Reversible Menstrual Pads

What you’ll need . . .

Instructions for creating a full-size pattern are included at the end of this guide.

» Sewing Machine
» Snap Pliers, Awl & Snaps
» Scissors
» Thread & Pins
» Knitting Needle
» Washable Marking Pen
» Terry Cloth
» Flannel
» Fleece

Wait, I don’t use pads!
That’s OK. Cloth pads are still a great way to practice sewing and make a wonderful gift. You’re also invited to donate unneeded, newly-created cloth pads. Just place them in the box marked “donations.”

Cloth menstrual pads are an environmentally- and economically-friendly product you can make yourself! They are also a great project to develop your sewing skills. This pattern makes an 11¾” heavy-flow pad. We’ve listed some resources at the end of this guide to make other kinds. In these instructions, we’re using a terry cloth towel for the core, red flannel for the skin-facing material, and yellow fleece for the underwear-facing material. Some scrap fabric will also be helpful to check the sewing machine’s thread tension.

Special thanks to Yoonsin Oh for providing the sample pad and photographs.

PART 1: THE CORE

Start by folding your core material wide enough for the core template. Use pins to secure the fabric. This fabric is for absorption.
2 Trace the core template using the washable pen.

Cut out the pinned core with the scissors.

4 If you’re using the Singer Sewing Machine in the Dabble Box, check that the tension is set as seen in the picture. You’ll also need to change to a zig-zag stitch. You can check the tension by sewing on a piece of scrap terry cloth.

Sew along the edge of the core fabric. Remove the pins and the core is done!
PART 2: THE SHELL

1. Trace the shell template on your skin-facing fabric with the washable pen.

2. Cut out the tracing.

3. Repeat the above two steps with the underwear-facing fabric.

4. Pin the core to the skin-facing fabric.
Change back to a straight stitch, and sew along the edge of the core.

Sew another line ½" inside the first. At this point, you should have two pieces remaining, as seen in the far right picture.

Pin the two pieces together. You'll want the side with the core facing away from the smoother side of the fleece.
8. Sew along the edge, leaving one wing’s edge unsewn.

9. Turn your pad inside-out through the open wing edge. Use the knitting needle to straighten out corners as needed.

10. Tuck in the open wing a little and pin it closed.
Starting from the open edge, sew along the edge of your pad to close it and fix the shape. You’re done with sewing!

Next will be attaching snaps. Make sure you have all the snap parts as seen in the pictures to the left.

Make a hole in one wing using the snap awl. Fold the wings over and poke the washable pen through the hole to mark the other wing. Make a hole at that mark, too. Place a snap piece with a plastic spike through one hole and slide a snap onto it. Repeat for the other hole. Check that the wings snap together correctly. If so, align the pliers with the black end on the bottom of the spiked snap and squeeze. Repeat. You’re all done!
Taking Care of Your Pads

Your new pad can potentially last years, especially in rotation with other pads and proper care. You may have the best results if you soak pads or use a pre-soak setting before laundering them in cold or warm water. Air-dry pads or tumble-dry them on low.

Consider avoiding fabric softeners and bleach as both can interfere with absorbency. You can sterilize your pads if needed by boiling them.

Pattern Template

The Dabble Box created a traceable poly template for this project. For a cut-out paper version, enlarge the pattern on the following sheet %150 using a photocopier.

For More Information

Other patterns exist for day pads, different sized pads, and different general designs. Here are a few freely-available patterns and guides that might suit your needs:

- Luna Wolf <https://lunawolf.co.uk/wordpress/> has patterns for light, medium, and heavy flows as well as wider versions.
- Cloth Menstrual Pads <https://cloth-pads.livejournal.com/445960.html> has short and long patterns using a folded, external core.
- She Who Runs in the Forest <https://sites.google.com/site/shewhorunsintheforest/0010> has a pattern with removable liner layers.
Enlarge 150% on a photocopier (11 by 17 paper size).