Cotton face-mask pattern – *by Vikki Haffenden*

Figure 1- front (left) and back (right)

Disclaimer: Please note that face masks do not defend you against any virus and are probably most useful to prevent you touching your face whilst outside your home.

Materials:

Tightly woven cotton poplin – any colour or print, or even a mix of different patterns and colours.

78cm of 2mm round hat elastic or 0.5cm flat elastic, or two 40 x 2cm lengths cut from an old tee shirt (cut across the shirt). Cut four of these tee-shirt strips if you want to make ties.

Sewing thread

14cm Plastic coated wire – e.g. the type of wire that comes wrapped around electrical goods cables, garden wire, food-bag ties.

Equipment:

Iron

Needle and pins

Scissors

Ruler

Safety pin

Abbreviations:

WS (wrong side), RS (right side)

Instructions:

Cut 1 piece of cotton fabric 36cm x 18cm (piece A).

Cut 2 pieces of cotton fabric 5cm x 11cm (pieces B and C).

1. WS facing, fold a 0.5cm hem to the WS at both the narrower ends of A, press.
2. Fold each hem over again to the WS by 0.5cm to cover the raw edge, press.
3. Stitch the two hems. These two hems will run along the chin edge of the mask.
4. Take pieces B and C, WS facing, and fold a 0.5cm hem to WS along all four of the narrow edges, press.
5. Stitch these four hems.
6. WS facing, fold a 0.5cm hem along each long edge of B and C and press these in place.
7. WS facing, fold pieces B and C in half lengthwise so that the RS is facing you. Take care to align the folded hems you just made and press the centre fold in place. These two pieces will be the elastic channels at either side of the mask, and the sewn hems are top and bottom end of these.
8. Take piece A with WS facing and fold in half across its width so that the RS is facing you and the sewn hems are aligned. Press the fold in place. This fold will go across your nose.
9. Fold both pieces of front together across its width into three pleats. The aim is to get the length from nose edge to chin edge to be 10cm so that it matches the length of the channels B and C.

   Fold downwards facing pleats as shown below, (those on the back will face upwards, and will be on the inside of the mask). The green dashed lines are folded RS together, and the red longer dashed lines fold WS together.

   Approximate measurements are shown in the second diagram.

Step 9 – making the pleats

Nose fold edge
4cm
1cm
3cm
1cm
3cm
1cm
3cm
Hemmed, chin edge
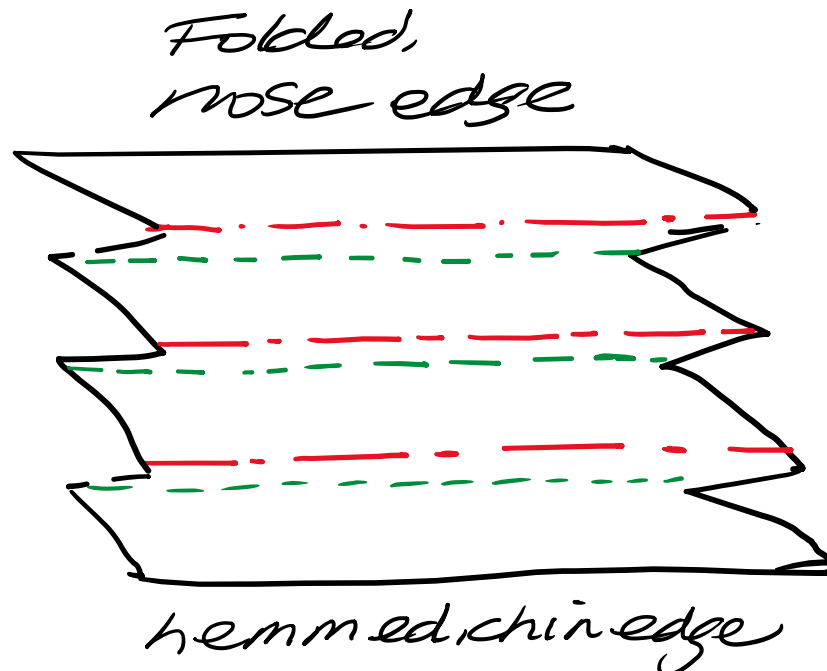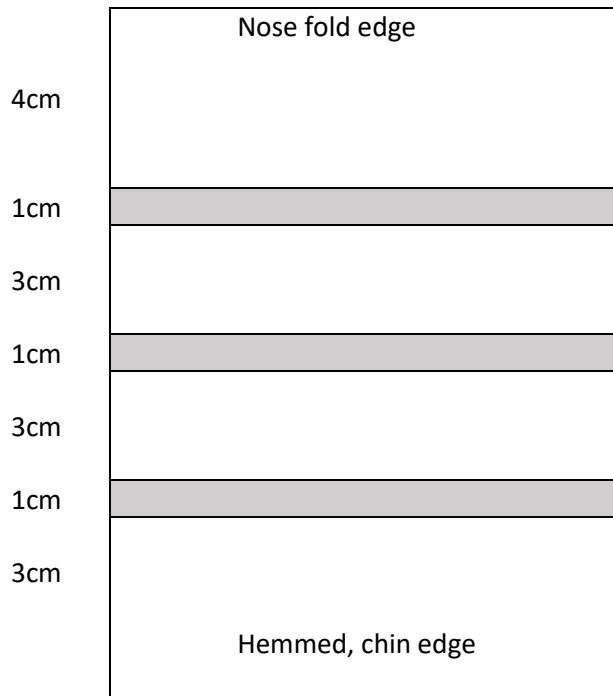
Step 9 - Grey areas are folded underneath the white areas. Folds should face downwards.

