

# Pearls

by LEE & PEARL™

Pattern diagram and directions for batch making five or more three-fold rectangular fabric FACE MASKS at one time.

Two-layer design includes fabric ties, optional nose wire pocket and **NO-GAP STRAP** for a close fit over the nose.

Detailed, photo-illustrated directions, and descriptions of all techniques and tools.

#100

**Face Masks**

with **No-Gap Straps, Fabric Ties** and **Nose Wire Pockets**

\*  
**NO-GAP STRAP**

# Fabric Face Masks with No-Gap Straps

We know that there are literally hundreds of mask patterns currently available for free on the internet. And we salute all the designers and home sewers who have been part of this extraordinary mask-making effort. So with all these options to choose from, why should you try THIS mask pattern?

## Because this one fits.

Our design preserves what is best about the three-pleat style of mask — the ease of construction and the ability to fit a range of face sizes — while significantly improving the fit and minimizing air leakage around the edges.

The challenge in closely fitting a rectangular mask to the human face is clear — a rectangle is straight and flat while our faces have lots of curves and bumps. The standard solution involves two design features: (1) elastic or ties that hold the mask tightly to the face, and (2) bendable wires in pockets along the top of the mask that can be shaped to curve over the bridge of the nose.

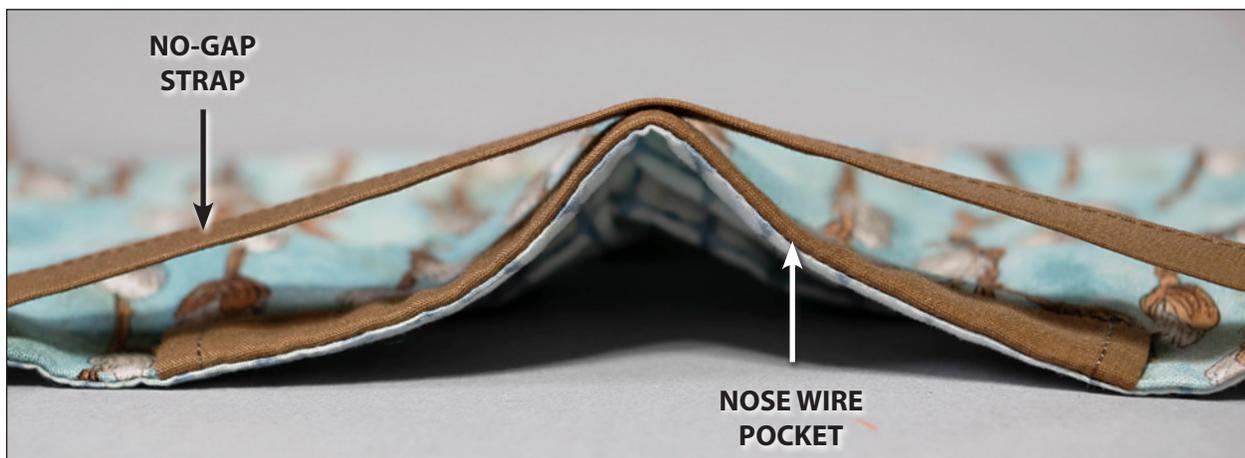
Our pattern includes both of these elements, but it adds **one more unique design feature** that solves an inherent contradiction between the two.

Think about it — unless your wire is very thick and heavy, any tension that you apply to the mask with the elastic or ties is going to pull that wire straight again. The tighter you pull the mask to fit at the cheeks and chin, the further it will pull away from the curve over your nose. If you wear glasses you know what we mean. Even if the mask fits when you first put it on, over time the wire gets pulled straight and your glasses start to fog up.

## This pattern fixes that problem with the addition of a separate NO-GAP STRAP.

Our revolutionary NO-GAP STRAP is an extra strap, cut slightly shorter than the mask and attached across the top of the mask at the side edges only.

With the no-gap strap in place, you can tie the mask firmly behind your head, creating a close fit at the sides, under the chin and right at the bridge of the nose — while the fabric underneath the strap still has enough ease to conform to the curved shape of your nose. We recommend including our OPTIONAL nose wire pocket and nose wire, but that wire doesn't have to be very heavy. Thanks to the no-gap strap, the wire just holds the curve in soft fabric, and isn't itself under any tension.



*And here's a tip — even if you don't wind up using our pattern because you already like the fit or construction of a different pattern, it's easy to add the NO-GAP STRAP design feature to lots of different face mask patterns. And we're thrilled if you choose to do so!*



**This pattern addresses another fit issue by stacking the top two pleats.**

Your face isn't evenly curved, so why make a mask with three evenly spaced pleats? What you really need is one bottom pleat to fit over the chin — and then two pleats on top for the nose. So we've stacked the middle and top pleats together at the top for a more comfortable fit over the nose.

**We've also tailored our instructions for batch-processing multiple masks at once to save precious time and materials.**

No one needs just one mask, so we've worked out simplified directions for measuring, cutting and sewing multiple masks at the same time. Whizz through a whole stack of our masks — while saving fabric by cutting or ripping the pieces from full-width strips, with almost no waste.



