

5 Articles on How to Sew a Quilt

INCLUDING A SEWING TUTORIAL ON ENGLISH PAPER PIECING



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5 SEWING BASICS

When it comes to sewing a quilt, you have a lot of options. You can choose one or more free-motion motifs,



a straight quilting stitch, or one of those fancy digitized quilting stitches. If you're piecing your quilt top, you can use hand piecing,

foundation piecing, or English paper piecing.

In this free eBook, *Sewing Techniques for Quilters: 5 Free Articles on How to Sew a Quilt Including a Sewing Tutorial on English Paper Piecing*, we give you four options for how to sew a quilt from expert quilt artists, plus a basic guide to sewing machine techniques, including a quick reference guide to basic tools and terms.

Quilt artist Ana Buzzalino reviews the options for how to sew a quilt in her article "How to Quilt Your Quilt," from doodling designs to choose the right thread and needle.

Of all the sewing machine stitches, the satin stitch can play a significant role in how to sew a quilt. This often underrated quilting stitch can be used to finishing the edges of a quilt, joining quilted blocks, free-motion quilting, and creating shapes. Kathy York's tutorial on the "Versatile Satin Stitch" has a wealth of information on quilting techniques using the satin stitch.

Hexagon quilting has experienced a revival recently among contemporary quilters. In "Linen Coin Purse with Hexagons," Jen Eskridge offers a step-by-step sewing tutorial on English paper piecing to help you achieve perfect points and seams. Plus you'll end up with an adorable coin purse!

Did you know that quilters in past centuries used newspaper for paper

piecing quilt patterns? Elizabeth Dackson references quilting techniques like paper pieced quilt patterns and foundation piecing in her sewing tutorial on how to make a "Spiderweb Quilt."

If you've ever wondered what it means to "square up" a quilt or how make a "fold binding," you will appreciate our "Sewing Basics" guide. It includes a list of sewing essentials, a glossary of terms and sewing techniques and a stitch glossary.

Sewing Techniques for Quilters: 5 Free Articles on How to Sew a Quilt Including a Sewing Tutorial on English Paper Piecing gives you so many useful quilting techniques and tips, you'll wonder how you ever got along without it.

Warmly,

VIVIKA HANSEN DENEGRE
Editor

Quilting Arts

MAGAZINE®

**5 ARTICLES
ON HOW TO
SEW A QUILT
INCLUDING A SEWING
TUTORIAL ON ENGLISH
PAPER PIECING**

EDITOR **Vivika Hansen DeNegre**

ONLINE EDITOR **Cate Coulacos Prato**

CREATIVE SERVICES

DIVISION ART DIRECTOR **Larissa Davis**

PHOTOGRAPHERS **Larry Stein**

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THE **big** DECISION HOW TO **quilt** YOUR **quilt**

BY ANA BUZZALINO

ADAPTED FROM
INTERNATIONAL QUILT FEST: QUILT SCENE
2011/2012

M A T E R I A L S

- Iron and ironing board
- A quilt top ready to be quilted
- Batting of your choice
- Backing of your choice
- Thread
- Bobbin thread
- Paper or a sketchbook
- Pen and pencil
- Tracing paper
- Colored pencils
- Marking pencils to mark quilt top

OPTIONAL

- Embroidery threads
- Beads

Quilting is an intrinsic part of the overall quilt design process and should not be treated as an afterthought. The old saying, “It’s not a quilt until it’s quilted,” is so true. The method used to quilt a quilt affects the way the quilt looks, hangs, and feels.

To me the quilting is the most fulfilling part of making a quilt. Once the top is finished, pressed, and layered, the fun starts. I usually start to design the quilting in the early stages, as I start to piece a quilt. I think of all the possibilities, change my mind, adjust the design, and usually change my mind again. Because I dislike taking out stitches, I make a lot of decisions before I even thread a needle; in this way, I try to avoid having to remove any quilting stitches.

DOODLING

I doodle a lot before I start to quilt. Doodling gives me the opportunity to try different designs and motifs on paper. It allows me to get an idea of what various motifs will look like, whether they will work as quilting designs, and how a motif will fit a certain space. Doodling also allows me to try to resolve any issues beforehand.

It only takes a few minutes to sketch a thumbnail of your block and you can mix and match designs until you find one that suits your needs. Sometimes you'll find that you like part of the designs, but not all of them, so the next step is to draw another thumbnail, repeat the designs you like, and add new ones.

1. On a piece of paper, and with a pencil or pen, draw a thumbnail look-alike of the block or blocks you are working with. (Figure 1)
2. Start by drawing one quilting idea on each block, varying the elements as you go and deciding what combination of elements you think will work best together. (Figure 2)

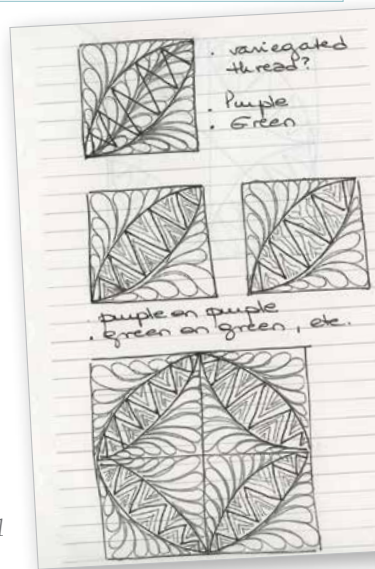
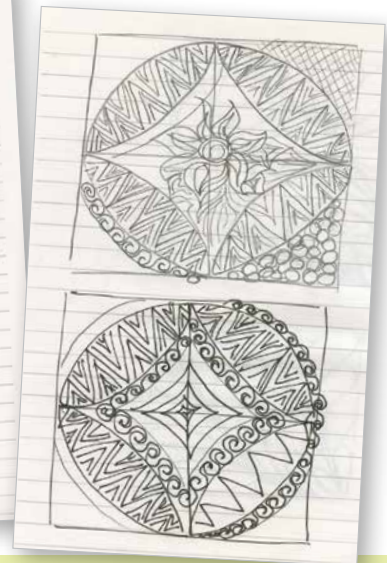


Figure 1

Figure 2



quilt design

The design of the quilt featured in this article was born from my desire to incorporate paint and stitch on one quilt. It started with the Rattlesnake block pattern from the book *KAREN K. STONE QUILTS*, which I changed and adjusted. There are two blocks in the quilt that are fully painted, and there's one block in which I used paint to change the color of the background patches, as the fabric I had used was too bright.

