

How to Make Cloth Pads

By Sara Whitford

The parts of a cloth pad are as follows:

- The **topper** is the part that is facing up when the pad is in place.
- The **backer** is the part that is attached to the crotch of the underwear.
- The **absorbent core** is the part that goes between the topper and the backer and that will absorb the liquid as it leaves the body.

Materials

There is a lot of flexibility when it comes to materials used for cloth pads, but to balance affordability with effectiveness, here are suggested fabrics for each layer:

Topper – Flannel is a preferred topper. Regardless of what you choose, just make sure you use something like natural. *Avoid* synthetics for the top layer, as they aren't as breathable nor do they absorb as nicely as fabrics like cotton, bamboo, or hemp.

Backer – Anti-pill fleece is a great fabric to use for backers because it provides water resistance and the fluffy side helps a cloth pad stay in place.

Absorbent Core – Zorb is a fabric that is ideal for use in the core of cloth pads because it holds 10x its weight in liquid. While it's highly absorbent, it is important that the each Zorb layer is sandwiched between two other pieces of fabric — ideally something like flannel — or else compression leaks can be an issue. If Zorb isn't available, the core can also be made of terry cloth or several layers of flannel or jersey (t-shirt material), but it would take about 6 layers of flannel to equal just 1 layer of Zorb. (FYI: If you were making something like cloth panty liners, it would be fine to just use a single layer of terry cloth or 3 layers of flannel.) Also, for added security, it's a good idea to use a layer of PUL (Polyurethane Laminate) between the Zorb-Flannel core and the fleece backer. Please see this video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OEARLPuWjOo>) for instructions on how to do this.

Absorbency Options *(At a minimum, you should use the following depending on desired absorbency.)*

Light (Pantyliner)

- 1 layer of terry cloth
- 3 layers of flannel

Regular (Basic pad)

- 1 layer of Zorb sandwiched between two layers of flannel/jersey/cotton
- 2 layers of terry cloth sandwiched between two layers of flannel/jersey/cotton
- 6 layers of flannel

Heavy (Heavy flow, nighttime, or post-partum)

- 2 layers of Zorb sandwiched between two layers of flannel/jersey/cotton
- 3 layers of terry cloth

Important DOs and DON'Ts

- DO make sure your Zorb fabric is sandwiched between two pieces of flannel (or other cotton fabric) so that compression leaks can be avoided.
- DO sew your absorbent core layers together first. Sewing about ½" from the edge should work well.
- DON'T sew your absorbent core straight down the middle. Stitches can cause liquid to wick down through the layers and cause a leak.
- DO sew your absorbent core to the underside of the topper about ¼" from the edge, but again, DON'T sew through the middle of the absorbent core.
- When you sew the backer to the topper and absorbent core, DON'T sew straight down through all the layers of the pad. It's only necessary to go around the edges of the topper and backer. There is no need to also stitch through the absorbent core. It can cause leaks if you do.

Pattern

The pattern can be found on the page where these instructions were provided.