**Finally, our pattern includes popular features like different FRONT and BACK fabrics so that wearers will always know which side should be the outside and which the inside — and binding strips that extend into fabric ties for an easy-to-wash and comfortable-to-wear finished product!**

We recommend that you read the directions at least once through before making the face masks. If you have any questions, feel free to contact us at [info@leeandpearl.com](mailto:info@leeandpearl.com).



### **When is it appropriate to wear a cloth face mask?**

The following recommendations are taken from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) publications, *Recommendation Regarding the Use of Cloth Face Coverings, Especially in Areas of Significant Community-Based Transmission*, and *Use of Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread of Covid-19*.

These references are not intended to replace your own understanding of best practice. They are provided with the understanding that they represent the current CDC guidelines as of the time of their publication. It is your responsibility to ascertain what is best practice at the time you are making or wearing a mask. No claims are made by Lee & Pearl or by any individuals as to the efficacy or superiority of the masks made using this pattern:

"The CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g. grocery stores and pharmacies) **especially** in areas of significant community-based transmission [of SARS COV-2/COVID-19]." (*emphasis in the original*)

"It is critical to emphasize that maintaining 6-foot-social distancing remains important to slowing the spread of the virus. CDC is additionally advising the use of simple cloth face coverings to slow the spread of the virus and to help people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others. Cloth face coverings fashioned from household items or made at home from common materials at low cost can be used as an additional, voluntary public health measure."

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html>

### **The CDC has also provided guidance for removing and cleaning a cloth mask.**

To safely remove the mask after wearing, the CDC recommends:

"Individuals should be careful not to touch their eyes, nose, and mouth when removing their cloth face covering and wash hands immediately after removing."

To launder the mask, the CDC recommends:

"They should be routinely washed depending on the frequency of use."

"A washing machine should suffice in properly washing a cloth face covering."

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>

## Materials

*Our directions — and the materials list that follows — are for batch-making FIVE 8" wide x 8" long masks at one time. We have found that 8" x 8" masks are a fairly flexible MEDIUM size for adult women and men.*

*If you want to cut and sew more than five masks at a time, multiply the amounts below. Twice the length of each material will make ten masks, three times the length will make fifteen, and so on.*

- 8" length x full width — tightly-woven plain weave cotton **fabric** for the FRONT of the masks
- 8" length x full width — tightly-woven plain weave cotton **fabric** for the BACK of the masks
- 20" length x full width — plain weave cotton or cotton/polyester blend **fabric** for the FABRIC TIES, NO-GAP STRAP and *OPTIONAL* NOSE WIRE POCKET. This fabric can be lighter weight and more loosely woven than the front and back fabrics.
- Matching **thread** (thread should match the strap & ties fabric)
- *OPTIONAL* — your choice of **nose wires**

## Required Tools

- **Sewing Machine** with a standard straight stitch. We strongly recommend a **1/4" quilting foot**, or a clear foot with 1/4" guides, so you don't have to mark or eyeball the 1/4" seams. We also recommend an **edgestitch foot** for topstitching the no-gap strap and ties, though this is less essential.
- **Sewing Machine Needles.** We use high quality universal needles for just about everything. Use smaller gauge needles on delicate fabrics and larger gauges on heavier fabrics. In general, 80/12 is a good needle for ordinary woven cottons, though it's good to keep a range from 70/10 to 90/14 on hand for most standard sewing.

*NOTE: If your sewing machine is throwing loops or puckering, you probably need a new needle. If your needle is bent or the tip feels rough — change it!*

- **Steam Iron and Ironing Board.**
- Sharp Fabric **Scissors.** We keep both large shears and small embroidery clippers on hand.
- **Pins or Wonder Clips.**
- **Ruler.**
- **Chalk Pencils** in a range of colors, or other erasable/disappearing fabric markers.
- **Cardboard or heavy cardstock** to create a pleating guide, and a writing **pen or pencils.**

- Your choice of **Bias Tape Maker**. We are using a 1" bias tape tool, and then folding the resulting 1" tape down the middle to make 1/2" (non-bias) binding tape.
- **Seam Ripper**. When you need one, you need one. We hope that you never will.

## Optional Tools

- See-through, acrylic **Quilting Ruler**. Our favorite is 4 inches x 14 inches, but any size will do. Once you've tried a see-through ruler, you'll never go back.
- A **Rotary Cutter** and a **Self-Healing Cutting Mat**. Though we advise cutting most of the fabric pieces by simply ripping them, for neatly trimming fabric along a ruler edge, we often use a rotary cutter. Please be careful using such cutters as they are razor sharp.
- 3" long **Hem Clips** or **Duckbill Hair Clips** (*shown below*) to hold the pleats and no-gap straps in place while attaching the binding.



