

Personal Protective Equipment Mental Practice Script

Prepared by Jamie Riggs, Chris Hicks, MD, MEd, Andrew Petrosioniak, MD, MSc,
and Melissa McGowan, MHK

Instructions for use

This script is intended to help users improve their ability to safely don and doff personal protective equipment by using mental practice. Mental practice involves rehearsing the steps of an action in your mind. In order to get the most out of this exercise, we suggest:

1. Finding a quiet location where you will not be disturbed for 10-15 minutes
2. 'See' yourself completing the task in the first person - some people prefer to close their eyes intermittently, while some prefer to keep them open. Either is ok.
3. Take your time - work through the steps using the script, trying to use the same amount of time as you might in real life
4. If possible, stand while completing the exercise, and move your hands/arms/body as if you were actually completing the task

Although this sort of exercise may seem strange, evidence has shown it to be beneficial in a number of professions. This includes learning surgical skills, professional athletics, performance musicians, and pilots. Do your best to work through the script methodically, and enjoy!

PPE Removal Script

Before starting to remove my PPE, I will **consider whether I have completed all tasks** requiring PPE? I have, so I move to a safe removal area with enough space around me, and note the **access to hand sanitizer and a waste bin**. *If possible, I will ask a colleague to observe my removal, to pay special attention to any lapses in protocol.*

Before removing any of my PPE, I will clean my gloves with hand sanitizer. I locate the hand sanitizer, and use my right hand to **dispense a few pumps into my left palm**. I ensure that I have dispensed enough to completely cover both gloved hands. Working methodically, I spread the sanitizer on both palms, the backs of each hand in turn, the web spaces between each finger, the tips of my fingers, and the entirety of my thumbs. I pay special attention to observing myself covering the entirety of my gloves, and spend 15-20 seconds completing this process.

I now turn my attention to **untying the waist tie of my gown**. I grab each end of the ties using separate hands, and **untie by pulling away from my body forward and to the side**. Once the knot is untied, I let the ties drop.

If single gloved → Now I will **remove my gloves**. Reaching with my right hand, I **grab my left glove just below the cuff**, making sure I don't touch my gown. Pulling down and away with my right hand, the **glove peels off of my left hand, ending up inside out**. Now I see the removed glove held in my still-gloved right hand. I will continue to hold onto this removed glove as I take the glove off of the right hand. With my **bare left hand, I reach under the cuff of the right glove**, watching carefully so that I do not touch the outside of the right glove with my bare skin. Once I feel I have the first one or two finger pads of the bare left hand under the cuff of the right glove, I **pull the cuff down, again rolling the glove off of my hand so that it ends up inside out**, with the other glove contained within it. Now I am holding both gloves, one inside the other, in my left hand. Without touching any other surfaces, I **throw the bundled gloves into the trash**.

If double gloved → Now I will **remove my outer gloves**. Reaching with my right hand, I **grab my left glove just below the cuff**, making sure I don't touch my gown. Pulling down and away with my right hand, the **glove peels off of my left hand, ending up inside out**. Now I see the removed glove held in my right hand. I will continue to hold onto this removed glove as I take the glove off of the right hand. With my **left hand, I reach under the cuff of the right glove**, watching carefully so that I do not touch the outside of the outer right glove with my left hand. Once I feel I have the first one or two finger pads of the left hand under the cuff of the right glove, I **pull the cuff down, again rolling the glove off of my hand so that it ends up inside out**, with the other glove contained within it. Now I am holding both gloves, one inside the other, in my left hand. Without touching any other surfaces, I **throw the bundled gloves into the trash**.

Now that my hands are bare, I am **mindful to avoid touching the front of my mask, gown, or eyeshield while I clean my hands**. Dispensing a few pumps of hand sanitizer with my right hand into my left palm, I rub my hands together, beginning with my palms, and methodically covering my entire hands with sanitizer, continuing to rub until my hands feel dry. While rubbing, I pay special attention to the space between my fingers, to each thumb, and to the space between my thumb and fingers. Although I feel rushed at this point, I **take at least 15 to 20 seconds to clean my hands** before moving on.

