

# HOW TO WEAR YOUR FILTERING FACEPIECE RESPIRATOR

For your filtering facepiece respirator (FFR) to work as effectively as possible, you must wear it correctly. This includes the process of putting it on (donning) and taking it off (doffing). FFRs must form a seal to the face. Fit testing is the best way to confirm that a respirator fits you.

## Donning Your FFR

### Before Donning

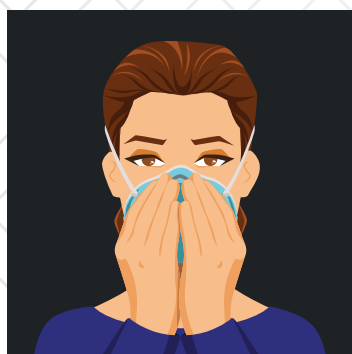
- Always use a new FFR.
- Clean and thoroughly dry your hands.
- Inspect your FFR. If it appears damaged, dirty, damp, or the straps are stretched, do not use it. Replace it with a new one.

### Donning Step by Step

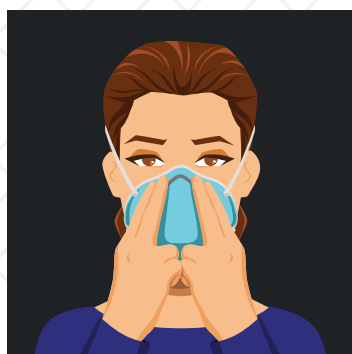
1. Hold the FFR in your hand with the nose piece bar (or foam) at your fingertips. (If you don't see a nose piece, check that the text is right side up.)
2. Place the FFR under your chin with the nose piece bar at the top.
3. Pull the top strap over your head, placing it near the crown and just above your ears. Then, pull the bottom strap over and place it at the back of your neck, below your ears. Make sure to lay the straps flat and that they are not twisted.
4. Place your fingertips from both hands at the top of the nose piece. Press down on both sides of the nose piece bar to mold it to the shape of your nose.
5. Perform a user seal check.



## User Seal Check\*



Positive Check



Negative Check

For a good seal, your breath must pass through your FFR and not around its edges. Doing a user seal check every time you wear an FFR tells you if gaps exist between your FFR and your face, which would allow contaminated air in. A user seal check can be a positive or negative pressure check.

### Positive User Seal Check

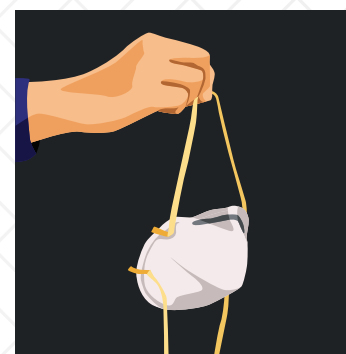
To check for gaps with a positive pressure user seal check, gently place your hands over the FFR, covering as much as possible, then **breathe out**. If you feel air leaking out from the edges, or if you are wearing glasses and they fog up, the FFR is not snug. Adjust the FFR and try again.

### Negative User Seal Check

To check for gaps with a negative pressure user seal check, gently place your hands over the FFR. **Breathe in** sharply and use the bottoms of your hands to block the paths where air could enter the facepiece. If the FFR is sealed tightly, the facepiece will slightly collapse under the negative pressure. If the facepiece does not collapse, or you feel air leaking beneath, the FFR is not snug. Adjust the FFR and try again.

## Doffing Your FFR

1. **Do not touch** the front of your FFR. It may be contaminated.
2. Remove by first pulling the bottom strap over the back of your head, followed by the top strap—all **without touching the respirator**.
3. Discard the used respirator in a waste basket.
4. Thoroughly wash your hands.



## Tips for a Good Fit

- Fit testing provides the best way to ensure proper respirator fit. Find out more from the person in charge of your workplace respiratory protection program.
- Jewelry, glasses, and facial hair can cause gaps between your face and the edge of an FFR. Your FFR will fit better if you are clean shaven. Gaps can also exist if the FFR is too big or too small.
- Your FFR may look different than shown. If your FFR has two head straps, basic donning instructions apply.
- You can find manufacturer's instructions for your respirator model on the manufacturer's website.

\*Not every respirator can be checked using positive or negative pressure. Refer to the manufacturer's instructions for conducting a user seal check on any specific respirator.

Need more information? Email us at [PPEConcerns@cdc.gov](mailto:PPEConcerns@cdc.gov)

### Resources

NIOSH [2010]. How to properly put on and take off your disposable respirator. Pittsburgh, PA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, DHHS (NIOSH) Publication No. 2010-133, <https://doi.org/10.26616/NIOSH PUB2010133>.

NIOSH [2018]. Filtering out confusion: frequently asked questions about respiratory protection, fit testing. Pittsburgh, PA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, DHHS (NIOSH) Publication No. 2018-129, <https://doi.org/10.26616/NIOSH PUB2018129>.

NIOSH [2018]. Filtering out confusion: frequently asked questions about respiratory protection, user seal check. Pittsburgh, PA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, DHHS (NIOSH) Publication No. 2018-130, <https://doi.org/10.26616/NIOSH PUB2018130>.



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health