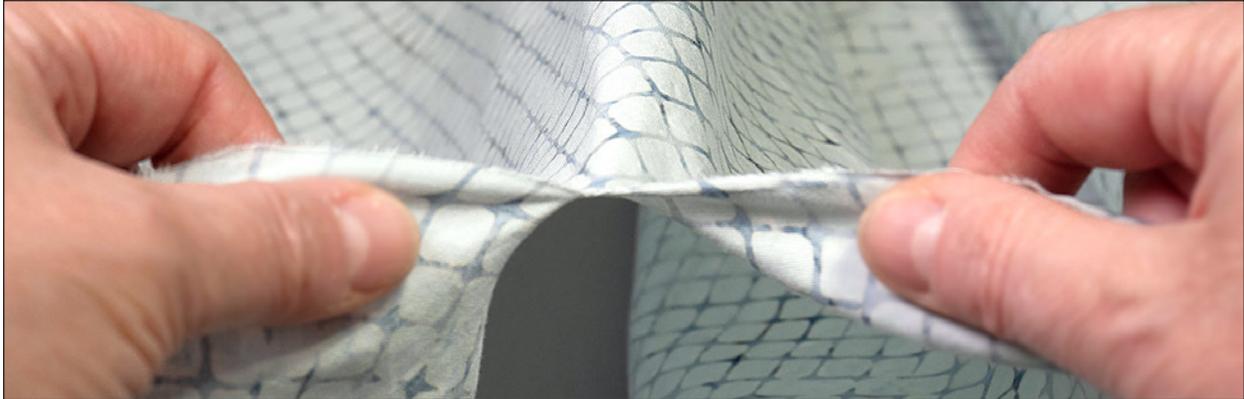
- **Heat Resistant Glove** or **Finger Protectors**. There's a lot of pressing in this pattern. Make it easier on your fingers — get some heat-resistant finger protection. Lightweight, flexible finger protectors can be found individually, in sets of three (*shown above*) and as gloves in sewing and craft supply stores and as curling iron accessories in health and beauty stores.
- A padded **Sleeve Board** ironing accessory will make turning the long seamed mask piece right side out a breeze out in Step 6.

## General Techniques

**CUT** or **RIP**. There are no printable patterns in this document. All the fabric pieces are cut — or ripped — directly from the fabric using the measurements or diagrams provided.

You can mark the pieces with a ruler and chalk pencil or other erasable fabric marker and then cut along the marks with sharp fabric scissors or a rotary cutter. But for speed and accuracy, we prefer to **rip** each piece of fabric instead.

To rip fabric, mark your desired measurement on one selvage edge, then make a 1 – 2" cut at that mark. With one in each hand, sharply pull the edges away from each other. Plain woven cotton fabric should rip cleanly, though you may want to rip only as far as the opposite selvage edge, and then use scissors to clip the pieces apart.



To get your ripped pieces sewing-ready, pull away any loose threads and press the slightly wavy ripped edges flat.

**BASTE.** Seams that need to fit exactly or are difficult to feed through a machine while pinned can be temporarily set and checked by stitching with very long hand or machine stitches. Remove basting stitches after the seam has been stitched, if possible.

**STITCH.** All seam allowances are 1/4" unless otherwise noted. **DO NOT** sew over pins or clips. Either pin at a safe distance inside the seam line, or remove the pins and clips before you reach them with your machine.

You may have been taught to stitch back and forth at the start and finish of each seam to anchor your stitches. This is a good habit, but here's a little secret: you do not have to anchor any seam that will be crossed by a later seam. Don't worry, we'll let you know in the pattern directions when you **DO** need to anchor a particular seam.

**PRESS.** Make sure that the temperature setting on your iron matches the fiber content of your fabric. Give the iron plenty of time to warm up so it won't spit or leak. Always test-press a scrap of your fabric before you start, and press delicate fabrics on the wrong side whenever possible. Let your fabric cool on the ironing board after you have pressed it. If you don't let the fabric cool at least a little, it might re-wrinkle or lose the shape you just pressed it into when you move it.

Pressing is important: if the pattern directs you to "press," do not skip the step.

**TOPSTITCH.** A standard straight stitch, sewn from the right side of the fabric as a finishing element, either for decorative purposes or to hold trim, pockets, facings or seam allowances in place. Topstitching remains visible in the finished garment, so be sure to use matching thread.

**EDGE STITCHING** is topstitching sewn right along a seam or turned edge. Though edgestitching is easy to do with a steady hand and an ordinary machine presser foot, an **edgestitch foot** makes the process even easier — and super neat!

