

## **A big thank you to everyone for sticking with our Covid Protection Plan under Red!**

Many studies have been done on mask safety while exercising, with studios across the globe requiring masks for adults and children over the past couple of years. This is handy for us, as there are already tips online on how to make mask-wearing more comfortable and protective.

While exercising in masks isn't the most fun, there are some ways to make it much more comfortable.

- **Try a different mask.**

Fabric masks, especially those with multiple layers, may be harder to breathe in than paper surgical masks. Respirators like N95s give you the best protection from viruses, but not if you're constantly adjusting it as they're harder to breathe in.

*Note: Dust masks* and any other mask with a valve or vent only filter the air coming in, protecting only the wearer. This would not be considered as adequate mask use in a contact tracing scenario, as they are ineffective in preventing the spread of airborne viruses.

- **Fabric Masks**

- Ensure they're made of a breathable, tightly-woven fabric e.g. cotton.
- If you hold your fabric mask up to the light, can you see light coming through the threads? This means it likely isn't filtering the air enough to protect you.

- **Surgical Masks**

- When wearing a surgical mask, the blue side faces outwards to repel moisture.
- Swap masks when they become damp.
- Surgical masks can be washed and reused, despite being labelled 'disposable.' Washing masks this way keeps them highly effective even after 10 washes.

*Washing a Surgical Mask:*

1. Wet the mask fully under warm or hot running water, without soap.
2. Using your hands, gently rub the inside and outside surfaces to wash away any bacteria, sweat, or saliva.
3. Hang up the mask or lay it flat across a clotheshorse and let it dry completely.

*Notes:*

Avoid scrunching or twisting the mask.

Don't use a machine to wash or dry, as this is too rough.

Don't be tempted to use boiling water for this as it breaks down the mask material, making it less protective. If it's too hot for your skin, it's too hot to wash a mask in.

- **Take breaks!** Take a minute or two between tricks or exercises to exit the training space and walk outside in the fresh air. Water breaks are a great time to do this.

Remember to only touch the ear/head loops when taking your mask off and putting it back on.

Maintain >1.5m distancing from classmates when taking these breaks.

- **Lower the intensity of your training.** If you're really struggling with training in a mask, try to give yourself more recovery time than usual between tricks/exercises, or train a little lighter during open training.  
Communicate this with your instructors if you feel overwhelmed, as we're all in this situation together. Take it easy and listen to your body.
- **Make your mask fit your face.** A mask that is moving around whenever you move is irritating and doesn't provide protection.  
Masks should fit snugly around the edges, and you shouldn't be able to feel any air escaping by your cheeks, chin, or eyes when you breathe out.

*Note:* Twisting the ear loops to make them shorter creates gaps in the sides of the mask, which stops the mask from being protective.

### Tools/Tips for Mask Comfort

If you feel you need to adjust your mask frequently, the following tips may help.

#### Knot + Tuck

The CDC created a short, helpful video on how to do this.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GzTAZDsNBe0>

1. Fold your mask in half lengthwise.
2. Tie a knot in the elastic as close to the material as possible.
3. Fold and tuck the extra material under the sides of the mask.
4. Put the mask on as usual, pushing the nose wire against your skin. Make sure there are no gaps around your cheeks or nose.



#### Use an Ear Saver/Mask Mate

Mask mates or 'ear savers' help your mask to fit better if the elastic loops are too long, and they stop the elastic from rubbing against your ears.

They're usually made of a strip of fabric with a button attached to each end, which you secure the elastic of your mask around instead of your ears.

Others are made of plastic or silicone, with notches that secure the elastic loops behind your head.

- Ear savers can be made at home, if you have basic craft skills.  
(Links under 'Resources' below.)
- Plastic/silicone ear savers can be purchased from dollar shops, some pharmacies, and online.



- Some people make and sell these via community facebook groups.
- A large hair clip or paper clip can also be used for this.

([Hairpins As Ear Savers](#))



### Mask Braces/Brackets:

Silicone or plastic mask inserts are available online, which act to hold the material of the mask away from your mouth and nostrils. This might help if you feel claustrophobic in masks, or if your masks get damp quickly during exercise.

#### **3D Mask Bracket**

- Helps to breathe easier
- Avoid contact of mask with skin
- Prevents make up from staining mask
- Prevents lipsticks from staining mask



## Resources

### DIY Ear Savers

Using hair clips as ear-savers.

<https://resourcefulnikki.com/3-face-mask-ear-saver-hacks/>

Super easy - only requires ribbon, buttons, and the ability to hand-sew a button to fabric.

<https://www.thecraftpatchblog.com/easy-diy-ear-savers/>

This is the crochet pattern I (Kayla) use for my own ear savers. Especially good if you don't have buttons handy. Might take a couple of goes to get one that fits perfectly, but it's fairly easy to adjust for your head size.

<https://www.ravelry.com/patterns/library/buttonless-face-mask-ear-saver>

Adjustable Crocheted Ear Saver (requires buttons)

<https://www.ravelry.com/patterns/library/adjustable-ear-saver>

If you knit there are hundreds of free knitted patterns on ravelry.

<https://www.ravelry.com/patterns/search#query=knitted%20ear%20saver>

### Surgical Mask Washing:

Study on the effects of washing medical/surgical masks, versus washable fabric masks and unwashed surgical masks.

[Liquid-Immersion Reprocessing Effects on Filtration Efficiency of 'Single-Use' Commercial Medical Face Masks](#)