Masks are becoming the new normal, but there is a flood of bad instructions online.

If you’re trying to make your own cloth face covering, you may be struggling to make sense of all the YouTube tutorials and how-to instructions on the internet.

If you don’t know how to sew, terms like “hemming, cinching, and pleating” can be confusing, as are the tens of millions of views of video tutorials demonstrating how to make masks from all kinds of materials including aluminum foil, paper towels, notebook paper and masking tape.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) only put out official instructions April 4, but they updated them significantly this week, removing recommendations to use a cut coffee-filter in one design.

For help following the most current CDC guidelines without having to guess what the drawings mean, BILT Inc., a Texas-based start-up, has created 3D interactive animated instructions and is providing them free on the BILT mobile app.

“Everybody’s got a quarantine story, but I just need the straight up instructions without the extra commentary,” says 19-year-old Kurima Langi, of Euless, Texas. “I don’t want to try to figure it out on my own, and I want to be able to wear it more than once.”

3D interactive instructions enable users on a mobile device, where you can tap for more information, drag to rotate the 3D images 360º, and pinch to zoom in & out; no need to hunt for your readers.

“Our team has created interactive instructions for everything from grills to greenhouses,” says Mike Wencel, VP of Instruction Design at BILT, who led the team that created the 3D animations. “Working on a project that has such an impact on our communities was truly a labor of love. I had designers standing in line for the opportunity to be a part of it.”

BILT also consulted seamstresses who painstakingly went through the CDC’s official instructions, clarifying confusing steps and making recommendations. For example, although the no-sew t-shirt mask will work in a pinch, trying to make tight enough stitches to hold stretching and fraying at bay on t-shirt fabric is difficult for beginners.

“Tightly-woven cotton fabric works much better than jersey knit,” says Natasha Siebach, who has been sewing for more than 40 years. “Masks made from the fabric of a regular pillowcase will hold up better in the wash. You want to be able to machine wash them in hot water as often as you can.” The CDC also recommends machine drying.

Analytics inside the BILT app indicate when users (in aggregate) have difficulty with instructions. If there is an unexplained spike in completion time or a lot of replays of any one step, those instructions can be examined, improved, and updated in real time. Instruction designers are already working on other animations for even more basic instructions for threading, stitching, knotting, and washing.

While wearing a face mask will not protect you from COVID-19, the CDC is urging mask use in public places like grocery stores and pharmacies where others may not be able to maintain social distances. Doctors encourage use of masks in public, even if you are asymptomatic in order to help “slow the spread of the virus and help people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others,” according the CDC website.