10. Pin and then press the pleats in place. Pinning the pleats all the way along makes the next step easier.
11. If hand sewing, tack lightly along each side, close to the edge (0.25-0.3cm) to keep the pleats in place. Remove edge pins only. Machine sewers should do the same, removing the side pins as they go.
12. Place piece B on the right edge of A, WS facing, carefully align the raw edges. Pin in place and sew along the 0.5cm fold line pressed in place in step 6.
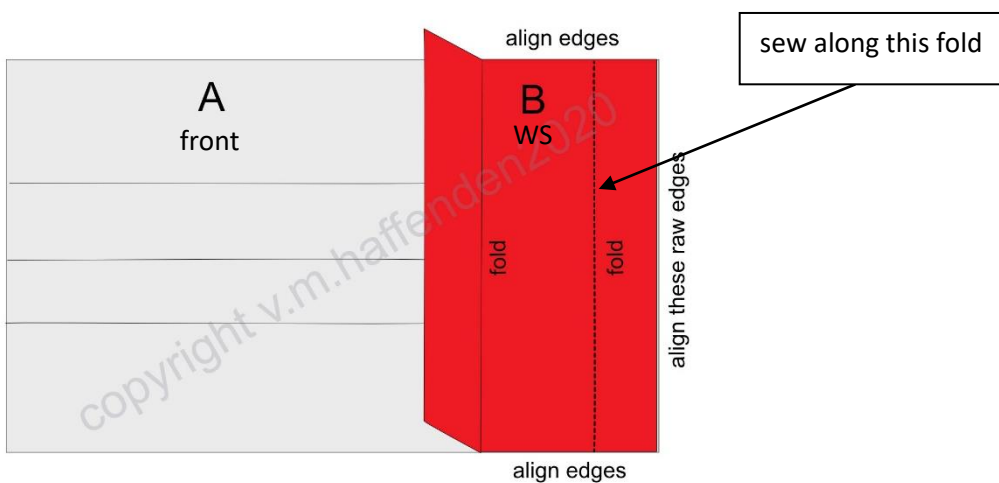

