

# How to Fold an American Flag

By Danielle Blinka MA MPA

## Part 1 : Folding the Flag Lengthwise



**Lower the flag down the flagpole slowly, not letting it touch the ground.**

Loosen the line and pull the cords to bring the flag back toward the ground. Do this slowly and in a reverent manner, showing your respect toward the flag.<sup>[1]</sup> Gather the flag as it gets close to the ground. Slide the flag off the line, then secure the line in place on the pole.<sup>[2]</sup>

It's best to fold the flag near the pole to reduce the risk of dropping all or part of it.



**Make sure no part of the flag touches the ground at any time.**

Letting the flag touch the ground is a sign of disrespect against the flag. As you fold the flag, keep it completely off the ground by either working with a partner or folding it on a clean, dry surface.<sup>[3]</sup>

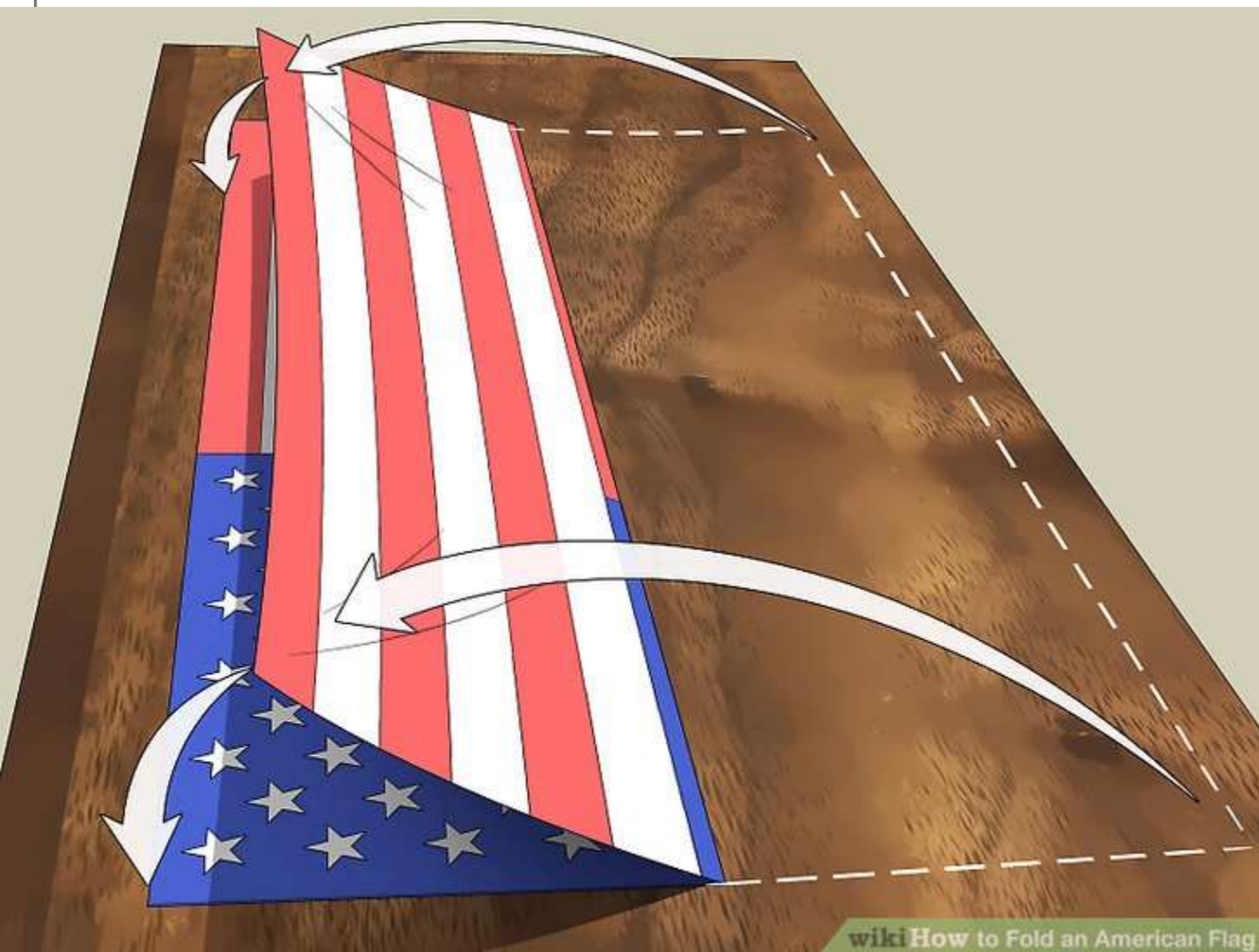
For example, you might lay the flag out on your dinner table face up.