CHOOSING THREAD

Once your quilting design is defined, take time to select the right thread. Will you use variegated? Rayon? Cotton? Thick? Thin? Shiny? I like rayon because of the way it shines on the surface of the quilt. The one I used for this quilt is a 40-weight, and it comes in a multitude of colors.

AUDITIONING THREAD: Take swatches of the fabrics in your quilt top to the store to audition threads. I find that it works really well to cut a small piece of each fabric used in my quilt and affix them to a page in my sketchbook (I use a separate page for each color); I then take my sketchbook to the store to audition threads. (Figure 6)

BOBBIN THREAD: Consider using bobbin thread in the bobbin. One of the advantages of bobbin thread is that it is very thin, so a lot of thread will fit on the bobbin. Because of the tight quilting I prefer to do, I use a lot of thread.

Before I switched to using bobbin thread, I would wind 10–12 bobbins prior to starting, as I knew that the bobbin would run out 30–40 minutes into the quilting. Now, by using bobbin thread (such as 60-weight Deco-Bob™ by WonderFil™ Specialty Threads, 100-weight Invisafil™ by WonderFil, 60-weight The Bottom Line™ by Superior Threads, etc.), I can quilt for hours before it runs out.

Bobbin thread comes in a variety of colors, so you can change bobbin thread colors as often as you change top thread colors. In this manner, if by any chance the tension is not perfect, the bobbin thread will not be a distraction on the top of the quilt.

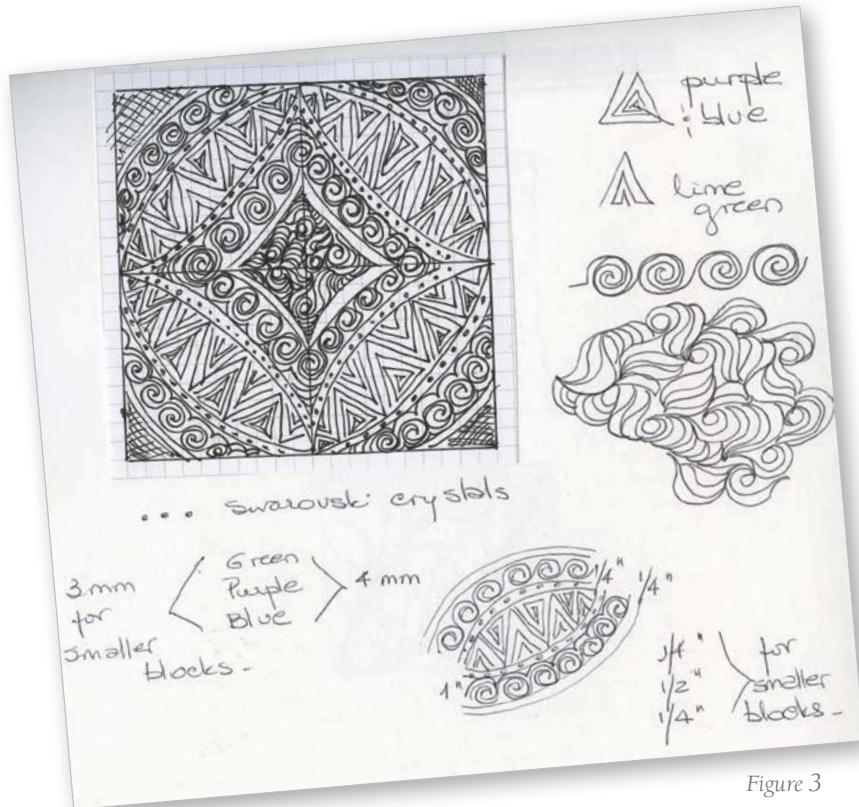


Figure 3

3. Repeat until you find a combination that pleases you. (Figure 3)

TRACING

The next step in the process is to audition the quilting design using tracing paper and colored pencils directly over your quilt top.

1. Place a sheet of tracing paper on the quilt top, over the block for which you're auditioning a quilting design. (Figure 4)
2. Using colored pencils to imitate the thread colors you intend to use, draw the different quilting designs on the tracing paper. (Figure 5)
3. Repeat this process until you find a combination that pleases you.



Figure 4



Figure 5

Photos by Ana Buzzalino



Figure 6

A nice side effect of using colored bobbin thread is the secondary design achieved on the back of the quilt. In addition, quilting with bobbin thread prevents nests of thread from forming on the back of the quilt.

MAKING SAMPLES

When you have found one, two, or more quilting ideas that you believe might work and you've selected the threads you plan to use, make a few extra blocks and layer them with the same batting and backing you will use on the actual quilt. This step gives you a chance to:

- Try the design on a sample block before trying it on the actual quilt.
- See if the batting and backing behave in the manner you expect.
- Try the thread and see if it gives you the look you want.

Using the same thread that you are planning to use to quilt the top, quilt the sample block following the designs on your thumbnail. I quilted one sample block using a variegated 30-weight thread that I thought would look great for my planned quilting design. Once I finished quilting the sample, I realized that I didn't like the variegated thread running through both colors on the paper-pieced part of the block, and I decided that this particular quilting design was not the right one. (Figure 7)

Continue trying out threads and quilting designs in the same manner until you meet with success. After my first attempt, I went back to the drawing board and made a few more thumbnails. When I came up with another idea I thought might work, I made more sample blocks. This time I made four, to complete one section of the quilt. (Figure 8)

Proceed in the same manner for any additional blocks in your quilt. I

returned to my sketchbook to resolve the quilting design for the alternate blocks in my quilt. Then I stitched a sample block to ensure my plan would work.

QUILTING THE QUILT

Once all of the elements have been defined—batting, backing, thread, and quilting designs—it is time to quilt your quilt. Machine quilting is a skill that improves with practice. It's like playing, really, with fabric, design and thread. It is very exciting, although there is also a measure of anxiety mixed with anticipation as to whether the design will work as envisioned.

