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On What To Wear and Where To Find It

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On What to Wear and Where to Find It

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When my family began to consolidate our masks on the top of our kitchen shelf, after months of struggling to locate them scattered around our house, I was presented with a vast selection of masks on display. Masks were no longer a mundane part of life; because I could now choose one to wear, I could become deliberate in my decision-making.

To select a mask, I first try to determine which mask can best suit my fashion for the day. If I have a work shift at the Benson Memorial Center, I wear my white work polo, white dress pants, and white SCU mask. Although I don't follow society's *dernier cri*, basic care about fashion has allowed me to have purpose in my clothing and I refuse to wear the same repetitive pajamas during quarantine. I can now experiment with creativity, explore potentials of self-manifestations, and energize myself with the transformation, even if all this comes from a task that itself is banal.

Secondly, I try to welcome the most comforting options for my glasses and beard. For the former, I often want masks that I can tighten on the top ridges of my nose so the air can't escape and thereby blur my glasses, and for the latter, I prefer masks that are large enough to avoid beard itches, like my strapless mask.

As a side note, every mask eventually irks me, and I find myself in internal debates about whether to covertly take mine off or wear it reluctantly. I have to remind myself of a utilitarian argument: A mere inconvenience for the greater safety of my society is worth it. This argument has been prominent and defining among my school's campus and social media.

Lastly, choosing a mask coalesces the connection between masks and personal identity. I sometimes hesitate to wear my SCU mask because the "SC" label feels like USC. I now wear the Oakland A's mask to represent my love for my local Bay Area teams, especially since the team might transfer to a new city due to delays in their stadium rebuilding in Oakland. Masks provide an ironic connection to my community; I imagine how others would imagine me and base my mask-choosing around it.



The first mask Santa Clara gave out for free, in an attempt to increase mask-usage among students. It feels tight now due to my many times washing it.



One family had extras of these disposable masks at the very beginning of quarantine (before the mass production of cloth, reusable masks) and offered them to us.

A free mask from the Oakland A's game versus the Detroit Tigers on April 18th, 2021 for my 22nd birthday. It has a triangular shape that sticks out like a beak when you wear it.




My sister's company offered these haphazardly handmade masks right after the quarantine orders—notice the scissor holes on the sides.




Bandanas were on the first list of reusable masks when quarantine began. They're not ideal, per the CDC, because they do not have double layers of cloth.



Aome masks are mysteries; my family doesn't know where this originated from!

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