Figure 2- step 12

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13. Fold B over along the centre fold made in step 7. Turn the mask over. Make sure the raw edge of B is folded to the inside. This will create a hollow channel up the side of the mask for the elastic.
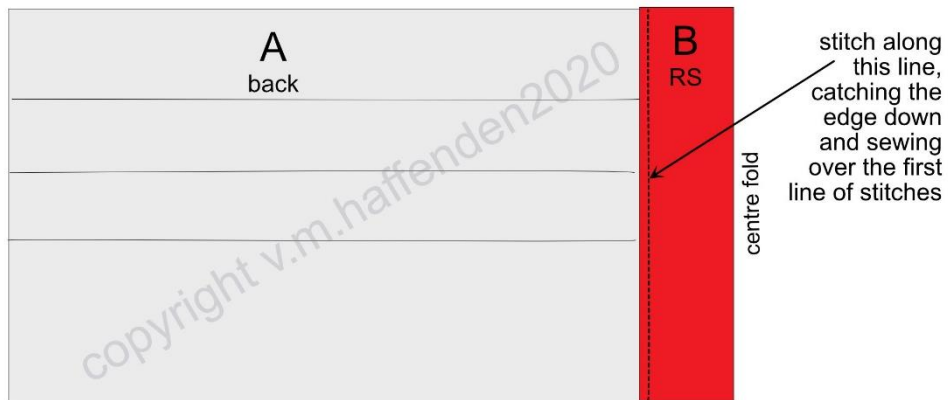

Figure 3- step 13

14. Sew the channel down close to the folded edge, taking stitches through all layers of the mask.
15. Repeat steps 12 – 14 of the left side with C.

Figure 4- the completed right-hand channel

16. Sew the bottom edges of mask together, leaving a gap of 10-11cm in the middle so that you can slip a filter inside if you want to. Tissues, bonded nappy liners or non-fusible interfacing are all suggested as filters, but I can't recommend anything specifically.
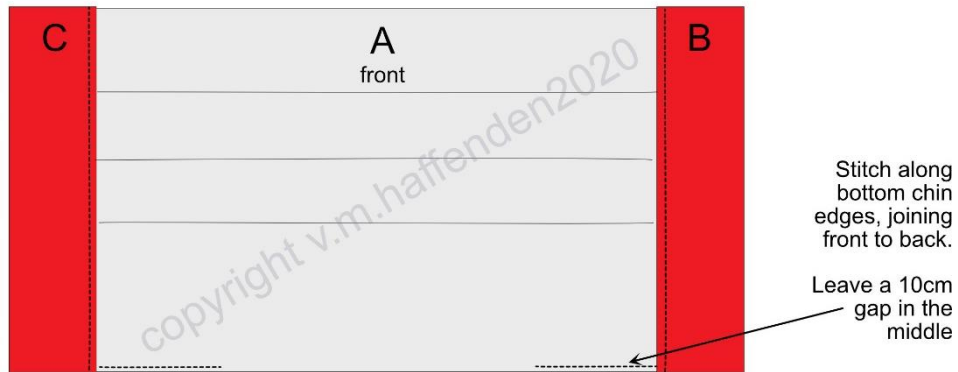
Figure 5- Step 16

Figure 6- the opening at the bottom of the mask

17.   Attach the elastic to a safety pin and thread it up through one channel and down through the other as shown. Tie the ends together making a circle with the mask stretching across the middle, as shown in the photo at the beginning.

18.   Try the mask on, keeping the downward pleats at the outside, and adjust the knot until comfortable.

19. If you are going to add a nose-wire, slide the wire inside the mask and lay it along the nose fold. Bending the end into a flat curl prevents it sticking into you and makes it easier to remove if needs be. Stitch the wire in place by sewing a little pocket around it by hand or machine. If you want to be able to remove the wire before washing the mask, leave one end of the little pocket open to allow you to do this.

If using tee-shirt strips instead of elastic

If using tee-shirt strips, you can do the same thing as with the elastic (step 17), but you may need to knot or sew the strips together to get the length you need. I suggest knotting one join (to go over the head) and leaving the neck join to be tied each time to make a good fit.

Alternatively, you can sew 4 x 40cm tee-shirt strips, one at each corner of the channel. If you prefer to have a gathered channel, then thread the strips through half-way and stitch through both channel and strip to secure the ends in place. When you pull on the ties the channels will gather and fit your face neatly.

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Vikki Haffenden 2020