1. Prepare your quilt sandwich.



Figure 7



Figure 8



Photos by Ana Buzzalino

Figure 9

2. Change the needle (select a size in accordance with the thread you are using), thread the machine properly, and start quilting.

tip: If you need to mark a quilting design, use a marking tool that you have tested on a scrap of the exact fabric you'll be using. In this case, I used a white chalk pencil; it makes a thin mark that remains on the quilt as long as I need it; then the marks are easy to remove with a soft brush. I mark one section at a time, just the area I am about to quilt. (Figure 9) If you are using a stencil to mark the quilt, take time to connect all the lines as it makes it easier for your eyes and your brain to follow a continuous line. (Figures 10A & 10B)

EMBELLISHMENT

When all of the quilting is done, it is time to add embellishments to your quilt if you wish. In the case of the featured quilt, I added hand stitching, beading, and crystals. I decided to hand stitch the centers of the smaller blocks to keep them uniform, but separate from the rest.

To add variety and texture, I used both a seed stitch and French knots, and I added beads. I interspersed bugle



Figure 10A



Figure 10B

beads among the seed stitches and seed beads with the French knots. I chose blue for the seed stitches on the blue blocks and purple for the French knots on the purple blocks.

Once again, take your fabric swatches with you when you go to the store to choose embellishments. I took my sketchbook containing the swatches of fabric when I went to choose hand-dyed threads and beads. (Figure 11)

FINISHING

The last step in the process is to bind and label your quilt. 🌸

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Figure 11

ADAPTED FROM
QUILTING ARTS™ MAGAZINE
FEBRUARY/MARCH 2010

BY KATHY YORK



versatile SATIN STITCH

ENRICH YOUR QUILTS WITH SIMPLE MACHINE STITCHING

Satin stitching can play a unique supporting role in the making of art quilts. I have used it for finishing the edges of a quilt, joining quilted blocks, free-motion quilting, and creating shapes and defining lines. One of the best aspects of satin stitching is that it doesn't have to be perfect to look fabulous!

BASIC CONSIDERATIONS

To get started, I recommend experimenting with the same fabrics that you plan on using for your project. The basic considerations when satin stitching include stabilizing your work, choosing

threads and needles, and adjusting the machine settings.

STABILIZING

Satin stitching through a single layer of fabric is quite unruly. It is

important to stabilize the fabric before stitching, and there are three main ways of doing this:

- Place two layers of tearable stabilizer under your fabric. Make sure to turn them crosswise (90°) to each other. After stitching, gently tear the stabilizer off the back.
- Stretch your fabric across an embroidery hoop that fits the dimensions of your machine.
- Make a quilt sandwich with a top, batting, and backing. It will be



"Falling Through the Cracks" • 30" x 39" • The edges of the protruding building motif are finished with satin stitching. This quilt won third place in the Embellished category at the 2009 "Quilts: A World of Beauty," the annual fall judged show of the International Quilt Association at International Quilt Festival/Houston.

easiest to work with if it is machine quilted first.

THREAD

There are three points to consider when selecting a thread: color, sheen, and weight. You can often get wonderful results by choosing an unexpected color, so experiment with matching and contrasting colors. Threads can either have a matte finish or a shiny one. To make a line recede, use a matte cotton thread of the same color. To draw more attention to an

area, use a shiny contrasting thread. Variegated threads can produce wonderful results with different stitch widths (see the bottom three examples in the sample shown on the next page). The weight of the thread can also affect the look of the stitching, with thinner threads typically appearing smoother.

When choosing a thread for the bobbin, the easiest approach is to select the same thread as the top. However, an invisible or thin thread like The Bottom Line™ from Superior

Threads also works well and requires less frequent bobbin winding. Don't forget to check the tension in the bobbin if you choose a thinner thread.

NEEDLE

You will need to select a properly sized needle for your project. Generally, if you are using a thicker thread or sewing through multiple layers, you will need a larger needle. You may also need a larger needle if your thread is continually breaking. Once again, practice on the materials specific to

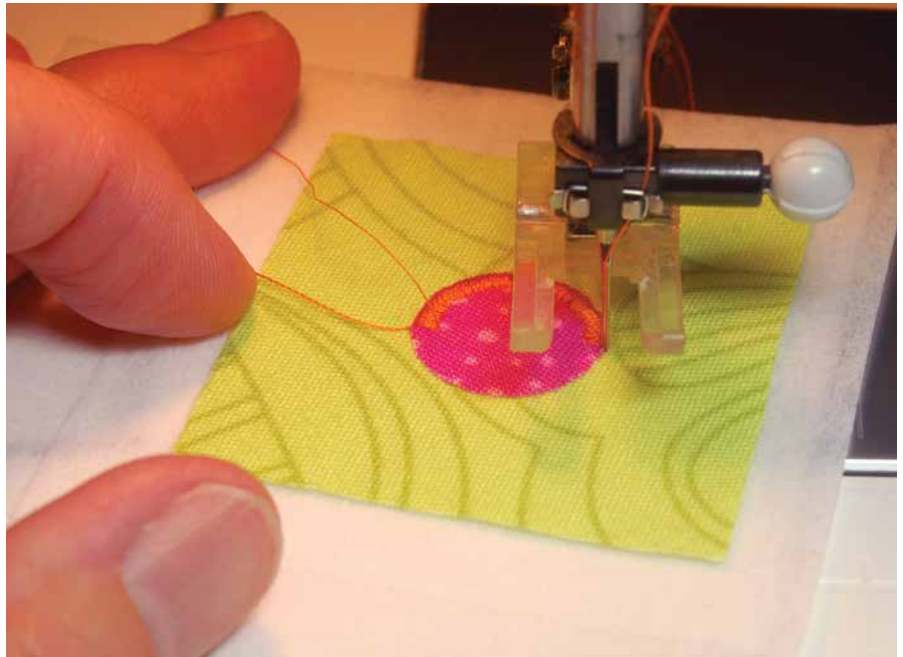
your project, and if your thread is breaking, select the next size larger needle. However, keep in mind that a needle that is too large will make big holes in your fabric, which is also undesirable.

