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Hello and welcome!

Here are your clear window mask instructions.

Tools you need:

A ruler or tape measure

1/3 yards total of cotton fabric, or 3 pieces of fabric measuring 10" x 7"

(I used lightweight cotton canvas for the outside and two layers of an old cotton sheet for the backing)

A piece of clear vinyl or thin plastic measuring 3 1/2" x 4"

Sharp scissors

Two pieces of elastic measuring 1/4" x 7"

Two 3 1/2" pieces of 1/2" wide twill tape or ribbon

A pen for marking

A working sewing machine

Size 12 or 14 universal sewing needle

Sewing machine thread

A twist tie

Straight pins

And some patience! Sometimes it takes a couple of tries.

Definitions of terms:

Grain of fabric is parallel to the long side of the fabric

A **straight stitch** is a machine stitch that sews straight up and down

Seam allowance is the extra amounts added to a pattern so you can sew the pieces together

To **backstitch** is sewing back over an area to lock in the stitches so they don't unravel. I usually sew forward for 1/4", sew back for 1/4", and then continue sewing forward. Reverse that at the end of a seam.

A **seam** is where pieces are sewn together.

In this pattern, the **darts** are the V-shapes at the top and bottom of the mask. Darts help shapes fit in over and around curves, like your nose and chin.

A **zig-zag** stitch is a machine stitch that zigs and zags from side to side. It's good for finishing off edges so they don't fray.

1. Make the pattern fit you:

-If you have a printer that lets you adjust your copy size, you can easily scale this pattern up and down. This mask measures 10" from side to side. Measure your face from the far side of your cheekbone over your nose to the opposite cheekbone.

-10% of this pattern = 1". Add or subtract that to the base copy size of 100% to get the size you need.

If (for example) your face is 11", copy the pattern at 110%. (You will need to print it in two pieces because it will be bigger than standard printer paper.) If your face is 9 inches, copy the pattern at 90%.

2. Cut out the mask

-Scale the pattern up or down as needed. Print it out and cut out the pattern for both the mask and the clear insert.

-Lay out the clear vinyl and put the clear insert pattern on top. Using a marker pen, trace around the pattern. Cut the piece out on the lines.

-Lay out the fabric and trace around the mask pattern. I put all three layers down on top of each other, drew out my pattern on the top layer, pinned the fabrics together, and then cut out all the pieces at once.

-If you haven't already cut them, measure and cut out your two pieces of elastic and the two pieces of twill tape or ribbon.

3. Sew the mask

-Lay one backing piece of fabric on the back side of the outer fabric and line up the cut edges. Fold both pieces in half with the backing fabric side up. Fold the second piece of backing fabric in half in the same way.

-Set your sewing machine to a medium length straight stitch. Use a 3/8" seam allowance to sew the darts at the top and bottom of the mask pieces, backstitching at the beginning and end of each seam. The darts are the v-shapes at the top and bottom of the pattern.

-Clip the bottoms of all the darts open and use your fingernails to press the seams flat.

-Lay the outer mask down with the outer side facing up. Place the backing on top with the seams visible. Match up the darts and cut edges and pin the mask pieces together.

-Using a 3/8" seam allowance, sew the top edge and bottom edge of the mask pieces together. Backstitch at the beginning and end of each seam. Leave the sides open.

-Push one side of the mask through the mouth opening and pull it out. When the mask is right side out, flatten the seams using your scissor handle or your fingernails.

-Pin the cut edges of the mouth opening together, matching up the dart ends and the cut edges. Set the sewing machine to a short, tight zig-zag. On my machine that's a 2 ½ width and a 1 length. Your machine may use different numbers. Sew right along the edges as carefully as possible, removing the pins as you sew. If the edge looks messy, trim off the fuzzy bits and sew it again.

-Fold the twist tie in half. This will make it stronger. Slide it in between the mouth opening and the top edge, pushing it up so it's right up against the top seam and centered over the top dart.

-Pin the twist tie in place and set the machine back to a straight stitch. Sew about 3/8" away from the seam edge, backstitching at both ends. Go slowly and push the tie up towards the seam so that you don't accidentally hit the wire inside with the machine needle.

-Place the clear vinyl window over the mouth opening hole on the inside of the mask. Pin it in place as smoothly as you can. It should be bigger than the mouth opening by 1/4" all around.

-Set the machine back to a zig-zag stitch. Working from the inside of the mask, sew the vinyl down to the edge of the mouth opening. This might take a couple of tries. Go slowly, take out the pins as you sew, and overlap your stitches at the beginning and end of sewing.

4. Sew the sides and ear loops

-Pin one piece of elastic to the bottom left side of the mask and pin the opposite side of the elastic to the top left side. Repeat for the right side of the mask.

-Put the twill tape or ribbon pieces on each side of the mask. They will hold the ear loops in place and finish off the sides. Fold the cut edges under so they are in between the mask and the tape or ribbon. Pin the edges down securely and zig-zag the tape or ribbon in place, taking out the pins as you sew and backstitching at both ends.

-Clip all the thread ends and try on your mask. Shape the twist tie so it fits over your nose nicely.

Voila! You have a mask that lets you show off your smile. I recommend hand washing the mask and hanging it up to dry.

Tips to keep the clear window from fogging up:

Use an anti-fogging spray

Apply a thin film of dish soap on the inside of the window and let it dry

Apply a thin film of gel toothpaste on the inside of the window and let it dry

Apply a thin layer of spit on the inside of the window and let it dry

Ear comfort

Adjust the ear loops by adding more or shortening the elastic. I've also replaced the elastic with 1/2" wide strips of spandex, which is less stretchy but softer and kinder on the ears.

Be kind to your ears- and be kind in general. It's a good policy.

Thank you for joining me! You are awesome.

– A. Laura Brody