

## Washing Cloth Menstrual Pads

*It's not that much trouble.... Really it's not!*

*When you change your pad, pop it into a bucket of water to soak and put on a fresh pad. Then wash when you are ready, and hang the pad out to dry. Simple!*

*You may like to have a small bucket of water with a lid to place used pads in. I find those small flip top bins you buy for kitchen/bathroom counters are perfect. Change the water every few days. This water is great for putting on the garden! So take advantage of it!*

*Cloth pads can be hand or machine washed (depending on your preference and the manufacturer's instructions). If they are soaked or rinsed out straight away (in cold water) they should not stain. Lighter colour fabric, or fabric with white parts is more likely to stain. As are pads that are allowed to dry out before washing, so try to wash, rinse or soak them straight away. Generally if you put the pad into the bucket of water as soon as you take it off, you can simply give it a quick rinse then pop it in the washing machine with your normal load of washing. If hand washing, simply tip the pads into your laundry (or bathroom) sink, and give them all a good rinse out. Then fill the sink with warm soapy(not too much) water and give them a wash. Wring out and hang up to dry. If soaking, change the soak water regularly (every 1-2 days ideally), to avoid any odour.*

*You shouldn't need to use any bleach or, disinfectants etc. in the water or wash, however if you have left them sitting for a while and they are a little unpleasant, a few drops of teatree Essential oil should take care of that. Disinfectant is a better alternative to a bleach*

*If you care for your pads properly you shouldn't have problems with staining, but if you do get any staining (which let's face it, is possible given that blood can stain), sunlight should help (hanging them on the line). Baking soda is good to remove fresh stains. Bleach will fade and deteriorate the fabric so it is not advisable to bleach them. If the possibility of staining bothers you, perhaps you could consider using dark fabrics and patterns, where any staining will be less noticeable.*

## Where can I find more information?

*More information, including reviews and lists of websites that you can go to for more information or to find patterns for making your own cloth pads is available at:*

[www.clothpads.org](http://www.clothpads.org)

### Alternative menstrual products Groups

*There are a couple of groups that discuss Cloth pads and Menstrual Cups (An Alternative to tampons).*

[http://www.livejournal.com/community/diy\\_pads](http://www.livejournal.com/community/diy_pads)  
[http://www.livejournal.com/community/cloth\\_pads](http://www.livejournal.com/community/cloth_pads)  
[http://www.livejournal.com/community/menstrual\\_cups](http://www.livejournal.com/community/menstrual_cups)  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/changeyourpad>  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Cloth4us>

### Places to buy Cloth Pads

*There are cloth pad sellers all around the world. You may be surprised at just how many cloth pads are available!*

*Most cloth pad makers are small home-based businesses, which means that buying pads supports these women (rather than large faceless corporations). Some will even offer a custom made service so you can get exactly what you want. There are many shapes, sizes and styles, as well as fabric choices available.*

*You will find a large listing of pad manufacturers including pictures and a few details about them at:*

[www.clothpads.wikidot.com](http://www.clothpads.wikidot.com)

*You may also like to visit the "One stop shop" for pads - where individual cloth pad makers around the world have joined together to form one convenient store*

[www.clothpadshop.com](http://www.clothpadshop.com)

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*This pamphlet on Cloth Menstrual Pads has been created by Obsidian at [www.obsidianstar.com.au](http://www.obsidianstar.com.au)*

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## Cloth Menstrual Pads



**Colourful, Funky, Soft, Comfortable,  
Eco Friendly & Economical.  
Cloth really is Cool!**

*Its not just hippies.... Women all around the world are going back to cloth pads, for many reasons.*

*With today's soft colourful cottons and effective waterproof yet breathable fabrics, modern cloth menstrual pads are a far cry from the strips of folded old cotton sheets women of old used. Today cloth pads can be as unique as the clothing you wear!*

*With many different styles and brands available you can find the perfect fit. Something you don't have as much freedom doing when using disposables.*

*Reusable menstrual products are no more "dirty" than using a hanky or cloth underpants. In fact many women who use cloth nappies on their children and cloth pads for themselves will say pads are much easier and nicer to wash! If you reuse your underpants, then you can reuse a cloth pad!*

*There are alternatives to disposable pads, that are not only nicer for Mother Earth, but nicer for them too!*

*Do you hate running out of pads at inconvenient times?  
Do you hate pads that never seem to fit right?  
Do you hate forking out money for something you wear for a few hours then throw away?*

***Then it might be time to change your pad!***

### **Cloth Pads aren't just from the "olden days"**

The first disposable sanitary products were brought out around 1921, and for many years after this disposable pads were too expensive for most Women to afford, so many continued to use cloth until disposables became more popular and affordable. What did Women use before disposables? Cloth of course!

Women often used strips of folded rags to collect their menstrual blood, which is where the term "rags" comes from (eg. "I'm on my rags"). But that wasn't the only option. Knitted pads, sheepskin, and even a "menstrual apron". Just like today, Women were creative!