TENSION SETTINGS

Your sewing machine's tension settings will need to be adjusted in preparation for satin stitching. Always reduce the



THE black and white stitched lines on this sample demonstrate different machine settings. The top tension of the first line is too tight and the bottom tension of the second line is too loose; in both cases, black bobbin thread is visible. The tension of the third line is just right so only the top white thread is visible. The purple lines on this sample demonstrate the effects of different stitch widths, colors, and types of thread: matte, cotton, and variegated.



Slowly pivoting your work as you go, while the presser foot is lifted, allows you to create satin-stitched curves without the underlying fabric showing through.

top tension; this is the single-most critical factor for achieving a beautiful satin stitch. For example, the normal top tension on my machine is about a 4, and I reduce it to a 2. You may also need to tighten your bobbin tension.

STITCH SPECIFICS

For satin stitching, select a stitch width that's between 1 and 5, and select a stitch length that's between 0 and 1. For the satin stitch to look full, you have to set the stitch length really short. However, beware that the repeated close punching of the fabric with the needle can weaken the fabric to the point of breaking.

FINDING THE BALANCE

Check your machine's settings by putting white thread in the top and black thread in the bobbin. Run a wide stitch on a sample piece of fabric. If black thread is showing on the top,

then the upper tension is too tight and the bobbin tension is possibly too loose. Adjust the tension and try again. (See the white and black threads in the sample piece.) If you can't get it perfect (I never can), the best choice is to have only the top thread showing on the front and some of the top thread showing on the back.

SKILLS AND APPLICATIONS

STARTING A LINE OF SATIN STITCHING

Pull the bobbin thread up to the top, and reduce the stitch length and stitch width to zero. While holding onto both threads, sew in place for 3–4 stitches. This locks the thread in place. Change the stitch width and length back, start sewing, and closely trim the tail threads.

Some threads will break if a few stitches are sewn on top of each other. For these threads, tie a knot after pulling them to the top, and then bury the ends between the quilt layers.

If you have to stop in the middle of a line, place your needle in the last hole that you finished before you start sewing again; it will be as if you never stopped.

SEWING CURVES

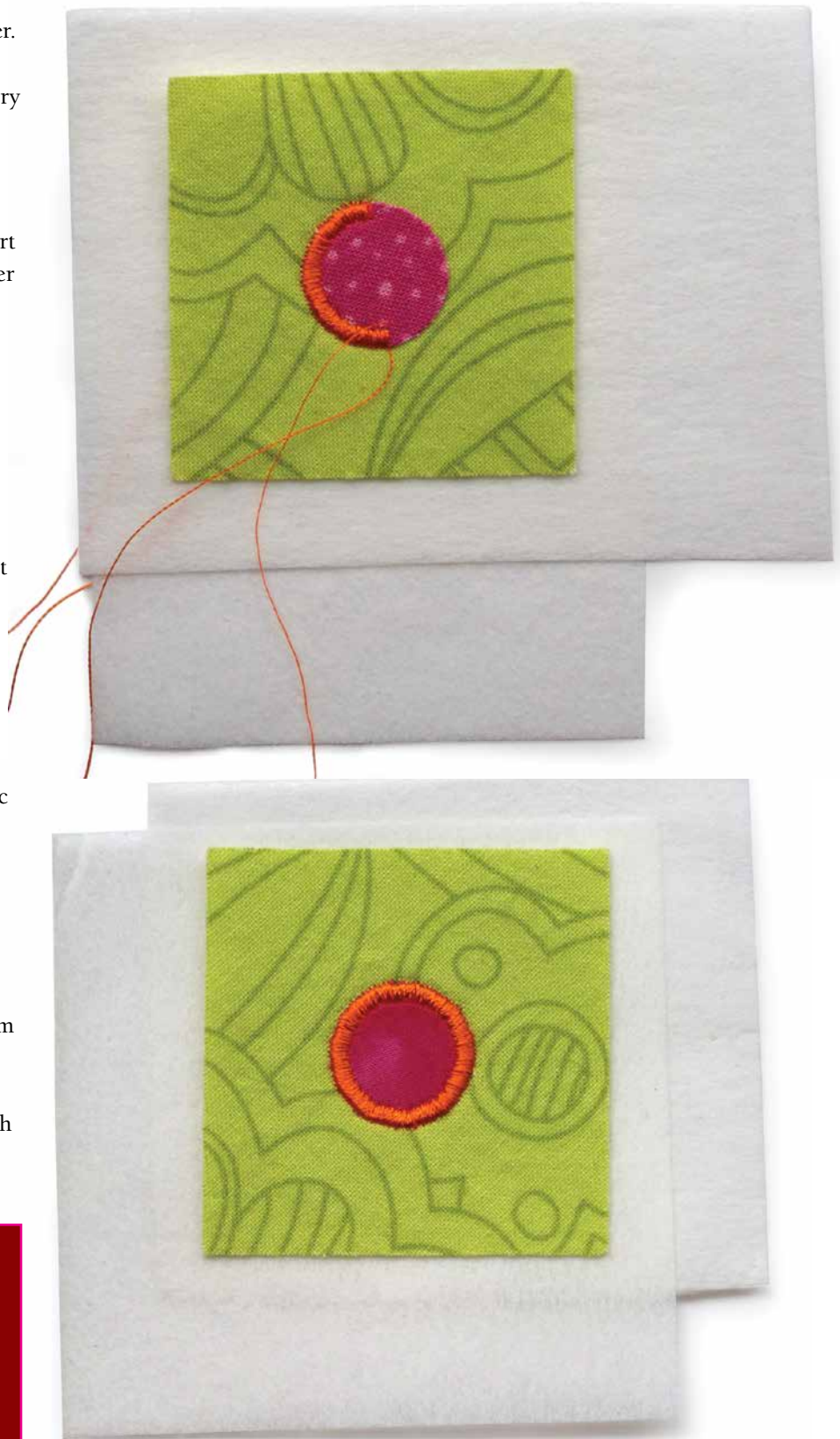
When satin stitching a straight line, the stitches should remain perpendicular to the edge you are sewing along. When sewing around a curve, the stitch will become less than perpendicular, so it is important to stitch slowly. With the needle down on the outside of the curve, gently pivot your fabric around so it is approaching perpendicular. The key is that, if the needle is down and you pivot your fabric, the next stitch should not leave a gap of fabric showing through, but should cover the fabric with thread as you sew.

