

# MAKE YOUR OWN REUSABLE SANITARY PADS!

BY SARAH APPLETON

I much prefer these to the plastic-y feel of single use pads; they are cheaper since you can make them from things you may already have at home and they're far better for the environment. What's not to like?! I use these on lighter flow days or as back up with a cup, so I do not include a waterproof layer as I have never found that I need it (these are surprisingly absorbent), but if you feel the need for one there are plenty of other tutorials out there which include instructions for that :) This tutorial will make more sense if you've been to one of my workshops, but I've tried to write it for everyone.

You will need:

Top fabric - the upper layer of your 'sandwich' - 100% cotton is best. This is the part with the nice colours and patterns on! If you want to upcycle, you can use old t-shirts, blouses, bed sheets etc.

Core fabric - the sandwich filling - the absorbent layer. An old bath towel or flannel that you don't mind cutting up is perfect

Base fabric - the underneath of your 'sandwich'. This can be anything really but I have used cotton flannel and synthetic fleece with great results. If you are upcycling, try old pyjamas or dressing gowns

1 snap fastening, velcro also works if you prefer

Template (attached) printed out A4 size, paper and pens

Scissors, pins, a needle, sewing machine, thread, iron, the usual sewing stuff! You can also hand sew if you like.

Be sure to wash and iron your fabrics before you begin, this improves the absorbency, sanitary-ness and reduces the chance of shrinking and distorting the shape.

How to do it:

Print or trace and cut out the paper templates. Cut out one layer of your top fabric and one of your base using the main template. Decide on your absorbency level for the core - this will be personal to your comfort, but I usually use anything from one to three layers of the towel, so choose the right amount for you and pin the layers together.



Top fabric



Base fabric



Core fabric - old towel

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Once your towel is layered up together, cut out a rough rectangle, draw around the core template with a pen and then use a zig zag stitch to sew them together all around the inside of your drawn line. Then carefully cut out the towelling around the outside of your zig zag stitch, without snipping the stitches. This layer won't be visible, so don't worry about it looking too neat!

zig-zag  
stitch  
(yellow)  
inside  
the pen  
line  
  
Pen line  
(black)



cut around the outside  
of the pen line



don't cut those stitches  
though!

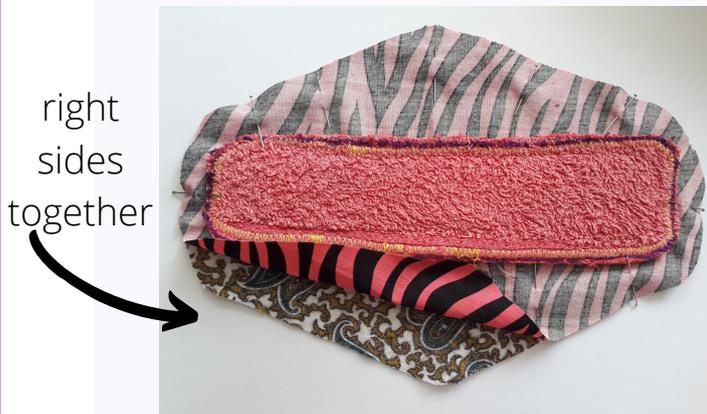
Switch to a straight stitch, then sew the absorbent towel core to the wrong side of the top fabric leaving a 1cm border around the edge. I have used a contrasting colour thread to make my stitches easy to see but you can use one the same colour as your fabric if you like. You should have something like this:



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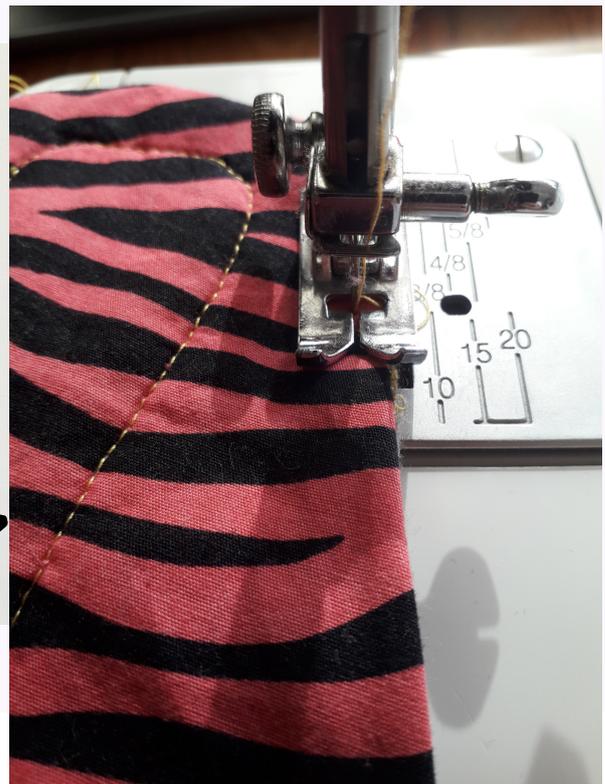
Sew the right side of the top fabric to the right side of the base fabric with a 1cm seam allowance all around the edge, but leave a 2" gap before joining your stitching up. You should be able to lift up the edge of the towel core if you need to get into those tight corners! Snip into the round parts and trim the seams if you want a really neat look. Use your gap to push the insides out, turning the pad right way around, then iron the pad flat.