Kotex, one of the first disposable manufacturers gets their name from "cotton like texture", presumably to show their pads felt like the cotton pads women used.

### **The Environment and Sanitary products**

Many people today would refuse to take their groceries home in a plastic bag, opting for a reusable bag.. We are always being told to "Refuse, Reuse and Recycle". Yet what about our menstrual products?

Most are made from bleached paper, (destroying trees, and bad for the environment). Most pads have a plastic layer (if not comprised mainly of plastics) and most use a plastic coated strip to cover the adhesive. Pads and tampons are usually individually wrapped in plastic and then most of these come packaged in a plastic bag. So not only are disposable pads filling up landfill themselves, they also produce non biodegradable waste, and toxins from the bleaching process. What a waste!

### **So are disposables really that great?**

Throwing away up to 40 pads a month (at a cost of around 40c a pad), month after month, year after year means a huge amount of money goes into buying disposable pads. Disposable pads are boring, scratchy, expensive, bad for the environment, ill-fitting and can cause irritation and thrush.

Cloth pads however are fun & colourful, soft, great value, environmentally friendly, can be made to fit any body shape perfectly and with natural breathable fabrics can be great for sensitive skin and preventing thrush..... and always on hand!

### **Why use Cloth Menstrual Pads?**

#### **Money saving.**

Just add up how much you spend on menstrual products a month. 3-4 pads a day, a 7-10 day cycle... that's up to 40 pads a month! If you spend an average of \$3 a pack of 10, that's \$12 a month, or around \$6,000 over your lifetime! You may have night pads, and all sorts of other products too, which will increase that cost. That works out at a lot of money! Cloth menstrual pads can be reused for around 4-6 years, maybe longer if you take care of them. For less than you'd spend for 1 year's worth of disposable pads, you could have enough gorgeous pads to last you 6+ years!

#### **Environmentally friendly.**

Disposable pads are filled and packaged with plastics and bleached paper. Cloth pads are reusable (reducing waste) and when they are too old to use, they are biodegradable (with the exception of any waterproof layer, which can be removed). The washing water is also a great fertiliser for your garden. The average woman goes through several shopping trolleys full of disposable products over a life time. What a waste!

#### **Nicer for you.**

Being made of natural fibres (or breathable synthetics), the skin can breathe. This is important not only for comfort (not nice having a plastic pad on, especially on a hot day), but it is great for women who suffer from thrush. No more boring white scratchy disposable pads, you can go as funky and wild or as plain as you like with cloth pads. Avoiding the chemicals used in disposables.

#### **Empowering.**

In today's society we are taught that menstruating is almost shameful. Something to secretly hide away and "endure" once a month. Some manufacturers even promote quieter packaging, so nobody will know you are using them... which can make Women feel embarrassed that they menstruate and feel the need to hide it. It should be as normal as buying toothpaste! Women menstruate. We should not be ashamed or embarrassed. By bringing this back to a more pampering time, we can shun those negative images of menstruation and begin to enjoy it. Yes enjoy! Many women who have switched to cloth change their outlook on menstruation and start to enjoy their "Moon Time".

### **Wearing your Cloth Pads**

You may like to wear your cloth pads at home for a while before you feel comfortable wearing them out in public. You will then get some idea of how often you will need to change them. To use them, simply put the pad into your underpants as you would a disposable pad. The pad should not slip around as the different types of pads should have their own way to prevent this. Some may have wings like a disposable, but fasten with snaps instead of adhesive. Some may have flannel or corduroy non-slip backing. But if you find the pad does move about (if you are wearing nylon or loose underpants for example), then you could use a nappy pin to hold it in place. If it has no wings, be careful not to drop it into the toilet! Sounds silly, but you'll realise it can be possible after you have it happen ☺ Simply hold the top of the pad as you pull your underpants down to make sure it doesn't move.

Some pads are made with a waterproof layer to prevent any seepage through to your underpants. This can make them virtually leak-proof, but it is advisable to change your pad before it becomes full for hygiene reasons. If you need to change your pad when out, place the used pad into a plastic bag until you return home to soak it.

### **How Many Will I need?**

You will need between 2-5 pads a day, depending on how often you like to change your pad/how heavy your flow is. It is recommended to have 6-12 pads, as the more you have the less wear & tear on each pad, making them last longer. This might seem like a lot of expense to begin with, but they will soon pay for themselves in savings. Plus the added benefit of always having a supply at home, and knowing you are helping the environment and your body. It is best to make sure you have several days supply in case you are not able to get them washed and dry in time.

Ultimately having enough pads to last your whole cycle would be beneficial, and you may find you like to create a "pad stash" and get somewhat addicted to buying new pads (just like clothes shopping!). You can add to your cloth pad collection as time goes by, buying a few now and then to spread the expense, and test new designs and patterns.