Next I will **remove my gown**, keeping in mind that the front of the gown is contaminated. I **reach behind my neck**, feeling for the loose ends of the gown ties. **Grabbing one in each hand I pull and untie the gown**. Bringing my arms back in front of me, I bend slightly forward, **shrugging the gown off of my shoulders**. Being **mindful to not let the front of the gown touch my bare hands**, I **roll the gown inward on itself**. The rolled up gown ends up as a small bundle in my hands, and I **place the used gown in the dirty linen container**.

** If double gloved, remove inner pair of gloves using single gloved script above **

With my hands bare and gown off, I am now **mindful not to touch my mask or eye protection as I move to clean my hands**. Dispensing a few pumps of hand sanitizer with my right hand, I rub my hands together, beginning with my palms, and methodically covering my entire hands with sanitizer, continuing to rub until my hands feel dry. While rubbing, I pay special attention to the space between my fingers, to each thumb, and to the space between my thumb and fingers. Although I feel rushed at this point, I **take at least 15 to 20 seconds to clean my hands** before moving on.

I now turn my focus to **removing my bouffant hair cover**. With my right hand, I reach up to **grasp the bouffant near the back of my head**. Tilting my head forward, I close my eyes while **pulling the bouffant up and off of my head**. I immediately **discard my used bouffant**.

I continue to be **mindful not to touch my mask or eye protection as I move to clean my hands**. Dispensing a few pumps of hand sanitizer with my right hand, I rub my hands together, beginning with my palms, and methodically covering my entire hands with sanitizer, continuing to rub until my hands feel dry. While rubbing, I pay special attention to the space between my fingers, to each thumb, and to the space between my thumb and fingers. Although I feel rushed at this point, I **take at least 15 to 20 seconds to clean my hands** before moving on.

If in a location with an appropriate anteroom, **at this point I will move to the anteroom to finish removing my eye protection and mask**. Anyone in the anteroom must have a properly fitted N95, so I will not enter until I have confirmed that this is the case.

After entering the anteroom, I locate the hand sanitizer with my right hand and dispense a few pumps into my palm. I rub my hands together, beginning with my palms, and methodically covering my entire hands with sanitizer, continuing to rub until my hands feel dry. While rubbing,

I pay special attention to the space between my fingers, to each thumb, and to the space between my thumb and fingers. Although I feel rushed at this point, I **take at least 15 to 20 seconds to clean my hands** before moving on.

If I am wearing **eye protection** separate from my mask, I will now remove it in a controlled way. Before beginning I remind myself that the **front of my eye protection is contaminated**, and will **only touch the back or side pieces**. Using both hands, I **grab the straps or arms on the side of the eye protection**, and lift them off of my ears. I now **move the eye protection away from my face**, placing it directly into the garbage, or into a container for cleaning.

By now, the only piece of PPE that I am wearing is my mask. **Before removing my mask I once again clean my hands**. I pay special attention to cleaning my hands in a methodical way, taking **15-20 seconds to complete** the process.

At this point I **remind myself that the front of my mask is contaminated, and that I will be mindful of this while removing the mask**. Choose the mask you are using:

Mask with ear loops → Reaching behind my ears with both hands, I **grab the elastic loops and pull them away from my ears**. With both hands I **pull the mask away from my face**, and immediately **place it in the garbage**, without touching any portion of the mask except the ear loops.

Surgical mask (tie on) → Reaching behind my head with both hands, I **grasp each end of the bottom tie, and pull apart** to undo the knot. Letting go over the bottom ties, I again reach behind my head with **both hands, grasping each end of the remaining tie**. While tilting my head forward, I feel the bottom of the mask fall away from my face. Remaining in this position, I pull the ties apart, feeling the knot undo. Continuing to **hold both sides of the upper tie, I pull the mask away from my face and discard it in the trash**.