Use your iron to press the 2" gap seam allowance inwards, then top stitch the whole pad around the outside with a 0.5cm seam allowance, closing the gap as you go and completing the machine stage of sewing.



after turning right way around, sew all around the outside



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Take your snap fastenings and sew them by hand to the 'wing' part of the pad using a needle and thread. Remember to sew one half to the inside of one wing (base fabric side) and one side to the outside of the opposite wing (top fabric side). You are sewing through the little holes and over the metal edge, then back though. Like this:



Sew one part of the  
snap to the top fabric



And the other part of the  
snap to the opposite wing on  
the base fabric

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That's it, you're done! The absorbency will improve with washing but if you find that the thickness or materials don't seem quite right for you don't be disheartened! You can always try making another one with different materials or a thicker / thinner core - don't be afraid to experiment and try different variations. And don't worry if your sewing isn't perfect (mine sure isn't); just feel good that you're helping to save the environment and saving yourself some cash too.

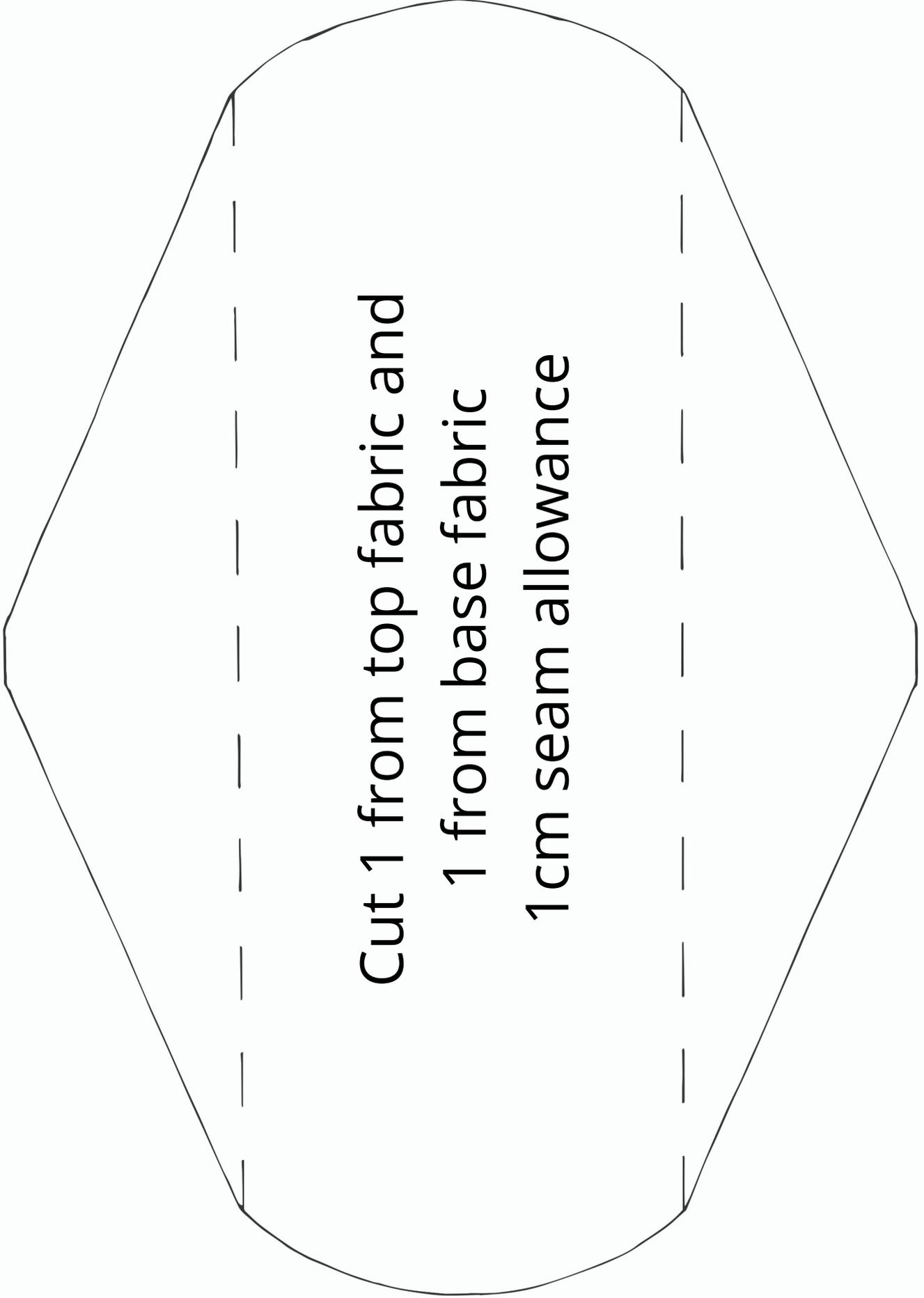
Thanks for reading! :)



If you have any queries about this tutorial, please email me:  
[sarah.j.c.appleton@gmail.com](mailto:sarah.j.c.appleton@gmail.com) or contact me via social media:



# MAIN TEMPLATE



Cut 1 from top fabric and  
1 from base fabric  
1cm seam allowance

# CORE TEMPLATE

Draw around template onto fabric and  
stitch before cutting out  
no seam allowance - cut to exact size