# Directions

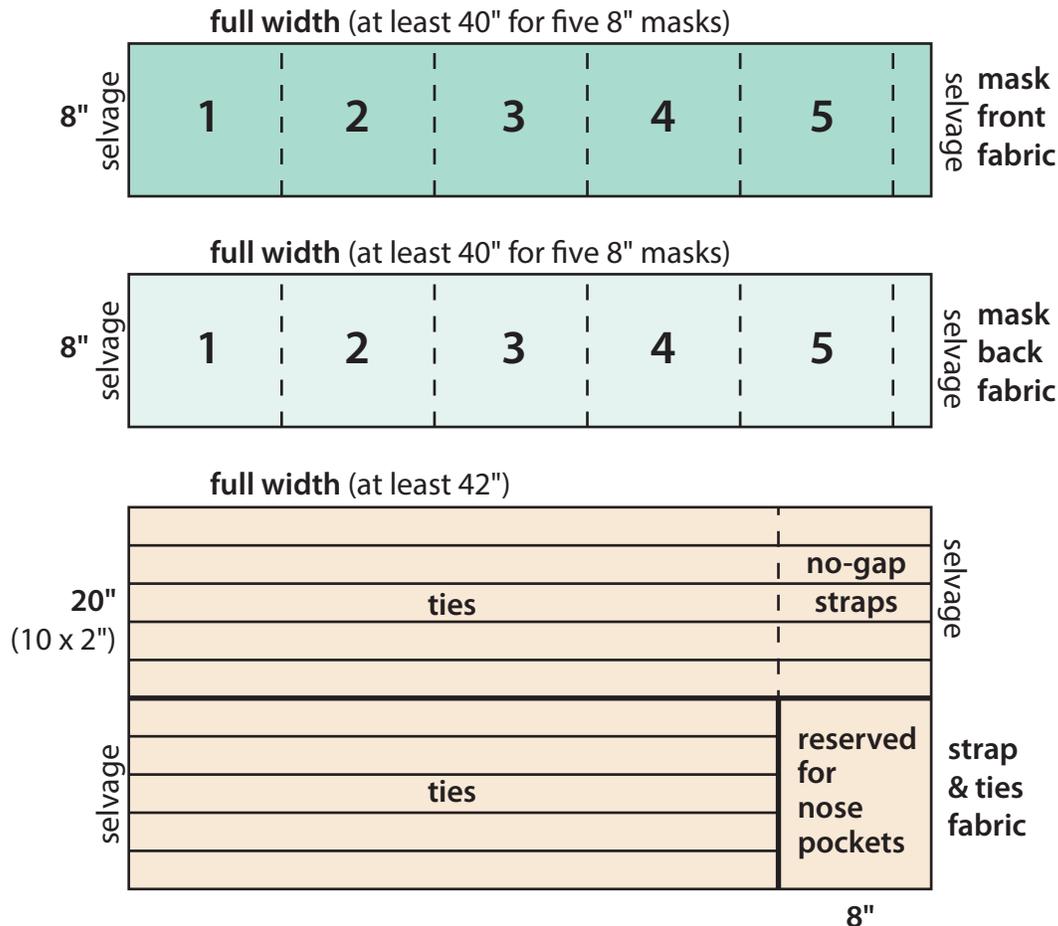
These are instructions for making **five masks at a time**, with **no-gap straps, fabric ties**, and **OPTIONAL nose wire pockets**.

1. Pre-wash your fabrics. If you plan to CUT the fabrics with scissors or a rotary cutter, PRESS the fabric flat and square before continuing. If you plan to save time by RIPPING as described on pages 5 and 6, save even more time by waiting to press until they are ripped.

If your fabrics have tightly woven selvage edges — as most cottons do — cut or rip them off as close to the edge as possible. Leave at least 40" of usable fabric width of the front and back fabrics, and at least 42" of the strap & ties fabric.

2. CUT or RIP the MASK FRONT, MASK BACK and STRAP & TIES materials.

The diagram below shows the different pieces and how they are cut from the full strips. Use this diagram for reference once you are familiar with the pattern — but please follow the full cutting directions on the next page at least the first few times you make the masks.



2. CONTINUED

CUT or RIP the MASK FRONT and MASK BACK materials as follows. Press these strips and set aside for now:

- ONE — 8" long x at least 40" wide strip of MASK FRONT material
- ONE — 8" long x at least 40" wide strip of MASK BACK material

CUT or RIP the STRAP & TIES material as follows:

- FIVE — 2" long x at least 42" wide strips of STRAP & TIES material
- ONE — 10" long x at least 42" wide strip of STRAP & TIES material

Further divide the 10" long strip by marking it 8" in from one end, and cutting or ripping across the width at that mark to create:

- ONE — 10" long x 8" wide piece
- ONE — 10" long x at least 34" wide strip

Further divide the 10" x at least 34" strip by cutting or ripping it to create:

- FIVE — 2" long x at least 34" wide strips.

Press all the 2" strips. FIVE should be at least 42" long and FIVE should be at least 34" long.



3. Fold and press the long edges of each 2" strip under 1/2" to create 1" folded strips.

*We used a 1" bias tape tool to do this, even though these tapes are not cut on the bias.*



Fold the resulting 1" strips in half to create 1/2" double fold binding tapes.

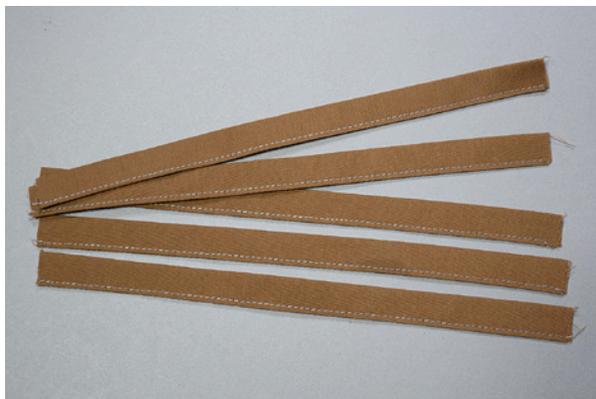
3. CONTINUED

Trim an 8" piece off each of the five longer binding tapes. You should now have TEN 34" (or longer) tapes to use as fabric ties, and FIVE 8" tapes to use as no-gap straps.



