



# Soothing Eye Mask

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This soothing eye mask is great for when you just to relax and give your eyes a rest, for eyestrain, for when your sinuses are acting up or when you just want some comfort. You can use it warm (heat in microwave for 5-10 seconds – do not make it hot), cold (keep it in the refrigerator) or at room temperature. It makes a thoughtful gift or a wonderful treat for yourself.

The soothing eye mask is easy to make in multiples as quick gifts.

This tutorial includes two sets of instructions. One set is very brief. The second has the same instructions as the first, but in greater detail with lots of hints and tips to make life a little easier.

## Materials required

100% prewashed **cotton**<sup>1</sup> fabric — 2 pieces that measure at least 3 ¾" by 7 ¾"

100% **cotton** thread that coordinates with the fabric  
rice

## Tools

usual sewing kit (includes sewing machine (optional), hand needle, pins, scissors)

paper scissors                      cardboard (cereal boxes work well) or template material (optional)

fabric scissors                      hemostat, large gauge knitting needle or a chop stick (optional)

pencil                                      a funnel or pop bottle<sup>2</sup>

## Directions (brief version)

1. Print the pattern (page 6) at 100% and cut it out.
2. Mark around the pattern on the back of one piece of fabric.
3. Sew on the line from one mark, around the two curves to the other mark. Leave the straight line between the marks unsewn for turning.
4. Press.
5. Cut excess fabric away and clip around the inside curve at the nose area.
6. Turn right side out and press.
7. Using the funnel, fill about half way with rice.
8. Sew the opening closed using a ladder stitch.

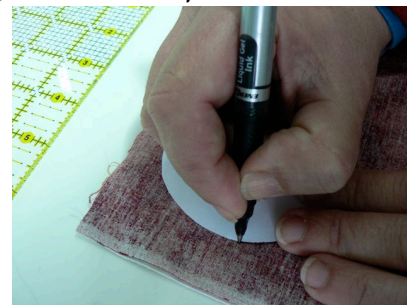
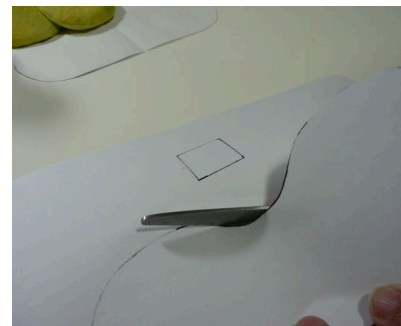
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<sup>1</sup> Use only 100% cotton, especially if you might ever warm this eye mask in the microwave.

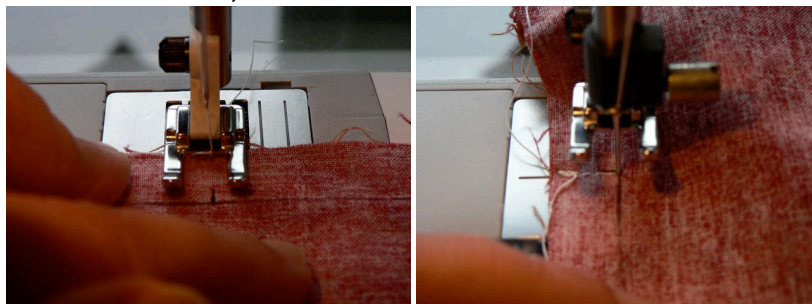
<sup>2</sup> Cut off the top of a plastic pop bottle to use as a funnel.

## Directions (details with lots of tips and hints)

1. Print the pattern on page 6 at 100%<sup>3</sup> and cut out on the line. Discard the rest of the paper including the 1" square (it is there merely to ensure that your pattern printed correctly). If you are making multiple eye masks, glue the paper pattern to cardboard before cutting out or transfer the pattern to template material.
2. Mark around the pattern on the back of one piece of fabric. Make sure there is an extra ¼" of fabric all the way around the pattern and an extra ½" of fabric at the straight edge.
3. Sew on the line from one mark, around the two curves to the other mark. Leave the straight line between the marks unsewn for turning. Use a fairly small stitch length (about 2 mm or 1/12"). Try using an open toe foot, like in the photos, for greater visibility.