**Lay the flag out on a table if you're working alone.**

The flag should be face up with the field of blue at the top. Make sure the flag is smooth and wrinkle-free.<sup>[4]</sup>

If you're working with a partner, hold the flag parallel to the ground at waist-height. Each partner will hold one corner of the flag.

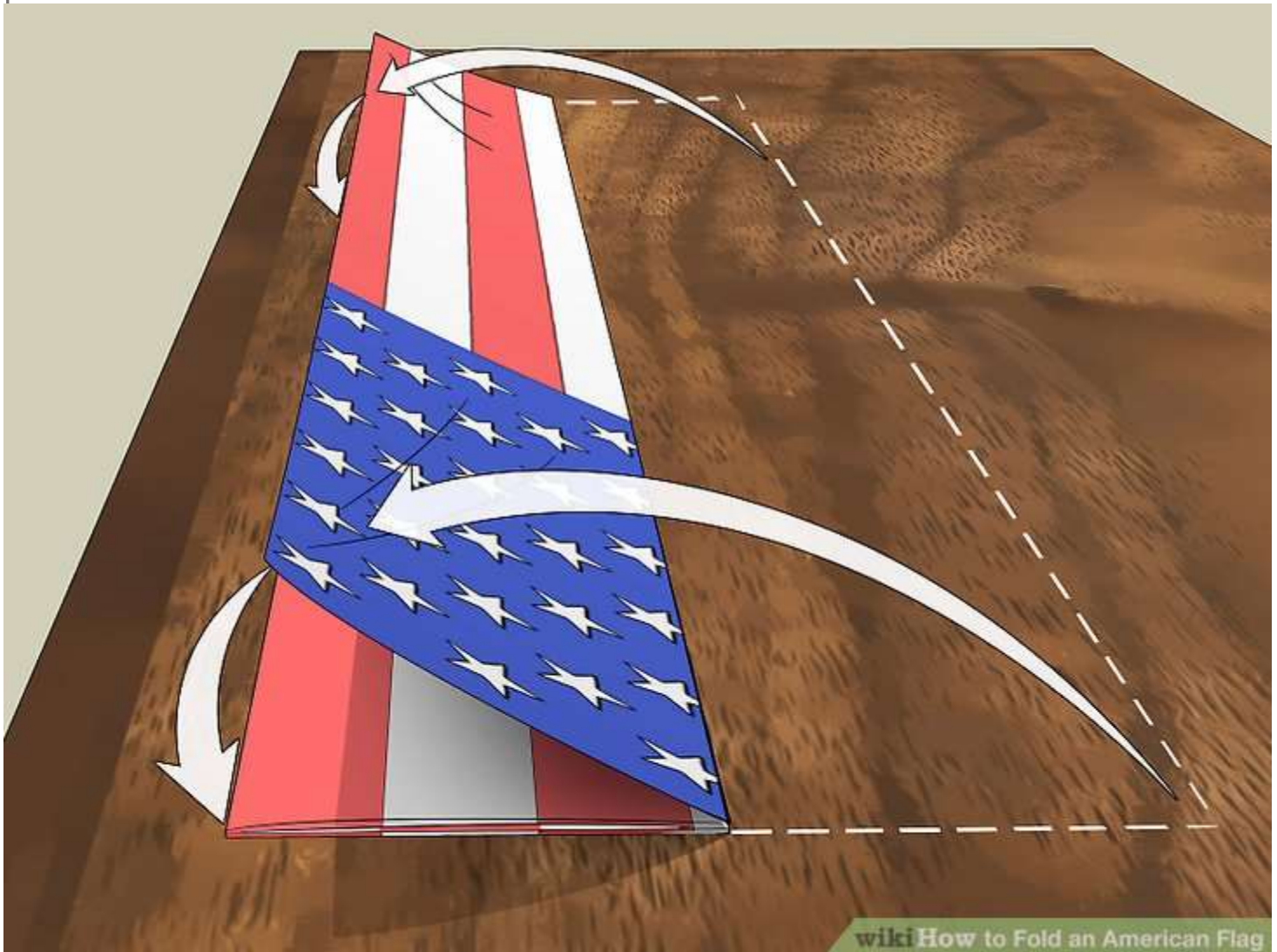


**Fold your flag so that the bottom stripes are over the field of stars.**

You will bring the bottom edge up, then align it with the top edge. The two edges will meet, while the bottom will now be a fold. Check that the flag is completely smooth, with no unevenness or wrinkles.<sup>[5]</sup>

If you're working with a partner, adjust your hands so that each partner is holding the layered corners in one hand and the middle fold in the other.