JOINING QUILTED BLOCKS

You can quilt small pieces of any shape on your machine and join them with satin stitching. First, trim your blocks to a size that allows them to fit flush with each other. Zigzag stitch them together with a narrow stitch width and invisible thread. Apply

satin stitch TIP

Use a running stitch to create a guide for your satin stitching. First, sew a simple running stitch with your machine to mark where the satin stitch line will go. Then satin stitch over it.



These samples of satin stitching are done on fabric laid on top of two layers of tearable stabilizer.



These multi-colored circles are made with free-motion satin stitching and are embellished with a bit of hand stitching.

a thin strip of fused fabric over the back of the seam with an iron. If it is a curved joint, cut the fused fabric on the bias. On the front side, use a wide satin stitch to cover the previous stitching. This makes even large pieces sturdy enough to withstand the gravity of hanging.

FREE-MOTION SATIN STITCHING

This is really fun. Set up your machine for free-motion quilting, and set

the stitch width to a wide stitch. Depending on your speed and style, you will get a lovely zigzag or a satin stitch. Let loose and let it go! You can achieve some wonderful effects by layering several lines of satin stitch with different colored threads.

FINISHING THE EDGES OF A QUILT

To prevent the edges of your quilt from rolling, satin stitch them using a blind hem foot. Another option is to

stitch around the edge of your quilt multiple times. Start with a standard running stitch to prevent the edge from stretching, then set the stitch width so that the needle's left position pierces the quilt and the right position goes just off the edge. Stitch around the edge of the quilt, creating successively wider stitches each time around. ♦

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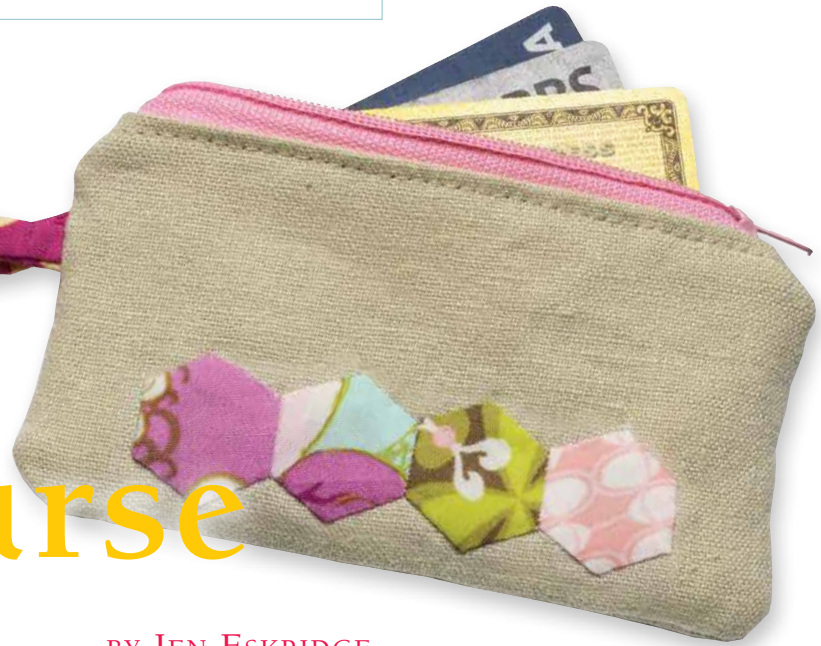
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101 PATCHWORK PROJECTS + QUILTS
2011



LINEN coin purse

WITH HEXAGONS

BY JEN ESKRIDGE



This coin purse, made from scrap fabrics, showcases hexagons made with traditional English paper piecing while still maintaining a modern, hip edge.

DIRECTIONS

THE HEXAGONS

1. Center a small paper hexagon on the wrong side of each of the fabric hexagons and finger press the fabric around the paper. (Figure 1)
2. Hand baste the folded seam allowances by taking large stitches through the paper and fabric, folding the fabric neatly at each corner. (Figure 2)
3. Place 2 hexagons on top of each other, right sides together. Using very small stitches, whipstitch the hexagons together. Open the pair and add the remaining 2 hexagons in the same way. (Figure 3)
4. Pin and then hand appliqué the hexagon strip to the exterior fabric rectangle, $\frac{1}{2}$ " from the lower edge. Remove the basting stitches, make

a snip in the fabric behind each hexagon, and remove the paper.

option: Arrange the hexagons in any design you like, adding more hexagons as desired.

THE PURSE

1. Apply interfacing to the wrong side of both of the $3\frac{1}{2}$ " \times $5\frac{1}{2}$ " linen pieces and to the wrong side of the 5 " \times $5\frac{1}{2}$ " pocket piece. Set aside.
2. Fold the strap fabric in half lengthwise, wrong-sides together, and stitch along the length. Following the manufacturer's directions, use the turning tool to turn the strap right-side out. Center the seam along the back of the strap and press.
3. Fold the strap in half and baste the cut ends to the right side of the front fabric piece and 1" below the top edge. (Figure 4)

4. Fold the divider fabric in half, wrong sides together, to create a piece measuring $2\frac{1}{2}$ " \times $5\frac{1}{2}$ ". Fold the pocket piece in half the same way. Stitch $\frac{1}{8}$ " from the folded edge on both pieces to secure the folds.
5. Align the interior divider on the right side of 1 of the lining pieces; machine baste along the 3 outside edges, $\frac{1}{8}$ " in from the edge. (Figure 5) In the same manner, machine baste the pocket to the back (non-hexagon) linen rectangle.
6. Layer the front piece (right-side up), the zipped zipper (right-side down), and the lining piece (right-side down), keeping the edges even (the zipper will extend about 1" beyond each side). Pin. Switch to a zipper foot and stitch the layers together, using a $\frac{3}{8}$ " seam allowance. (Figure 6)
7. Open the piece flat, and edgestitch along the zipper on the outside.

