

Get Stitching

When early Jewish immigrants arrived in Baltimore one of the first things they would need to do is find work. Often they would reach out to members of their extended family or others from their home who had already settled here. New immigrants would often need to find work that didn't rely upon being able to speak English, this is why working in the scrap trade was especially popular (you can read more about this in our exhibit *Scarp Yard: Innovators of Recycling*). One other popular industry was the textile trade, individuals could use the skills they had already learned and didn't need English to work. However the conditions in this industry could often be very difficult working long hours in cramped and hot conditions for relatively low pay.

In this activity you can practice your sewing skills and make a simple ear defender to use with elasticated face masks.

What You Need:

- Strong ribbon, 1 inch wide
- Large buttons
- Needle and thread
- Scissors
- Ruler
- Lighter or candle



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What to do:

- Measure and cut an 8 inch long strip of ribbon, you may need to vary the length depending upon who you are making your ear guard for.
- Ask an adult to hold the ignited lighter to the ends of your ribbon strip, this will melt the ends of the ribbon and reduce fraying. You shouldn't hold the ribbon in the flame but just beside.
- Using your needle and thread sew a button on either end of your ribbon. Make certain to really secure your button firmly.
- Your ear protector is ready, simply loop the elastics of your face mask over the buttons to help keep it in place and reduce pressure on your ears.
- Try making a couple of different ear defenders to share with members of your family.

Bonus Activity: Once you have mastered this activity try looking online for another activity that involves a little more sewing, such as a simple hand puppet.