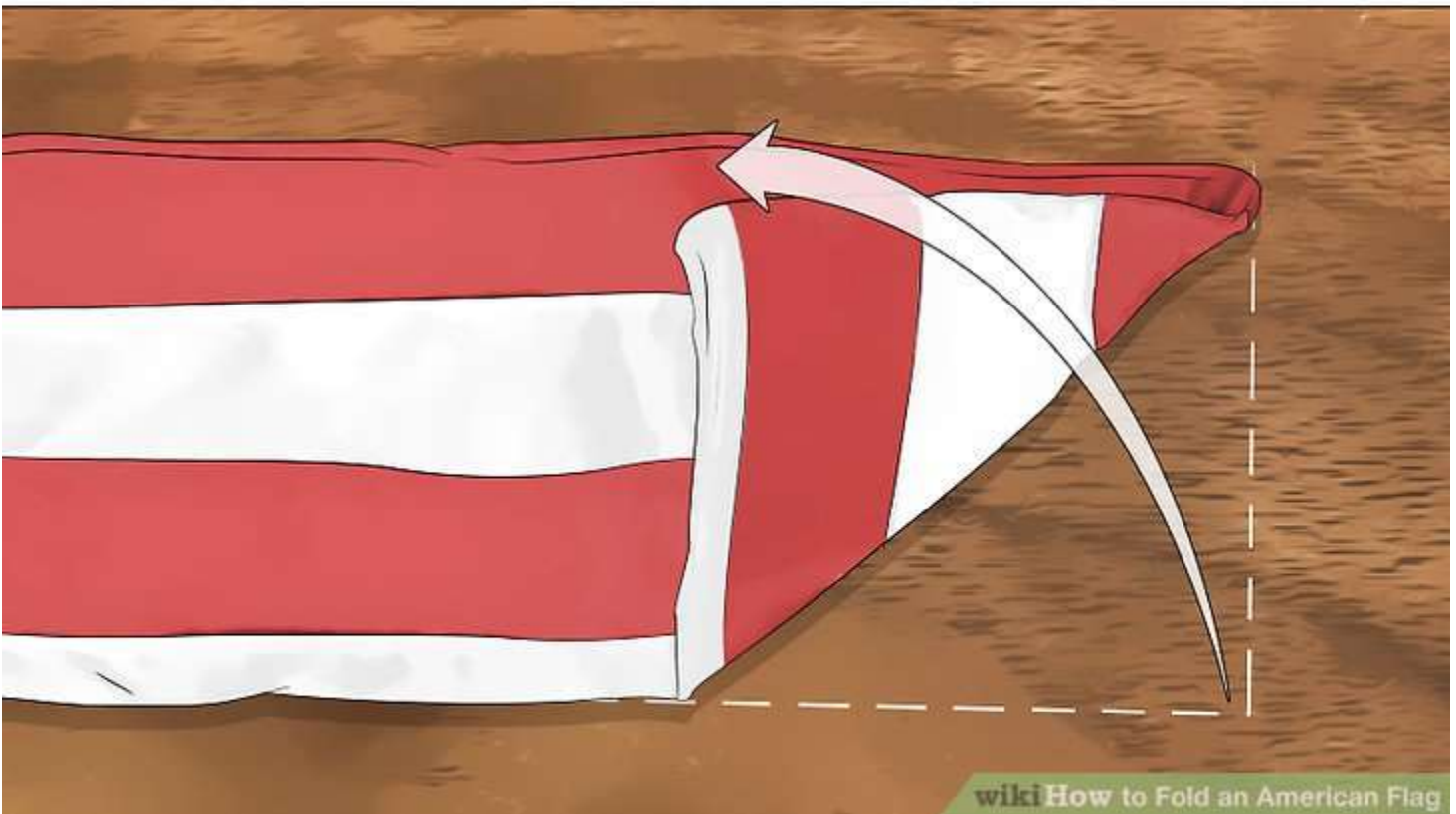
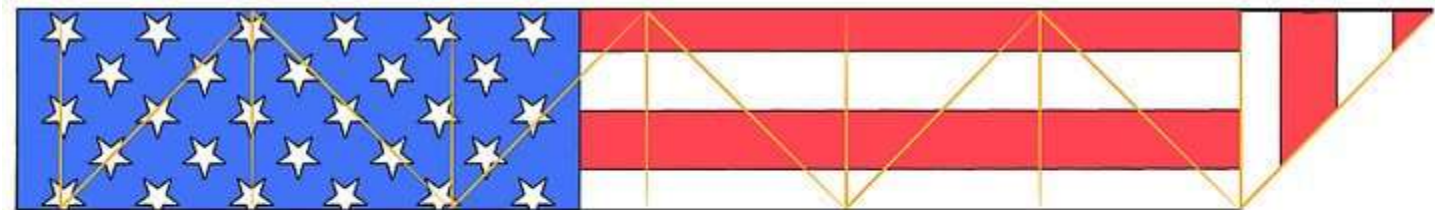
**Bring the folded edge up to the top edge to create a second fold.**