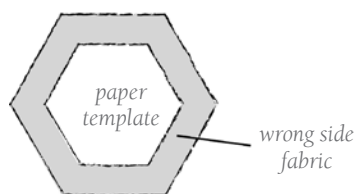


Figure 1

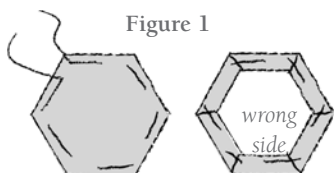


Figure 2

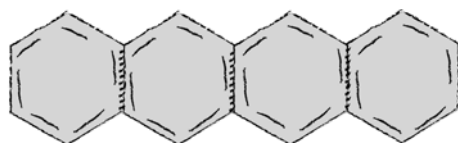


Figure 3

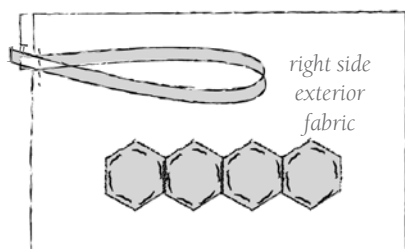


Figure 4

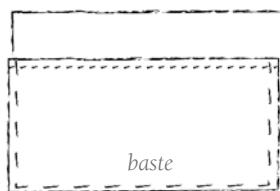
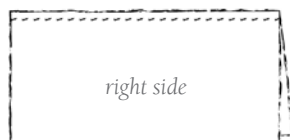


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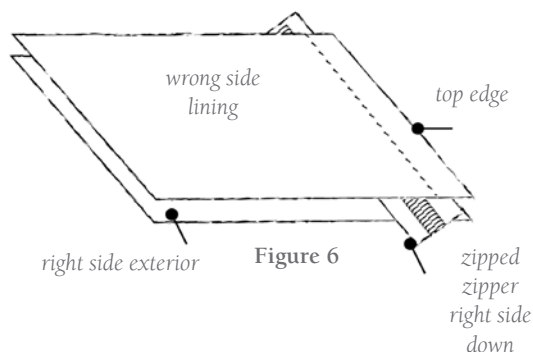


Figure 6

(Figure 7) Repeat for the second side. (Figure 8)

- Match the right sides of the linings and the right sides of the exteriors. Tuck the looped strap inside the bag and sew around the entire purse, leaving a 3" opening along the bottom edge of the lining. (Figure 9) Be sure to stitch carefully and slowly over the zipper teeth.

FINISHING

- Trim the excess bulk from the corners of the lining and exterior pieces, and trim the excess zipper length.
- Turn the coin purse right-side out through the opening in the lining. Use a blunt object to push the corners out.

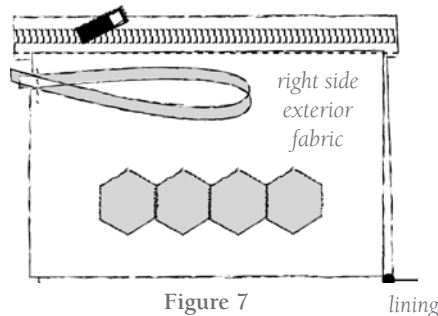


Figure 7

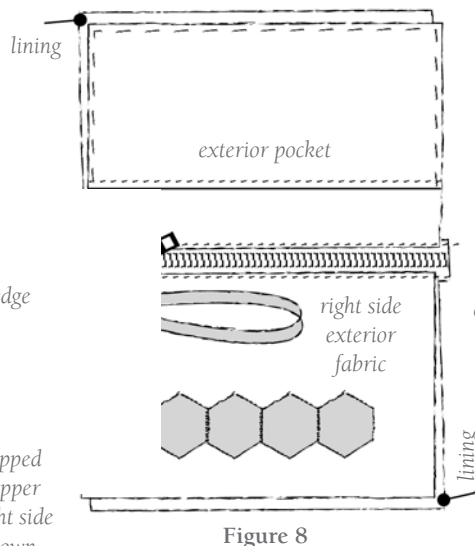


Figure 8

- Tuck the seam allowances into the opening left in the lining and stitch the opening closed. Push the lining back into the purse to complete the project. ♦

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MATERIALS

- Hexagon templates (pattern insert)
- Paper: 4 hexagons (use $\frac{1}{2}$ " pattern)
- Assorted fabric scraps: 1" \times 8" strip (strap) and 4 hexagons (use $\frac{3}{4}$ " pattern)
- Linen fabric: 2 rectangles $3\frac{1}{2}$ " \times $5\frac{1}{2}$ " (exterior) and 2 rectangles 5" \times $5\frac{1}{2}$ " (exterior pocket and interior divider)
- Lining fabric: 2 rectangles $3\frac{1}{2}$ " \times $5\frac{1}{2}$ "
- Fusible interfacing: 2 rectangles $3\frac{1}{2}$ " \times $5\frac{1}{2}$ " and 1 rectangle 5" \times $5\frac{1}{2}$ "
- Zipper, 7" plastic, non-separating
- Zipper foot
- Turning tool

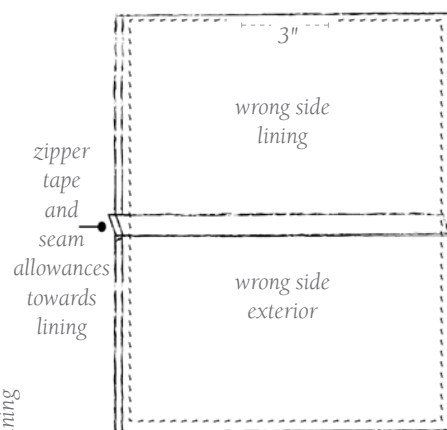


Figure 9



spiderweb QUILT

BY ELIZABETH DACKSON

ADAPTED FROM
INTERNATIONAL QUILT FEST: QUILT SCENE
2011/2012

String quilts, while currently quite popular amongst modern quilters, began as utility quilts as early as the mid 1800s. String quilts were usually made on a foundation of either muslin or paper; quilters commonly used newspaper for the foundation and whatever fabrics were available for the strings.

For my quilt, I used prints from two of Anna Maria Horner's fabric collections: "Good Folks" and "Garden Party." I adore the bright, saturated colors in these collections; I used a white background to balance out the cacophony of color in the prints. You can follow my lead and use lots of color, or you can make a big impact in your quilt by choosing fabrics in just one or two colors.

To make this quilt your own, you can vary the width of your scrap strips, cutting them as narrow as 1" wide or as wide as 2½". This variety of widths can create a lot of visual interest and lends an improvisational feel to the finished quilt.

note: The featured quilt was assembled with assistance from the {Sew} Beautiful quilt bee: Katie Bowlby, Megan Bohr, AnneMarie Chany, Cara Elsas, Lee Heinrich, Brooke Johnsen, Emily Lang, Angela Nash, Kati Spencer, and Cherie Wright.

