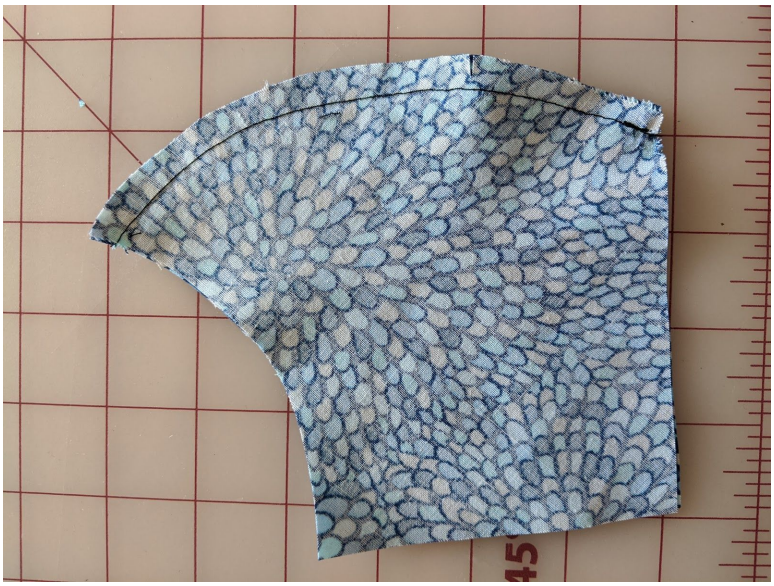
2. Press your fabric to ensure your cuts are as clean and even as possible.

3. Trace the pattern of your choice once as is and once by adding an inch to the short side.



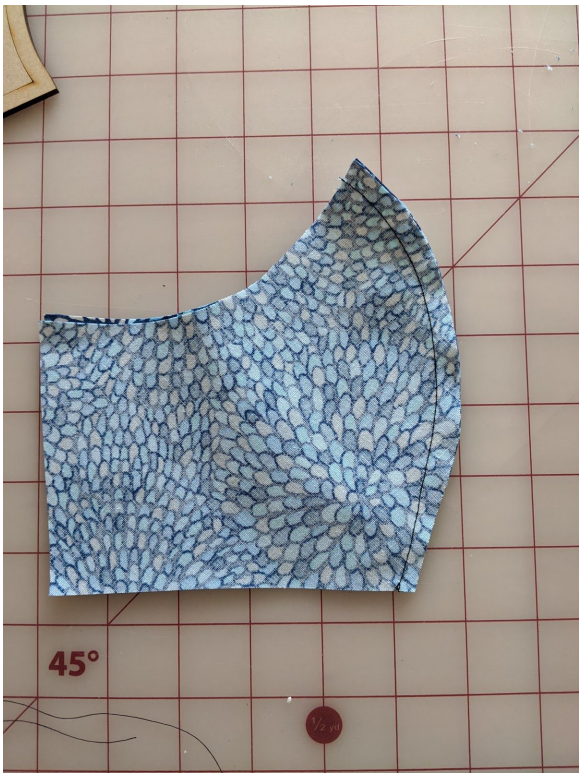


4. Take the two short pieces right-sides-together and sew along the largest curve. Using your sewing foot as a guide and with the needle in the rightmost position will give you the desired ¼” seam allowance. There is no need to but if you would like you may stitch the seam allowance down following the directions in step 7 and 8.

