

How to don and doff a mask

A disposable surgical mask or a reusable cloth mask will come in handy once we are allowed out of our homes, especially if physical distancing cannot be easily maintained, e.g. using transit.

Step 1: Wash your hands before touching your mask

If you are going to use a mask in public, be sure to wash your hands before you put the mask on and after you take it off. This is by far one of the most important things to keep in mind.

Step 2: When you put on the mask, make sure it covers your nose and mouth and fits comfortably around your face

WHO guidelines say the mask should cover both the nose and mouth and the wearer should make sure there are "no gaps between your face and the mask."

According to the **CDC**, cloth face coverings should do the following things when put on correctly:

- Fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face
- Be secured with ties or ear loops
- Include multiple layers of fabric
- Allow for breathing without restriction

Step 3: While you have the mask on in public places, avoid touching it and replace it if it feels damp

Don't defeat the whole purpose of wearing a mask by constantly touching it. **If there are virus particles trapped on the outside of the mask, they'll get on your hands when you touch it.**

If you do have to touch it to adjust it, "clean your hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water," says the **WHO**. If your mask becomes damp (which it likely will), replace it if possible.

Step 4: When you're done with the mask, or replacing it with a new one, carefully take it off from behind or by the straps

"Individuals should be careful not to touch their eyes, nose, and mouth when removing their face covering," the **CDC** tells us. The **WHO** seconds this point. "Remove it from behind (do not touch the front of mask)," it says.

Step 5: Put reusable cloth masks directly into the laundry hamper

You don't have to worry about having to wash your mask separately. When you remove your bandana or mask, just put it into the laundry to wash it with other clothes.

The **CDC** agrees: "A washing machine should suffice in properly washing a face covering."

Step 6: Wash Your Hands!