CUTTING

1. From your base fabric, cut 60 squares 8½" x 8½". Carefully layer several squares on your cutting

mat. Using a large quilting ruler, make a cut diagonally across the squares from corner to corner. Each square will yield 2 triangles.

2. Prepare your scraps by cutting them into 1"-wide strips. You may trim them further, into 5½"-long strips, or you may trim them as you go, which will create minimal fabric waste.

PIECING

1. Using the diamond pattern (provided), make a template from cardboard or template plastic.
2. Place the template on 1 of your base triangles, matching the top of the diamond with the top of the base triangle as shown. (Figure 1) Using a water-soluble marking tool, trace the outline along both long sides of the diamond. Repeat for all 120 base triangles.
3. With right sides together, place your first fabric strip on top of your base triangle, lining up the raw edge of your strip with the line you traced from the diamond template. (Figure 2) Use a ¼"

Figure 1

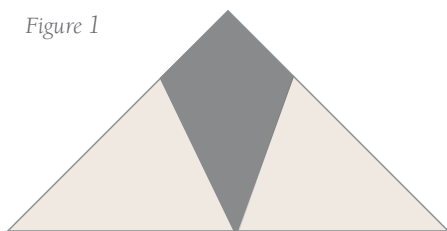
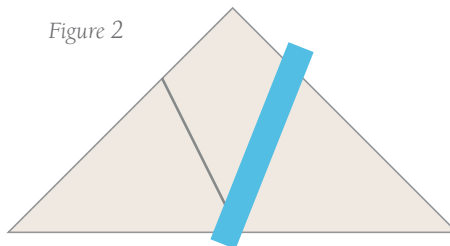


Figure 2



MATERIALS

Finished size: 55" x 65"

- Base fabric (for background), 3¾ yds.
- Various scraps, 2 yds. total (approximately)
- Backing fabric, 4 yds.
- Binding fabric, ⅝ yd.
- Batting, twin size
- Cardboard or template plastic
- Water-soluble marking tool

seam to sew together. Do not trim anything except for your thread tails at this point.

4. Carefully finger press the strip open, away from the center, and line up your next strip on the opposite side of the center of the block. Sew this strip to your base triangle in the same manner. Finger press this strip open as well, then press both seams with your iron.

note: Once you have sewn the 2 fabric strips that border the center of your base triangle, you will not sew any additional strips onto the base triangle. (It will be folded out of the way as you add the remaining strips.)

5. Position your next fabric strip, right sides together and raw edges aligned. Fold back the base triangle and sew the seam.
6. Continue adding strips until you have covered the base triangle, finger pressing and pressing your strip seams open along the way.

note: You can chain-piece these spiderweb triangles, which can minimize thread waste.

7. Turn the triangle to the wrong side, and using the base triangle as your guide, trim away the excess strip lengths. (Figure 3) Then, fold back the excess base triangle fabric, and trim it away.

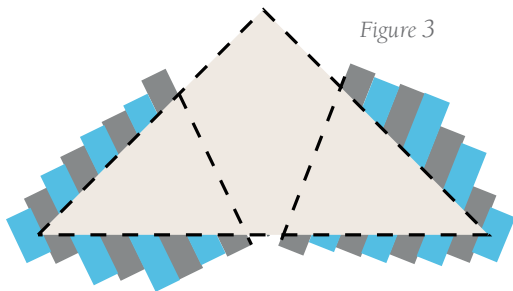


Figure 3

8. Lay out 4 completed triangles in a star formation. (Figure 4) Using a $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowance, line up 2 triangles at a time and seam them together. Continue for all blocks. Press the seams open. Next, seam the half-blocks together using a $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowance.



Figure 4

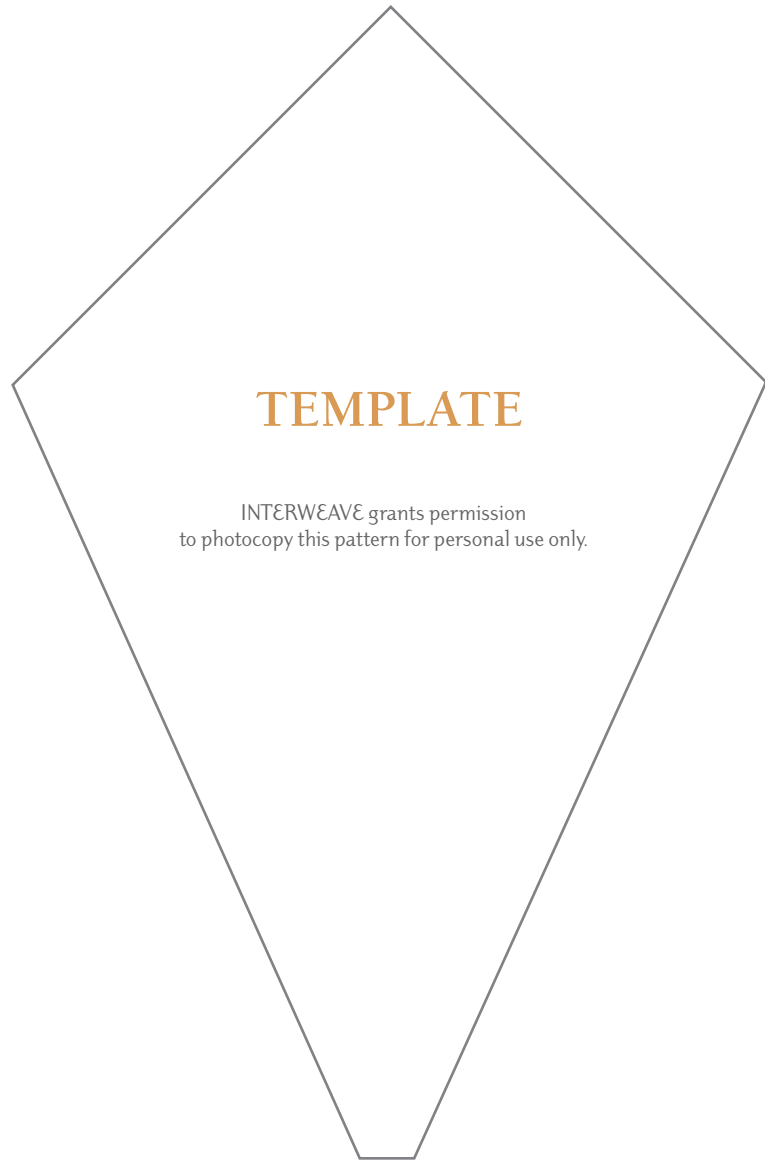
tip: When pressing the finished blocks, push the seams open at the center of the blocks so they will lie as flat as possible.