Fold each of the fabric tie tapes in half widthwise and press the fold. *This pressed crease will mark the midpoint when you attach the tapes in steps 9 and 10.*

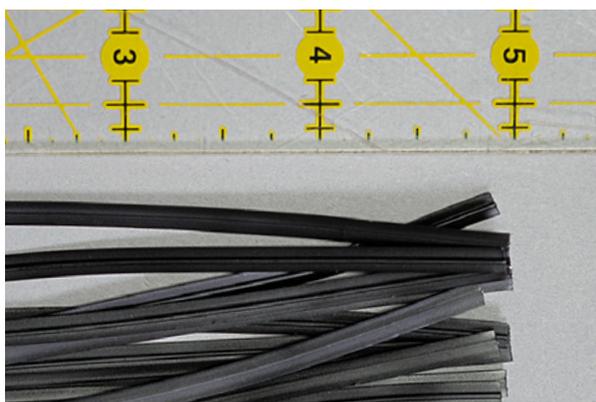
Set the fabric tie tapes aside for now.



TOPSTITCH or EDGESTITCH the long open edge of each 8" NO-GAP STRAP to close it.

Press. Set the no-gap straps aside for now.

*Here's a tip — the no-gap strap is a great place for monograms or machine embroidery motifs, a customization option that won't save any time, but can be fun if you're making masks for family members!*



4. **For masks without the OPTIONAL NOSE WIRE POCKETS, skip ahead to Step 6.**

For masks with the OPTIONAL NOSE WIRE POCKETS, measure the length of your intended nose wires.

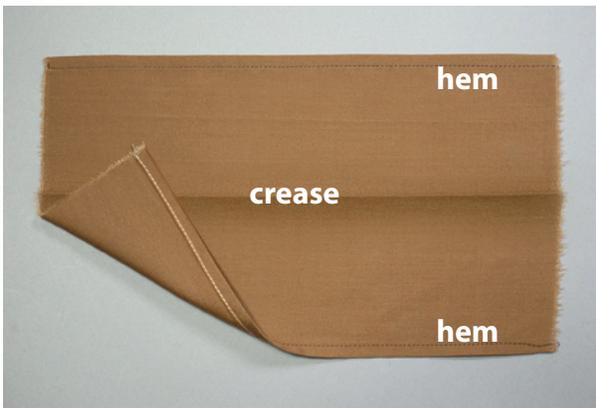
*We are using 5" long plastic coated wire twist ties that we purchased online.*



4. CONTINUED

Trim the 10" long x 8" wide remaining piece of strap & ties fabric to be 10" long x 1 1/4" longer than the nose wire.

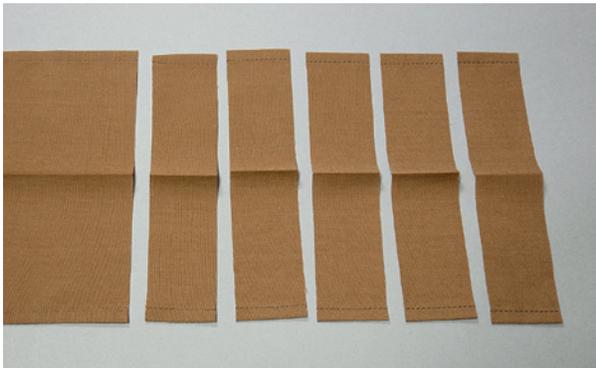
*For example, our twist ties are 5 inches long, so our piece is trimmed to 10" x 6 1/4".*



Hem both 10" edges by turning under 1/4" twice.

Topstitch or edgestitch right along the turned edge. The hemmed piece should now be only 1/4" wider than your intended nose wire.

Fold the strip in half with the finished edges together. Press the fold to mark the centerline with a crease and unfold.