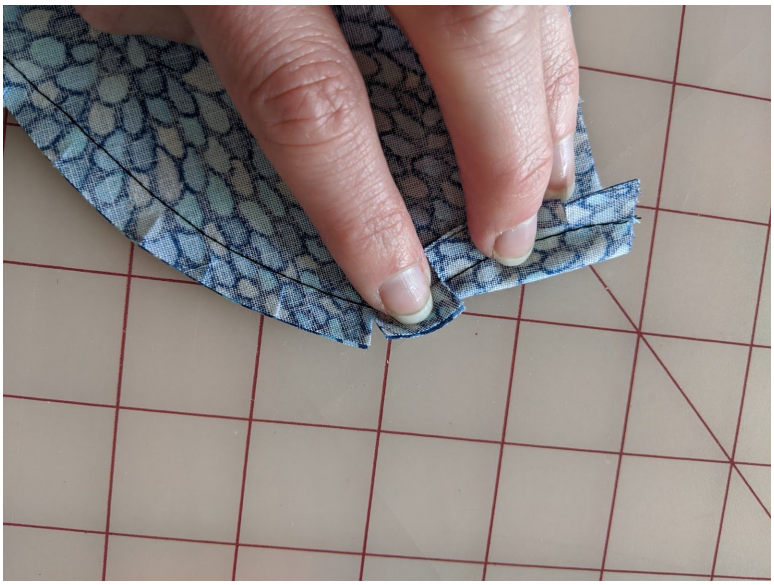


5. Open the joined pieces and fold&press each end in twice, sew along the edge effectively rolling the open end inside to avoid unraveling.

6. Take the two long pieces right-sides-together and sew along the largest curve. Using your sewing foot as a guide with the needle in the rightmost position will give you the desired ¼” seam allowance.



7. Snip the seam allowance (the small edge you created when sewing the last step) into a large fringe. This will enable the curve to form properly later on.



8. Open the two joined pieces and fold the seam allowance to one side. Lining your needle up along the middle of this portion and holding the fabric smooth with both hands, sew the seam allowance in place.

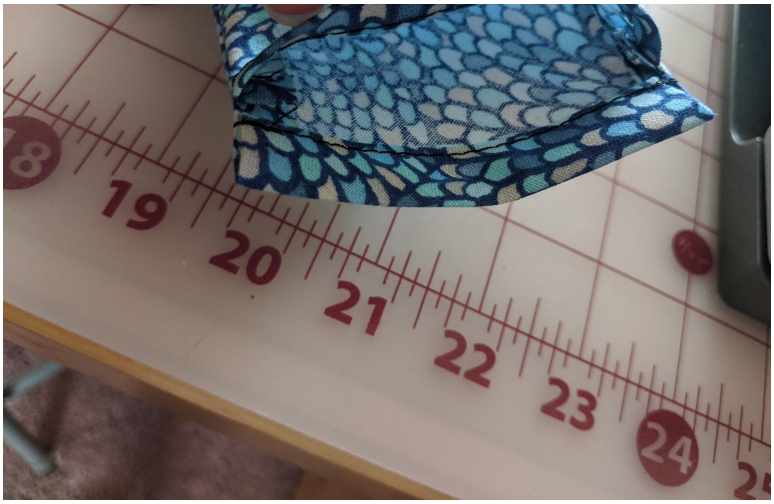
9. Place the two new pieces you have created right-sides-together with the top and bottom seams lined up. With your needle in the rightmost position, line your fabric up with the edge of the foot and sew across the top and again across the bottom of the two pieces. Make sure the edges stay lined up. A quilting clip or pin can be used to keep the pieces lined up.

10. Clip the point following the curve of the mask making sure not to clip the stitches.

11. Turn the mask right-sides-out and press to smooth.

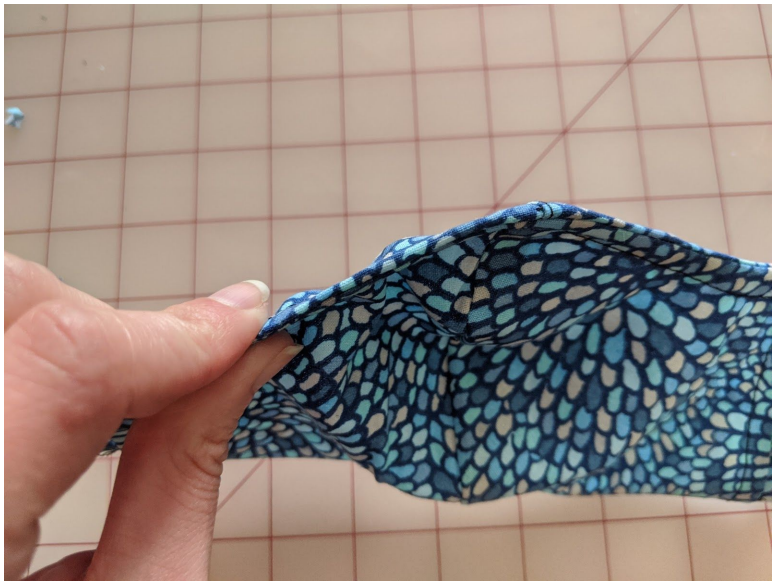
12. Placing the fabric at the edge of your foot and with the needle in the rightmost position sew a channel across the entire top of the mask.