I like to start ½" away from the seam line, bring my bobbin thread to the top and sew right up to the seam line. Stop with the needle in the fabric, turn 90° and continue stitching. At the end, I stop, turn and sew 1/2" toward the edge.



4. Press to set your seams.

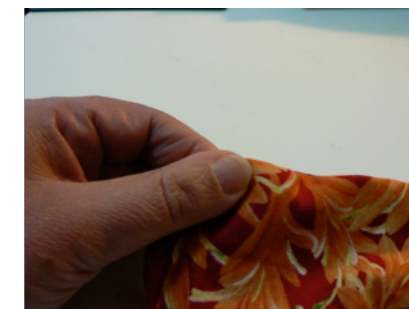
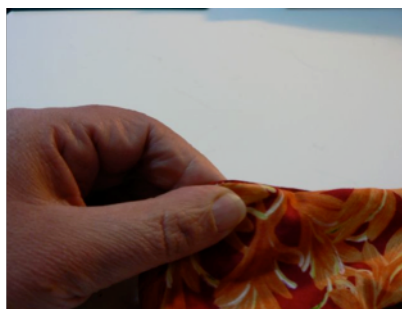
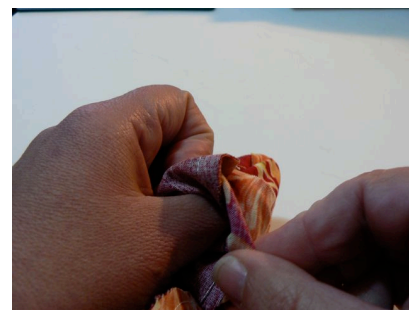


<sup>3</sup> The square on the pattern is 1" (2.54 cm) square. Measure the square on your printout to make sure that it is the correct size. For this project, a small variation in size is not critical.

5. Cut away excess fabric, leaving a scant  $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowance around the sewn part and  $\frac{1}{2}$ " allowance at the turning hole. If your fabric is really tightly woven, you can leave  $\frac{1}{8}$ " seam allowance around the sewn part. Clip around the inside curve at the nose.



6. Turn right side out. Use a hemostat, large gauge knitting needle or a chopstick to push out the seam or "roll" the seam between your thumb and forefinger to push the seam out fully. If using a hemostat, open and close the hemostat slightly as you gently push out. If using a knitting needle or chopstick, gently push the end of the stick against the seam. If using your fingers, put your thumb and forefinger on either side of the seam and roll by rubbing your thumb and forefinger together, first in one direction and then the other. You are essentially rubbing your thumb up and down the top of your forefinger. It sometimes helps if the tips are slightly moist.



7. Press again, pushing out and rolling as necessary to get a nice edge.



8. Cut the top off the pop bottle to get the funnel shape in the photo on the right. Using the funnel, fill about half way with rice. For this eye mask use 1/3 to 1/2 cup of rice, or just fill one side of the eye mask with rice. Slip the top of the bottle into the turning hole, add the rice and then gently shake to help move the rice into the eye mask.



9. Sew the opening closed using a hand ladder stitch.  
a. Slip the needle between one of the allowances and the fabric and come out on fold at the seam, just before the end of the machine sewing. If you like, you can pin the opening closed.



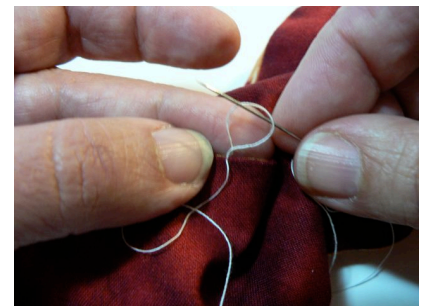
b. Take your thread across the seam and enter the fold on the other side, directly across from where you came out. Take a small stitch (about 2 mm or 1/12" or about the same length as your machine stitching).



c. Repeat step 9b until you get all the way across the opening. This will give you small stitches perpendicular to the seam. Every three or four stitched. Pull the thread

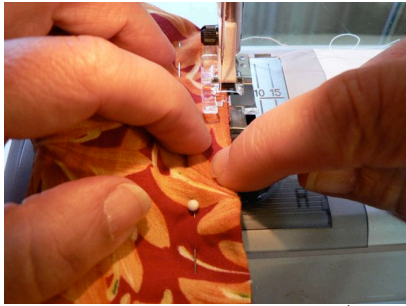
taut and the stitches will almost disappear.

d. When you have finished sewing the opening



closed, take a couple of tiny stitches, 1 mm (1/25") or less and then pass your needle through the loop before tightening your last stitch. Insert the needle into fabric right at the last stitch and scrunch the fabric up so that the needle exits more than a needle length from where it entered. Cut the thread and pull the fabric out again to pull the thread end into the eye mask, thus hiding it.

