

## Fitted Face Mask

The Government has now advised the wearing of face coverings to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 in some circumstances. For advanced stitchers, we offer the below DIY solution to the fitted mask and for those less adept at sewing, check out our [easy sew, folded face covering](#).



This mask is shaped to fit the contours of your face and is held in place by elastic around the ears and a piece of wire across the bridge of the nose to ensure a snug fit.

### Before you begin

The Government has now advised the wearing of face coverings to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 in some circumstances. "Face coverings are not intended to help the wearer but protect against inadvertent transmission of the disease to others if you have it asymptotically."

**CAUTION:** These face coverings are recommended for **PERSONAL use** only and are **not suitable for healthcare professionals**, who need to wear certified PPE masks, which are in short supply. These masks are not suitable for donation to health or care services. Face coverings should not be used by children under the age of 2 or those who may find it difficult to manage them correctly. For example, primary age children unassisted, or those with respiratory conditions. Further details of the Government guidelines can be found online.

### What is the best fabric to use for your face coverings?

One of the biggest challenges is finding a suitable fabric to make your mask from. It needs to be one that is dense enough to catch viral particles, but still be breathable so that you can wear it! The best fabric to make your face covering from is a tightly woven, 100% cotton fabric, such as craft cotton, used for by patchwork and quilting, bed sheets, curtains or even old shirts, as long as they are entirely made of cotton.

One of the best ways to check whether your fabric is dense enough for the job is to hold a piece of doubled-fabric up to a bright light and if you can easily see the fibres in the fabric, then it's not suitable, if it's a denser weave and the light doesn't pass through it as much, then that's a good one to use. For this reason, jersey fabrics, such as T-shirts are not the best, as they create holes between the threads when they stretch, which can allow the virus to pass through.

Always prewash your selected fabrics in a hot wash to pre-shrink the material to ensure that they do not change shape when they are made up and washed. However, if you only have cotton t-shirt fabric available, although not ideal, this would be better to use than nothing at all.

### Hygiene

Another reason for using a good quality cotton fabric is that 100% cotton can be washed at a 60-degree wash, which is hot enough to kill bacteria. Hygiene is very important when using any face covering and the Government has stated that, "It is important to use face-coverings properly and wash your hands before putting them on and taking them off."

## You will need

**Skill level:** Intermediate/Advanced

**Sizing:** Adult (One-size fits all)

- Fitted Face Mask template. *Note: Make sure to print this template at 100% on A4 paper.*
- 100% tightly woven fabric – see the section on selecting the best fabric, above
- A narrow strip of iron-on interfacing or iron-on edge tape (*Optional* – to cover up the holes in the stitched centre seam)
- Soft shirring elastic or similar – *Note: We experimented with hair elastics but found them to be too strong to wear around the ears, but if this is all you have available, then these will work*
- Bias binding
- 6cm length of wire – use a piece of covered 'Soft-tie' garden wire (for delicate plants), or a chenille stick/pipe cleaner
- Matching sewing threads
- Sewing machine
- Scissors
- Iron
- Bodkin or safety pin
- Towel
- Pins
- Tape Measure

## To make

**Note:** A 1cm seam allowance is used throughout these instructions and all seams are sewn with right sides together unless otherwise stated.



1. Print out the Fitted Face Mask template at 100%. Cut out and pin the template to a piece of doubled fabric and cut out two pairs. Remove pins and the template.



2. Pin and stitch each pair of fabric pieces together along their outer curved edge, as shown. Remove pins.



3. Clip small 'V' shapes out of the seam allowances along the curved edge, making sure that you do not snip into the line of stitches. This will help you to create a smooth curved seam.



4. Using a small rolled-up towel to help you, carefully press open the seam allowances on each seamed piece.



**5. Optional** - if you want to add extra protection to your mask by covering up the holes between the stitches in your central seam, press a strip of iron-on interfacing over the seam allowances on one pair of joined pieces. Use the rolled-up towel again to help you and make sure that you don't get any tucks in the fabric. If you do not want to add this, move straight on to step 6.



6. Matching the central seams, pin the two pairs together along the top curved edge (a) and then sew pieces together, reverse stitching at each end to secure. Remove the pins (b).



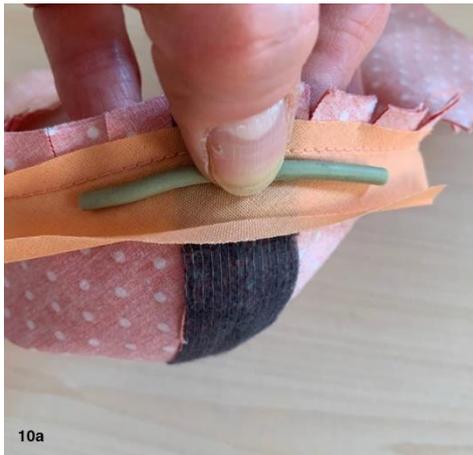
7. Matching the central seams again, pin the two pairs together along the lower edge and sew pieces together, reverse stitching at each end to secure. Remove the pins.



8. Snip into the top edge curved seam allowances, taking care not to snip the stitches.



9. Cut a 10cm length of bias binding. Open out one folded edge and place it centrally across the central seam, pin the foldline along the top curved stitching line, as shown (a). Sew the binding in place along the foldline and remove the pins (b).



10. Cut a 6cm length of soft-covered wire or chenille stick. Open out the second fold on the bias binding and place the wire on top, as shown (a). Fold the binding strip over to enclose the wire and pin in place, keeping raw edges level (b).



11. Stitch the binding in place close to the edge, enclosing the wire and removing the pins as you stitch. Finally, stitch across the open ends of the binding, just inside the seam allowances to keep the wire from slipping out at either end.



12. Turn the mask right side out through one of the open sides and press the seamed edges flat. If desired, edgestitch the top and bottom of the mask for a neat finish.



13. Press the open side edges 1cm to the wrong side (a), then press over a further 1cm and stitch the hems in place, reverse stitching at each end to secure. Cut two lengths of shirring elastic 18cm long (b).



14. Thread a length of elastic through each side channel using a bodkin or safety pin (a). Knot the ends together, trying on the mask to adjust fit if necessary (b). When happy with the fit, pull the elastic knot around to hide the ends in the channel.

15. Your mask is now ready to wear. We suggest that you make several of them so that you will always have one to wear when the others are in the wash!



**Note:** this mask is suitable for those who wear spectacles and also works with over the ear hearing aids too.

### **Additional Button Band**

If you also wish to make a button band to go across the back of your head to take the pressure of the elastic off your ears, please see our **Button Band project**.



**Project:** Jane Bolsover, Craft Consultant, NFWI