The field of stars should be visible on both sides of the folded flag at this point. Check that both sides of the flag have the field of blue on the left and the stripes on the right. [\[6\]](#)

If you're working with a partner, each person will be holding 2 corners and a folded edge in one hand. In their other hand, they will hold the bottom folded edge.

## Part 2 : Making the Flag into a Triangle

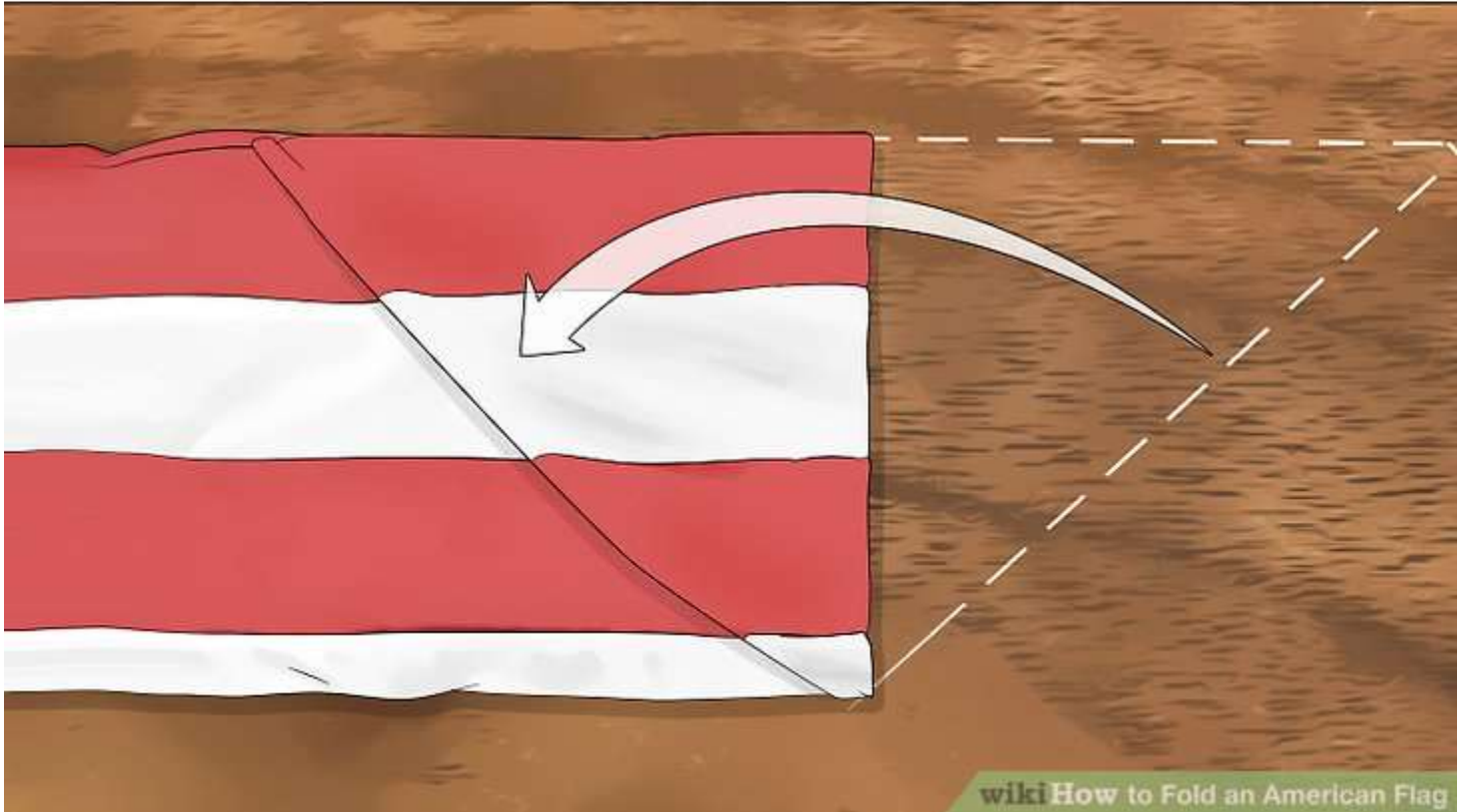
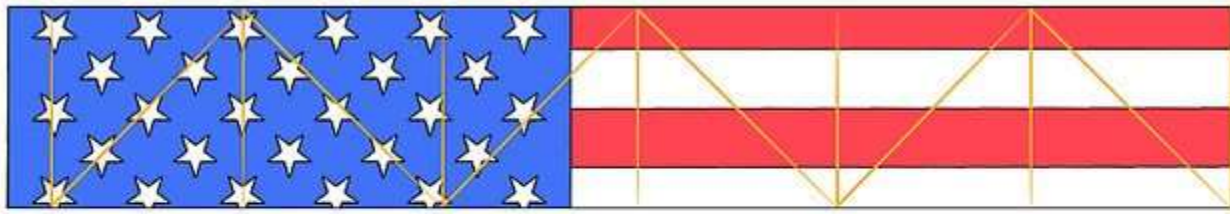
1.