10. Alternatively, use a whip stitch (faster but not as nice). You could also edge stitch by machine as close to the edge as possible all the way around the eye mask.

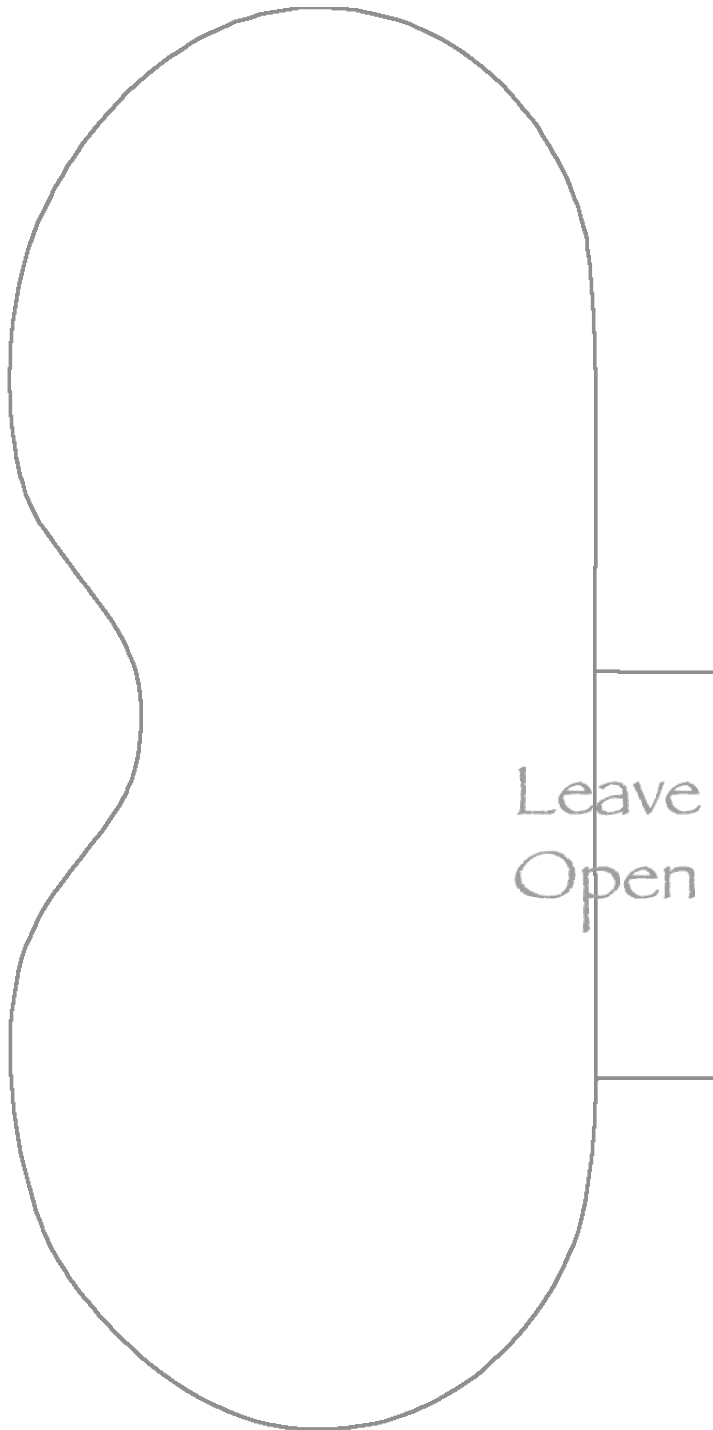


11. Enjoy your new eye mask!



Continually, move rice kernels out of the way to avoid damaging your machine, your needle, your project and yourself.





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