13. Fold&press and then fold&press the remaining unfinished edges so they almost touch the pocket and sew in place. This creates the channel for the elastic or straps.

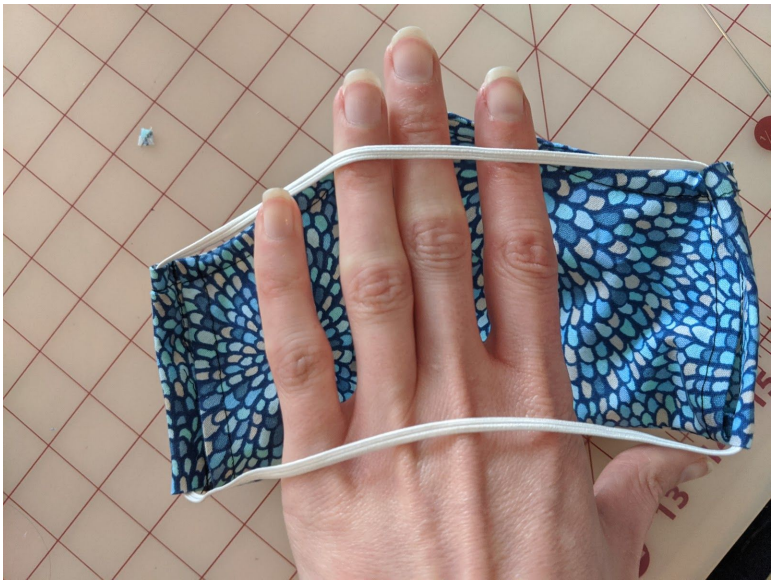


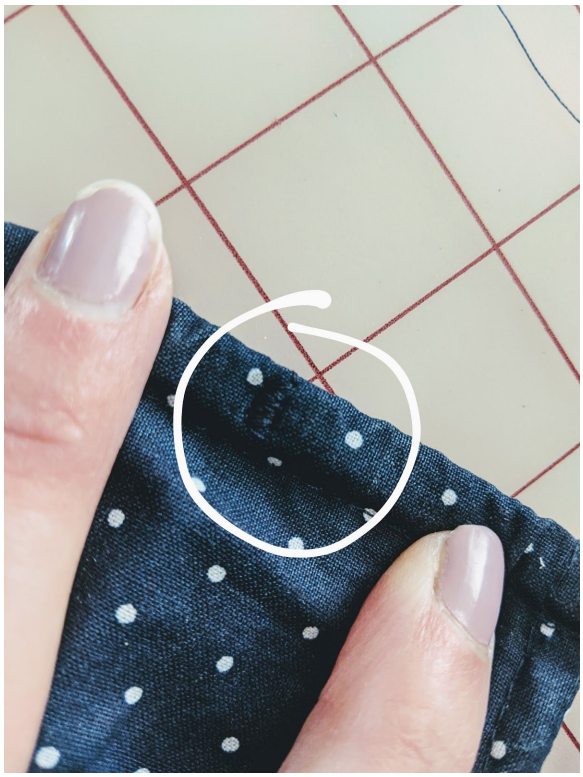
Optional Elastic and Wire

1. If you have wire you will cut a length of it to fit from edge-of-pocket to edge-of-pocket. Bend the end s into loops so it does not poke through the fabric. Sew the edges of the channel shut after inserting.



2. If you are using elastic, thread 16 inches of ⅛ inch or 22 inches of ⅜ inch elastic through both ends of the mask and sew the two cut ends together to make one complete loop using a stretch stitch of your choice. The thicker the elastic the longer the string needs to be. I tack the joint on one side of the mask, inside, to allow for ease of adjustment. If you have a different size of elastic you will need to experiment with what fits over the head. (Fabric Strap Next Page).





If you are making a fabric strap, please make it 40” long and insert it like an upside down U through both sides and knot the ends.