

Using potholder loops in place of ties or elastic. Note: These are not suitable for first responders, police or firefighters.

The masks we are making have a variety of ways to fasten. Ties of various kinds and elastic are typical. Both have advantages and disadvantages. Ties make for a custom fit to many heads and are ideal for medical personnel, but are awkward to put on and off in a hurry and can be difficult for the elderly or people with disabilities. Elastic is easy and flexible but latex allergies or fragile sensitive skin make them uncomfortable for extended wear. When I ran out of elastic I discovered another alternative which has been working well for some of us - cotton knit fabric loops used for children's potholder looms. They are stretchy, easy to remove, comfortable for long wear and hypoallergenic.

The loops I have been using for the masks my family and I wear and which I have made for several groups of nurses and midwives are Potholder Pro 10" loops. They are available on the internet.

I cut them carefully in half for the two sides of a single mask. They work on masks 8-9" wide like the simple pleated masks if you are binding the sides.

However, if you are making them for strangers or to donate it is best to use a whole loop cut and attached the same way. That way they can be cut and knotted to fit any head.

To attach them securely I sew them to the underside of the corners with three passes of a zigzag stitch (forward, back, forward). I try not to twist them as I lay them out. I trim off any ragged ends.

For the smaller pocket mask where you are turning before pleating and not using ties it would likely work to attach them directly to the mask this way or insert them in the seam before turning.



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They look like they might be fragile but I have machine washed and dried a mask in a load of towels and they came out as good as new. They come in big bags and occasionally one looks a little ragged and I just discard that one. I do not think they are suitable for all masks or all recipients but I think as an option for some they are a workable choice.