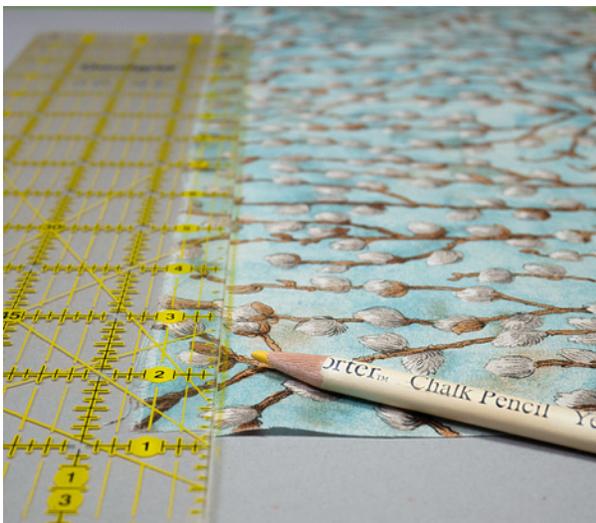


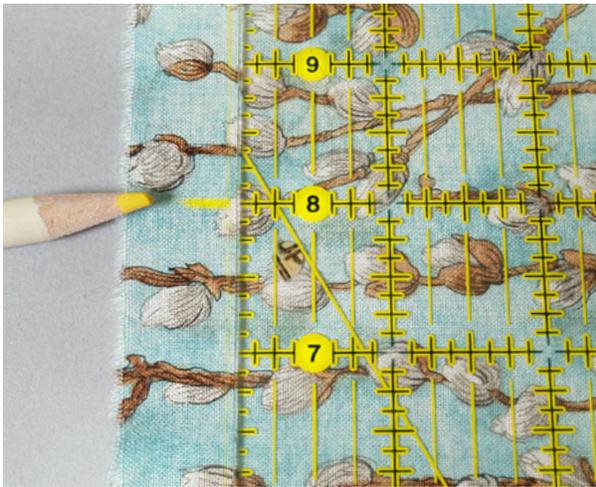
Decide how deep you want the finished nose wire pocket to be. *We have chosen a 5/8" deep pocket as that will accommodate a range of nose wire materials.*

Slice five pieces from your hemmed and folded strip that are your chosen depth plus 1/2". *For our chosen depth, that's 5/8" + 1/2" = 1 1/8".*

5. Lay the MASK FRONT strip right side up.

With a chalk pencil or other erasable marker, mark a nose wire pocket placement line across the full width of the strip, 5/8" below the top edge.





5. CONTINUED

Trim one short edge of the mask front strip neatly square.

From that edge, measure and mark every 8" across the full width of the nose wire pocket placement line. These marks will be your mask edges.

Double check your measurements, then draw a right angle line at the last mark and trim off any extra fabric.

**For five 8" wide masks, your front fabric strip should now be exactly 40" wide.**

*NOTE: 8" wide masks are a flexible MEDIUM size for adult women and men. If you want to change the dimensions of your masks to be narrower or wider, adjust the mask edge spacing accordingly. Be aware that if you make them longer than 8 5/8", you will need longer no-gap straps.*



Using a different color chalk pencil or marker, mark the 4" center of each mask on the placement line.



With right sides together, pin each nose wire pocket to the mask front, with the pocket top edge along the marked placement line.

Match the center crease on the pocket to the center mark of each mask.



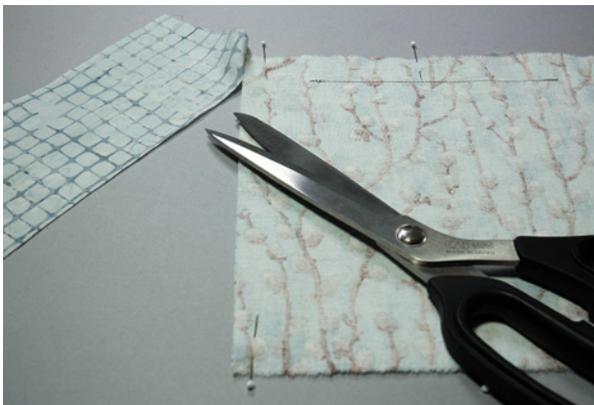
5. CONTINUED

Stitch each nose wire pocket to the mask front along the top edge, using a 1/4" seam line.

Stitch back and forth at each pocket edge to anchor the seams.



Press all the nose wire pockets up, so the unstitched edges align with the top edge of the fabric strip.



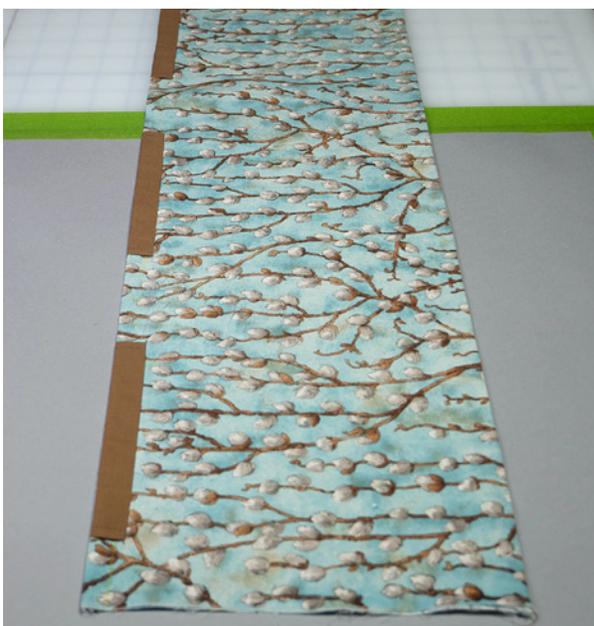
6. Pin the MASK BACK strip to the mask front strip along the top and bottom edges, right sides together.

Trim the mask back strip as needed to be the same width as the mask front (which should be 40" for five 8" masks).

Stitch the top and bottom seams, using a 1/4" seam allowance. Be sure to stitch the nose wire pocket edges into the top seam.

Turn the stitched tube right side out and press it flat.

