

# How to Make a Pleated Facemask with a Filter Pocket

**Tightly-woven cotton (quilting fabric, batik, or cotton sheet fabric) is best.** This tougher, quilting-style fabric holds up better under multiple washes. Test your fabric by folding it in half and hold it up to the light, with this double thickness, you should not be able to see the weave of the fabric.

Wash the fabric in hot water before cutting it and wash masks after making them. It is best to use unscented detergent as people wearing the masks may have allergies.

Keep in mind that facemasks have to be breathable and **you have to wash them every time you wear them in public.** The CDC also notes that your mask should have multiple layers of fabric.

## Easy to Sew® Pleated Face Mask with a Filter Pocket

These instructions are for an easy to sew **pleated surgical mask.**

An instruction video <https://youtu.be/BCJcE-r7kcg> on YouTube shows you step-by-step how to make the mask.

To find the video, search “HOW TO MAKE FACE MASK WITH FILTER POCKET AND ADJUSTABLE WIRE SEWING TUTORIAL” on Easy to Sew ® site.

### SUPPLIES:

- **1, 15”x7-1/2” piece of tightly woven fabric** such as, duck cloth, canvas, or a high-quality quilter’s cotton fabric, tight enough that you can’t see the weave when you hold up a doubled over piece to the light.
- **1 coated wire 4”-6”**; you can use 16-20 gauge floral wire or jewelry wire (no paper twist ties – as they will not stand up to washing). You can use needle nose pliers to make a small loop on both ends of the wires so they don’t poke.
- **2, 2”x4” fabric pieces for ear strap casing**; can be from straight-of-grain strips for the ear strap casing or extra wide double fold bias tape\* (can be purchased or *you can easily make it yourself with instructions below*).
- **2, 10” pieces of soft braided elastic for ear loops**, 1/8” to 1/4”  
For the elastic, please consider that the mask is going to be worn for hours or days on end and hard elastic will hurt the ears. Lingerie elastic is softer, or you can make your own straps from cotton or knit fabric (washed in hot water 1st for shrinkage). Cut 1-1/4”x 36” long for each side, fold ends into the center and fold in half again, stitch along the edge and secure ends by backstitching (same method as making your tape\*).

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## INSTRUCTIONS FOR SEWING FACEMASK:

1. Serge or zig-zag stitch the short (7.5") sides of the fabric.
2. Fold the fabric in half, matching short sides, with the right sides of the fabric together.
3. Mark 1-½" in from each side of the serged/zigzagged edges.
4. Sew a ¼" seam from each 1-½" marking to the outer edge of the fabric on both sides, backstitching at both ends of the stitching to secure the seam. This will leave an opening in the middle.
5. Press seams and gap edges open.
6. Turn right side out and topstitch across the bottom seam and gap.
7. Mark ½" in on both edges of the seam side not topstitched.
8. Fold across the width of the mask using the ½ inch marks and press.
9. Topstitch across the top of the folded edge and then all the way around the mask edges.
10. Center the wire on top of the folded edge, above the gap opening, and mark the fabric on either side of the wire. Stitch a vertical line between the fold and seam large enough to hold the wire.
11. Insert the coated wire and center it in the top folded edge next to the gap opening.
12. Stitch across the gap seam securing the coated wire in the fold. You can stitch 1" from the ends to keep the wire from shifting, but don't stitch over the wire as you might break a needle, or worse.
13. With the gap opening up and facing you, make pleats any size you'd like folding them toward the gap. The pleats should face down on the front side. Start the 1st pleat at 1-1/2" from the top and every 5/8 " make a 5/8" pleat (3 pleats total) like in the video.
14. Stitch across ends of the pleats to secure (less than ¼" seam).
15. Sew the 2"X 4" ear strap casing to both sides of the pleated ends with one of these methods:
  - As in the video, match and pin the raw edge of the casing to the raw edge of the pleated side, fold a ¼" over onto the backside at each end, pin, and stitch a ¼" seam, backstitching at the beginning and end of the seam. Pull out casing piece away from the seam, you can use a regular glue stick to hold the ¼" folds in place, fold the raw edge of the casing under half-way, and fold again matching to the previously sewn seam covering the raw edges, pin, and stitch close to the folded edge, backstitching at the beginning and end.
  - Or**
  - Fold under the raw end of the tape\* on both ends so there isn't a raw end of bias tape showing (you can use a regular glue stick to hold the raw end in place). Place over the raw pleated edge, pin, and stitched close to the folded edge, backstitching at the beginning and end of the seam.
16. Insert a 10" elastic piece through the ear strap casing. Knot the elastic, do not trim ends of the elastic knot so the elastic can be adjusted to suit the user. Once adjusted to the user, pull the knot into the ear strap casing to hide the knot.

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*If using fabric straps instead of elastic, pull the strap through the casing using a safety pin or bodkin, then knot each end of the strap so they don't slip back through the casing.*

The straps should be long enough to tie behind the head instead of the ears (keeps ears from getting sore).

## HOW TO MAKE YOUR OWN TAPE\*:

Cut a 2" strip of cotton or cotton-blend fabric that is more than twice as long as the top length of the mask.

\*For this project, the strip can be cut along the straight-of-grain, not the bias.

To make the tape:

- Using an iron and pressing as you go, fold the strip in half lengthwise. This will result in an approx. 1" wide strip of fabric.
- Open the fabric. You will see the crease down the center.
- Fold one side over to meet the crease. Press along the folded edge.
- Now, fold the other side to the center crease and press along the fold. You will once again have a one-inch wide strip – with the raw edges not quite touching in the center crease.
- Fold the one-inch strip in half (along the center crease) so that the raw edges are folded inward and you are left with a ½ strip with folded edge.

If you'd like to make a bias strip, click here for instructions on how to cut and sew bias strips together, then follow instructions above to make the casing.

<https://theseamanmom.com/how-to-make-bias-tape/>

## Making Ear Savers:

If you don't have straps long enough to tie behind your head, you can make an Ear Saver to eliminate the ears hurting from wearing the facemask for a long time. This can be a fabric headband with buttons sew on to loop the elastic around, or a piece of ribbon with a button sewn to each end for the elastic to go around.