N95 mask → Reaching **behind my head with both hands, I grasp the bottom elastic strap**. I pull this up and over my head, being careful not to touch the front of my mask. I **continue to hold this strap with my left hand**, while reaching up with my **right hand to grasp the top strap that remains in place on my head**. With my right hand I pull this top strap up and over my head. Keeping **one hand grasping each strap, I pull the whole mask away from my face**. Again taking care not to touch the front of the mask, I place it into the trash or into a sealable bag for reuse.

Now that **all of my PPE is removed**, I am careful to **not touch my face or my clothing** until I have completed another hand sanitization. Dispensing a few pumps of hand sanitizer with my right hand, I rub my hands together, beginning with my palms, and methodically covering my entire hands with sanitizer, continuing to rub until my hands feel dry. While rubbing, I **pay special attention to the space between my fingers, to each thumb, and to the space**

between my thumb and fingers. Although I feel rushed at this point, I **take at least 15 to 20 seconds to clean my hands** before moving on to my next task.

PPE Donning Script

Before putting on any PPE, I **consider whether I am prepared to complete the tasks** that require this equipment. Looking around, I see that I have within arms reach a dispenser with hand sanitizer, as well as my gown, gloves, eye protection, a hair cover, and an appropriately sized mask. I have removed any jewelry, and checked that my ID badge, pager, cell phone and pens are secure inside pockets, or have put these things aside. If I have had a stethoscope around my neck, I will set this aside as well. I check that my hair is secured so that it will not fall into my face. If possible, I will **ask a colleague to observe my donning process**, and encourage them to let me know any lapses in protocol that they notice.

First, I will **clean my hands with hand sanitizer**. I locate the hand sanitizer, and use my right hand to dispense a few pumps into my left palm. I ensure that I have dispensed enough to completely cover both gloved hands. Working methodically, I spread the sanitizer on both palms, the backs of each hand in turn, the web spaces between each finger, the tips of my fingers, and the entirety of my thumbs. I pay special attention to observing myself covering the entirety of my hands, and **spend 15-20 seconds completing this process**.

The next piece of PPE I will don is my mask. Having already considered which mask is appropriate for my tasks, I will have an appropriate type and size of mask available.

N95 → I will first remove the packaging from the mask, confirming that I have the correct size. Using my right hand I **cup the front of the mask** and hold it up in front of me, looking to verify that the nose piece is at the top. With my left hand I grasp the lower elastic strap, flipping it up and over the mask to rest on the back of my right hand. Using the same motion I move the top strap to the same position, so that **both of the straps are on the front side** of the mask. Using my right hand I bring the mask up to my face, **placing the mask so that I feel the bottom portion just under my chin**. Holding the mask in position with my right hand, I use my left hand to **grasp the lower strap, and pull it over my head**. I feel the strap resting just below my ears. Again with my left hand I **grasp the top strap, pulling it over my head to rest above my ears**. I now let go of the mask and the straps with both hands, and can feel the mask secured on my face, noting the pressure on the bridge of my nose, around my cheeks as well as my chin. I **place two fingers from each hand very close together on the nosepiece of the mask**, and methodically press the nose piece into my face. **Working my way out from the centre of the mask, I can feel the nose piece molding to my nose and face**. After reaching the end of the nose piece, I check the fit around my chin, feeling for any gaps or folds in the mask where it meets my face. Before moving on I **check the seal by placing both hands over the front of my mask**, covering as much of it as possible. I quickly **exhale into the mask**, and am attentive to any air leaks. If I perceive any leaks, I will repeat the process of molding my nose piece and adjust the straps to ensure a tight fit. **Before moving on I will be sure that I do not have any leaks** by performing the same process.