*NOTE: we used a sleeve board to press the seams flat and seam allowances to one side first, before folding and pressing the edges.*





- There should still be visible marks on the front fabric marking the divisions between the masks. Fold the top edge over and transfer those marks to the BACK material.

Now let's mark the mask edges and the pleats in one easy step!

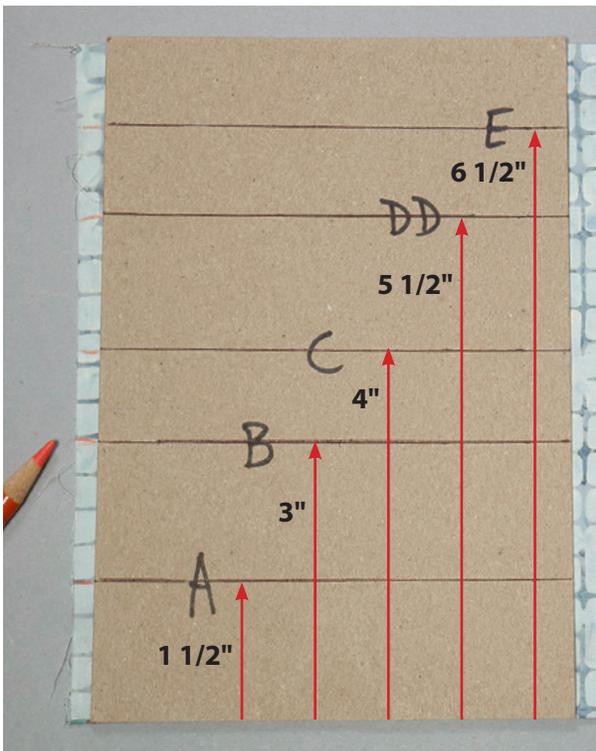
First, create a pleating guide from a rectangle of cardboard or cardstock at least 7 1/2" high.

Draw lines across the rectangle from the bottom up as follows:

- 1 1/2" from the bottom — label this line A
- 3" from the bottom — label this line B
- 4" from the bottom — label this line C
- 5 1/2" from the bottom — label this line DD
- 6 1/2" from the bottom — label this line E

Place the cardboard guide on the back of your mask strip, matching bottom edges and one side edge.

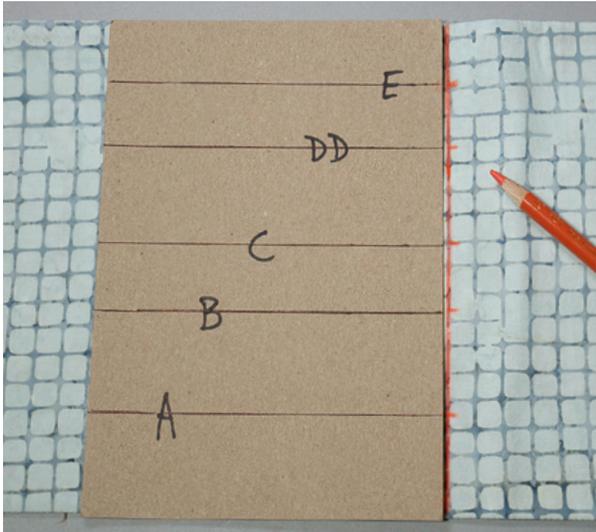
With a chalk pencil or other fabric marker, make a mark at each line — A through E.



Move the cardboard guide to the first mask division mark.

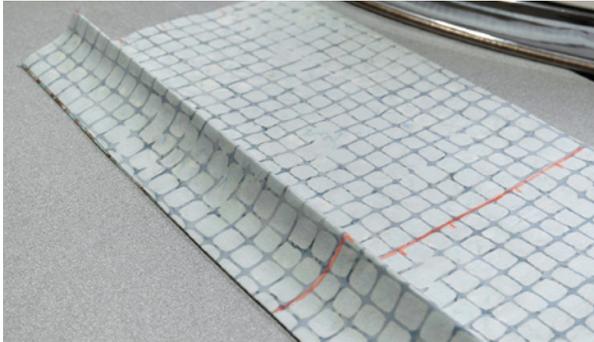
Use the cardboard edge to draw a line from top to bottom. Then cross it with marks at the A through E lines. You can be bold with these marks as they will be covered by the binding strips.

Repeat with each mask division line and also on the remaining mask strip edge.



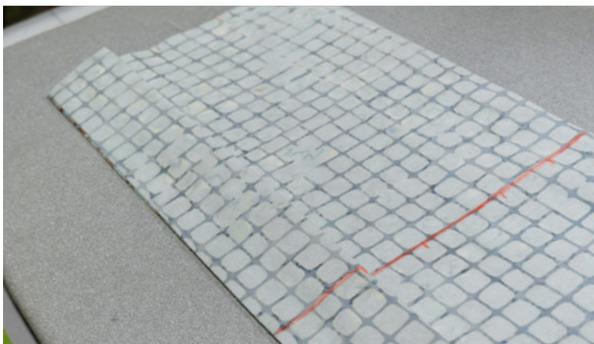
7. CONTINUED

Let's press the folds! We're going to use the origami vocabulary of "mountain" folds, which are folds with "peaks" facing the viewer.