**Create a triangle fold by bending the striped corner up to the top edge.**

The outside edge of the folded flag should be aligned with the top edge. The fold itself will look like a triangle. Check that the flag doesn't have any wrinkles.<sup>[7]</sup>

Each side of the triangle should be an equal length.



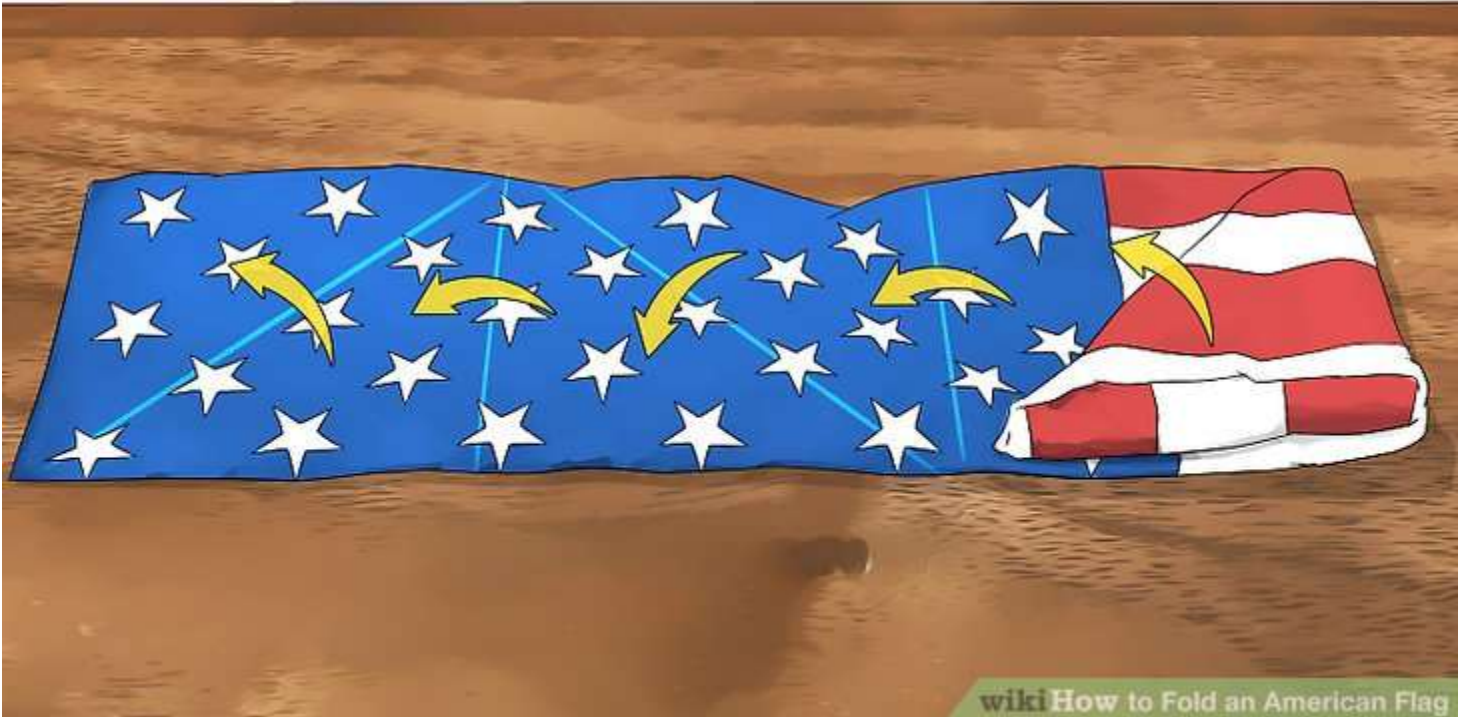
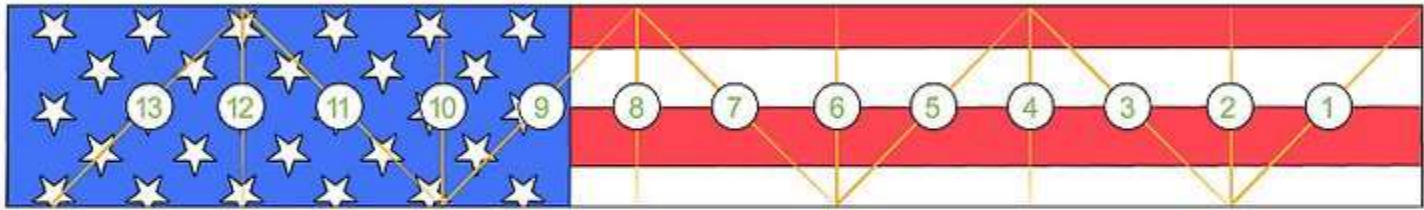
**Fold the pointed corner over to form a second triangle.**

The edge of the first triangle will stay aligned with the edge of the folded flag. The flag should once again look like a rectangle. [\[8\]](#)

Make sure the fold is wrinkle-free.



## 13 folds



**Continue making triangle folds down the length of the flag.**

In total, you will make 13 folds, including the first 2. On the last fold, only the blue field will be visible.<sup>[9]</sup>

The 13 folds symbolize the original 13 colonies. Additionally, each fold is assigned a special meaning, as explained here: <http://www.usflag.org/foldflag.html>.

Each triangle should be evenly sized.





**Tuck the end of the flag into the open fold.**

The edge of the field of blue can be tucked into the open fold on the side of the triangle. Only the field of blue should be visible on either side of the flag.

The triangle shape is used to honor the 3-corner hat traditionally worn by the revolutionaries who fought for American independence. [\[10\]](#)

### Part 3 : Storing Your Flag



#### **Display the flag in a triangle-shaped display case.**

Many people love to display the flag, especially if it's a flag given in honor of a loved one. You can place your folded flag in a container designed for displaying the flag. This is a reverent way to display the flag with honor. [\[11\]](#)

For example, veterans' families often receive a flag following the veteran's funeral. This flag will be placed over the coffin, then folded to be presented to the family. You can store this flag in a display case to remember your family member.

You can purchase a case online or at a store, that sells flags.



**Store the flag in a clean, dry place.**

You might place it in a drawer or closet. Keep it separate from other items so it doesn't get mixed in with your everyday linens.

It's a good idea to put the flag in a case or plastic container before you store it. This will protect it from dirt and dust.



**Make sure the flag is secure in its spot.**

Place the flag somewhere it won't fall or get mixed up with other linens. You might put it in a secure drawer or keep it in its case at all times. If you are displaying the flag, make sure it's properly hung or its display case is on a sturdy shelf.

You don't want your flag to fall out of its storage place or become damaged. It's disrespectful to the flag if it becomes dirty or damaged during storage.

Similarly, you do not want the flag to fall out of the spot and touch the ground. [\[12\]](#)