Surgical mask (tie on) → I **grasp my mask with colored or printed side facing out**, and the nose wire at the top. Then using my thumb and fore-fingers of each hand, locate the center of the mask while feeling the nose wire. Gently I **form the nose wire into a U shape and place the formed nose wire over the bridge of my nose** so I can feel it extending across the upper cheekbones. Using both hands I gently **press the nose wire, fitting it around my nose and cheekbones**. Once I feel the mask is well-fitted to my face, I continue to hold the top of the mask at my nose using my left hand. With my right hand I **grasp the bottom of the mask, and pull it down below my chin**. Now that the mask is snugly fitted to my face, I **grasp the top ties**, one in each of my hands, and bring them behind my head. I **tie them snugly** around my head using a slipknot. Now that the top ties are secure, I **grasp the bottom ties**, one in each hand, and bring them behind my head, so that they fall below my ears. Again I **tie a slipknot to hold the ties snug against my head**. The mask now feels snug on my face, without any large gaps around my nose or cheeks, and extends below my chin to below my neck.

Procedure mask (ear loops) → I pick up my **mask with the coloured or printed side facing out**, and the nose wire at the top. I place **my fingers through the earloops, and position the mask over my nose and mouth**. Pulling the elastic ear loops back, I **place them securely around my ears**. I **pull the mask from the top and bottom to fully open the folds of the mask**, and adjust the mask around the face. Using both hands, I **gently form the nose wire over the bridge of my nose**, and feel the mask now snugly secured on my face, with no large gaps around my nose or cheeks, and fully covers my mouth and nose.

Goggles → With my mask secured, I will **now put on my goggles**. While donning my eye protection, I will be **vigilant to not disturb the fit of my mask**. Using both hands, I place the **side pieces over each ear, and adjust the fit until it feels comfortable and secure** on my ears and nose. If I feel at this point that my mask fit may have been disturbed, I will complete another fit check.

Face shield → With my mask and goggles secured I **now reach for my face shield**. With my left hand I **hold the forehead pad just above my eyebrows**. Continuing to hold the shield in position over my face, I **use my right hand to pull the elastic strap over my head**. Now that I feel the strap secured around the back of my head, I use both hands to **adjust the shield until it is comfortably positioned just above my eyebrows, and covers my entire face**. If I feel the shield is too loose, I will adjust the strap until it is comfortably snug.

Once happy with the fit of my eye protection, I **grasp my bouffant (hair protection) placing both hands inside the elastic headband**. I pull my hands apart to stretch the bouffant, and reach above my head. Holding the bouffant stretched out, I lower it **over my head so that the elastic headband rests just above my goggles, or covers the top of my face shield**. With my right hand, I feel the back of the bouffant, paying attention to **make sure it is pulled low and is covering as much of my hair as possible**.

I now pick up my gown with both hands, and allow it to fall open in front of me. I pass my right arm through the right sleeve, and then my left arm through the left sleeve, **with the gown opening at my back**. Reaching behind my head with both hands, I **grasp the ties behind my neck, and tie a slip knot** to secure the gown around my neck. With my arms now covered and the gown hanging from my neck, I **can grasp the waist ties, passing one end behind my back and around my waist**. I tie the two ends together with a slipknot. Now that the gown is secured, I will **look to see that the sleeves cover my arms all the way to my wrists, and that the lower part of the gown reaches at least to my knees**.

By this point, I have put on my gown, mask, eye protection, and hair covering, and am **protected from the top of my head to my knees**. To complete my PPE I will **put on my gloves**. I select appropriately sized gloves for my hands, with cuffs long enough to allow me to pull them up over the wrists of my gown.

I pick up my right glove by the cuff using my left hand. I **place my right hand inside the cuff, and using my left hand pull the cuff up and over the gown on my right wrist**. Next I pick up my left glove by the cuff, using my now gloved right hand. Placing my **left hand inside the cuff, I pull the cuff up and over my gown on my left wrist**. Once both gloves are on, I **carefully examine my right glove for holes, and pay special attention to make sure that there is no skin visible at my wrist**. Once satisfied, I repeat this process with my left gloved hand. If I am to perform a task requiring **double gloving, I will repeat the same procedure once more**. While donning the second pair of gloves, I **pay special attention to creating holes or rips in either set of gloves, and carefully check for damage once donned**.

Before proceeding into the patient care area, I **ask a colleague to verify that I have donned all of the PPE necessary**. Once I am confident my PPE is appropriate, I gather the needed equipment and set off to begin my tasks.