Lay the strip on your ironing board, marked back side facing up. Create a mountain fold across all the A marks by folding the rest of the fabric under along that line, pressing it and then unfolding it.

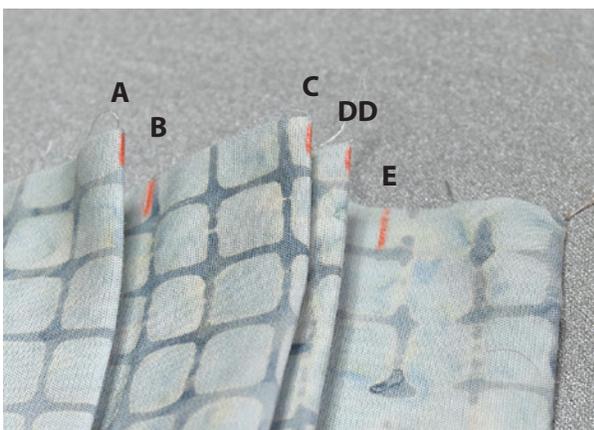
See how there's now a "peak" crease facing you along the A marks?



Bring that pressed crease up to the B marks and press it in place.



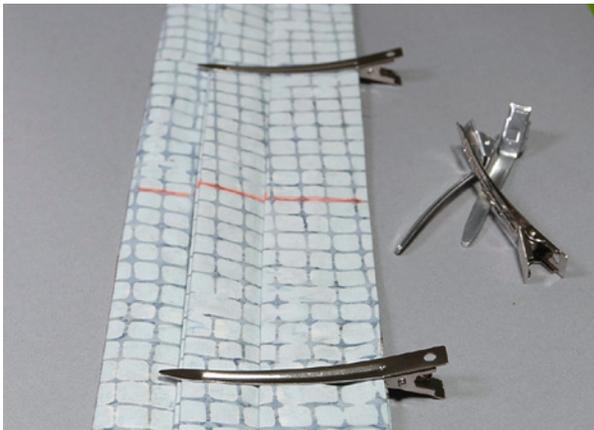
Repeat this process with the C and DD marks: press a mountain crease at C, bring it up to the DD marks, and press it in place.



Now for the Double D fold!

Press a final mountain crease along the DD marks, exactly under the C mountain crease that you just brought up.

Bring both the C and DD creases together up to the E marks and press in place.



7. CONTINUED

Press all the folds firmly.

If you have 3" long hem clips or duckbill clips for hairdressers, use those to hold the pleats in place through the next steps.

If you don't have long clips, consider machine BASTING about 1/4" on either side of the mask division lines.



Cut the masks apart along the division lines.



8. Trim the NO-GAP STRAPS to be **5/8"** shorter than the width of your masks.

*For 8" wide medium-size masks, trim the straps to 7 3/8" long.*



9. Pin or clip a no-gap strap to the front of each mask **on one side only**.

Pin about 1/8" down from the top edge of the mask. If you used a 5/8" deep nose wire pocket, the bottom edge of the no-gap strap will match the bottom edge of the nose pocket.

Slide a binding strip over the same edge, matching the fold mark to the middle of the mask edge, and pin or clip in place.

*NOTE: If you measure the middle of the mask edge once, you can eyeball it on the other masks, as it will always be in the same place.*



9. CONTINUED

**Check your bobbin thread for the long seams that follow.**

On each mask, topstitch or edgestitch the binding strip edges together from one end all the way to the other, on one side of each mask only. Repeat with all five masks

Be careful to catch both edges of the binding in your topstitching. Stitch back and forth at the beginning and end of your seams — and also as you pass over the no-gap strap to anchor it firmly in place. As you pass over the pleated mask, make sure that the fabric is tucked all the way inside the binding strip.



10. Pin or clip the remaining edge of the no-gap strap to the opposite side of each mask.

*As the no-gap strap is shorter than the mask, it will pull away from the edge, which can make sewing it in place difficult. To reduce the tension on the strap, fold the opposite side of the mask over, as shown left.*



Follow the Step 9 directions to pin and stitch a binding strip to the remaining edge of each mask.

To save time, sew all these long seams in sequence, only lifting the presser foot to insert each binding strip and clipping the threads between them when you're done.



11. Here's one more **OPTIONAL** step for a custom-fitted mask.

Have the intended wearer try the mask on and pinch a small dart under the chin as needed to create a perfectly snug fit.

Carefully pin the dart and remove the mask.

Mark the dart with a chalk pencil or other disappearing marker, and stitch it on the outside of the mask.



To wear your mask with a nose wire in place, slide your choice of wire into the pocket.

*Be sure to remove the nose wire and separately clean it or discard it before laundering the mask.*



*Congratulations, your  
**Face Masks with No-Gap Straps,  
Fabric Ties and OPTIONAL  
Nose Wire Pockets  
are done!***

*Always wear the mask with the no-gap strap on the **OUTSIDE**, so the shorter length strap can hold the top of the mask in place while the longer mask front edge underneath curves to conform to the shape of your nose.*

*Firmly tie both sets of ties behind your head, with the top set of ties over your ears.*



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