

Important Tips for Sewn Mask Making

I am of certain convinced that the greatest heroes are those who do their duty in the daily grind of domestic affairs whilst the world whirls as a maddening dreidel. – Florence Nightingale

First and foremost, THANK YOU so much for your interest and efforts making masks!

These tips for mask making are based on the work I have been doing with an Allina Health Employee Safety Specialist, combined with what I have learned from my own experience sewing masks and experiences shared by my colleagues. I hope you find this resource helpful. I am proud to be part of such a resourceful and caring community. -Alicia M. Wold

Matching the request for donations with what is being donated helps streamline the process of providing PPE to those in need, as well as helping match PPE styles to PPE uses. Streamlined processing of PPE donations is of particularly important for donations intended for use by medical personnel. Please supply the mask style requested by the organization to which you are donating.

There are **many** different organizations and groups requesting hand sewn masks of varying styles and sizes.

If you are interested in donating masks to a specific organization/group/effort:

- PLEASE check to see what they are specifically requesting and if they have resources, such as patterns, that they would like used.

If you are interested in making a specific style of mask:

- PLEASE research what organizations/groups/efforts have specific donation requests and donate your masks to a resource that is requesting masks that match the style you are making.
 - Many resources requesting mask donations have pattern links available on their websites.

Focus on Quality over Quantity.

One of the potential benefits of hand sewn masks is the ability to clean and reuse them. Making sure your mask can withstand wear and tear is important.

Many of these masks will need to withstand Industrial Washing and Sanitizing, particularly if they are intended for use by medical personnel or patients. To help ensure masks can withstand the washing process and can continue to be of use, please DO the following:

- Pre-wash your materials with HOT water and dry them on the HOT setting. This includes elastics, which can be laundered in a lingerie bag to help prevent tangling.
- If you are able, complete a 2nd wash on completed masks and look them over for quality and wear prior to donation.

The next section focuses on specific suggestions for materials & methods. It includes some photo examples of donations that have come in for repair. Again, please work to specific instructions of whatever resource you are looking to donate to. While many alterations to patterns may not seem like that big of a deal, one must assume that the specifications are there for a reason. In the moment where there is a strong movement to help and pitch in for a cause, *how* we help can be just as important as our willingness to help.

Important Tips for Sewn Mask Making

Tips for Fabric Selection –

- Use only type of fabric specified by the pattern you are using.
- Use fabrics with different appearances inside/outside of your masks, i.e. two different prints or colors.
 - This can help the user establish an “inside” and “outside” of a mask.
 - A strong visual distinction allows this to happen quickly and confidently.
- When selecting a fabric, think about how the mask is used.
 - If you have a print or material that has a rougher texture or hand, try to pair it with a softer fabric for the other side.
 - If you wouldn't want it on your face for 8+ hours, maybe consider what other fabric you have available to use first. Different textile printing techniques can affect how the fabric feels.

A Statement on Wired Nose Pieces –

- DO NOT add these to masks for large group distribution, specifically for medical personnel!
 - More detail on this at the end.

Tips for Using Elastic –

- Please use the recommended 1/8” flat elastic or elastic cord, or the specific elastic indicated in the pattern you are using.
 - DO NOT make substitutions or alterations to the suggested elastic unless there are substitutions indicated by the resource you are donating to.
 - DO NOT cut elastic lengthwise to achieve the requested narrow width.
Doing this leaves unfinished elastic, which is a problem not only in the wash, but other areas as well.
 - DO NOT crochet elastic thread to make a larger cord. It does not hold up in the wash
- Prior to installing elastic on your mask, test your elastic to be sure it is still viable
 - Give it a good tug to be sure it holds up and springs back.
- Use only one type of elastic per mask.
 - Many of us are working through our supply stocks. While it may be tempting to mix and match elastic to get just one more mask done, please do not.
- Please pay attention to the direction you pattern calls for the elastic to be inserted. Follow you pattern.
- Be sure the elastic ends are securely caught in the corners of the mask.
 - When you have finished your mask, pull firmly on the elastics to be sure they are well attached.



Important Tips for Sewn Mask Making

Tips for Using Ties –

- Each tie should be 18” long or the length specified in the pattern you are using.
- Use only the materials suggest by the pattern you are using.
- Be sure the ends of your ties are securely caught in the corners of the mask.
 - When you have finished your mask, pull firmly on the ties to be sure they are well attached.
 - If the pattern calls for the tie to be inserted through a side casing be sure to stitch the tie in place so it does not get lost in the laundry.
- Finish the “free end” of the ties to avoid unraveling in laundering.
 - If you are using Cloth
 - Double fold the end and stitch in place
 - Tie a small, tight, knot in the end of your tie
 - Follow the directions of the pattern you are using
 - Take a final look over your ties to be sure there are no raw edges.
 - If you are using Ribbon
 - Heat seal it with a flame and tie end in a knot.
 - Double fold the end and stitch in place



A Statement on Wired Nose Pieces –

- DO NOT add these to masks for large group distribution, specifically for medical personnel!
 - The odds are high that they will not hold up in industrial laundry-the ends will begin to poke out or rust.
 - The metal type cannot be verified and may create an additional hazard.
 - Adding a wired nose piece can easily render the mask unusable in many settings.

(PHOTOS NEXT PAGE)

Important Tips for Sewn Mask Making

Wires migrated during laundry process.



Assortment of wires used – no way to know metal content.



Once again-

- Please focus on Quality over Quantity.
- If you can, wash your batch of masks and give them a quality check prior to donation.

THANK YOU!