FINISHING

1. Arrange the blocks into 5 vertical rows of 6 blocks each. Sew the vertical rows, and then sew the rows together to complete your quilt top.

2. Piece the backing. Layer the backing (wrong side up), batting, and quilt top (right side up).
3. Baste the layers together.
4. Quilt as desired. The featured quilt shows an allover meandering stipple design.
5. Trim the edges as needed, and bind. ♦

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ADAPTED FROM
MODERN PATCHWORK
2012

SEWING basics

A QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE TO BASIC TOOLS, TECHNIQUES, AND TERMS

SEWING KIT

The following items are essential for your sewing kit. Make sure you have these tools on hand before starting any of the projects:

ACRYLIC RULER This is a clear flat ruler, with a measuring grid at least 2" wide × 18" long. A rigid acrylic (quilter's) ruler should be used when working with a rotary cutter. You should have a variety of rulers in different shapes and sizes.

BATTING 100% cotton, 100% wool, plus bamboo, silk, and blends.

BONE FOLDER Allows you to make non-permanent creases in fabric, paper, and other materials.

CRAFT SCISSORS To use when cutting out paper patterns.

EMBROIDERY SCISSORS These small scissors are used to trim off threads, clip corners, and do other intricate cutting work.

FABRIC Commercial prints, hand-dyes, cottons, upholstery, silks, wools; the greater the variety of types, colors, designs, and textures, the better.

FABRIC MARKING PENS/PENCILS + TAILOR'S CHALK Available in several colors for use on light and dark fabrics; use to trace patterns and pattern markings onto your fabric. Tailor's chalk is available in triangular pieces, rollers, and pencils. Some forms (such as powdered) can simply be brushed away; refer to the manufacturer's instructions for the recommended removal method for your chosen marking tool.

FREE-MOTION OR DARNING FOOT Used to free motion quilt.

FUSIBLE WEB Used to fuse fabrics together. There are a variety of products on the market.

GLUE Glue stick, fabric glue, and all-purpose glue.

HAND-SEWING + EMBROIDERY NEEDLES Keep an assortment of sewing and embroidery needles in different sizes, from fine to sturdy.

IRON, IRONING BOARD, + PRESS CLOTHS An iron is an essential tool when sewing. Use cotton muslin or silk organza as a press cloth to protect delicate fabric surfaces from direct heat. Use a Teflon® sheet or parchment paper to protect your iron and ironing board when working with fusible web.

MEASURING TAPE Make sure it's at least 60" long and retractable.

NEEDLE THREADER An inexpensive aid to make threading the eye of the needle super fast.

PINKING SHEARS These scissors with notched teeth leave a zigzag edge on the cut cloth to prevent fraying.

POINT TURNER A blunt, pointed tool that helps push out the corners of a project and/or smooth seams. A knitting needle or chopstick may also be used.

ROTARY CUTTER + SELF-HEALING MAT Useful for cutting out fabric quickly. Always use a mat to protect the blade and your work surface (a rigid acrylic ruler should be used with a rotary cutter to make straight cuts).

SAFETY PINS Always have a bunch on hand.

SCISSORS Heavy-duty shears reserved for fabric only; a pair of small, sharp embroidery scissors; thread snips; a pair of all-purpose scissors; pinking shears.

SEAM RIPPER Handy for quickly ripping out stitches.

SEWING MACHINE With free-motion capabilities.

For the projects in this ebook (unless otherwise indicated):

- When piecing: Use 1/4" seam allowances. Stitch with the right sides together. After stitching a seam, press it to set the seam; then open the fabrics and press the seam allowance toward the lighter fabric.
- Yardages are based upon 44"-wide fabric.

STRAIGHT PINS + PINCUSHION Always keep lots of pins nearby.

TEMPLATE SUPPLIES Keep freezer paper or other large paper (such as parchment paper) on hand for tracing the patterns you intend to use from the pattern insert. Regular office paper may be used for templates that will fit. You should also have cardstock or plastic if you wish to make permanent templates that can be reused.

THIMBLE Your fingers and thumbs will thank you.

THREAD All types, including hand and machine thread for stitching and quilting; variegated; metallic; 100% cotton; monofilament.

ZIPPER FOOT An accessory foot for your machine with a narrow profile that can be positioned to sew close to the zipper teeth. A zipper foot is adjustable so the foot can be moved to either side of the needle.

GLOSSARY OF SEWING TERMS AND TECHNIQUES

BACKSTITCH Stitching in reverse for a short distance at the beginning and end of a seamline to secure the stitches. Most machines have a button or knob for this function (also called backtack).

BASTING Using long, loose stitches to hold something in place temporarily. To baste by machine, use the longest straight stitch length available on your machine. To baste by hand, use stitches at least 1/4" long. Use a contrasting thread to make the stitches easier to spot for removal.

BIAS The direction across a fabric that is located at a 45-degree angle from the lengthwise or crosswise grain. The bias has high stretch and a very fluid drape.

BIAS TAPE Made from fabric strips cut on a 45-degree angle to the grainline, the bias cut creates an edging fabric that will stretch to enclose smooth or curved edges. You can buy bias tape ready-made or make your own.

CLIPPING CURVES Involves cutting tiny slits or triangles into the seam allowance of curved edges so the seam will lie flat when turned right-side out. Cut slits along concave curves and triangles (with points toward the seamline) along a convex curve. Be careful not to clip into the stitches.

CLIP THE CORNERS Clipping the corners of a project reduces bulk and allows for crisper corners in the finished project. To clip a corner, cut off a triangle-shaped piece of fabric across the seam allowances at the corner. Cut close to the seamline but be careful not to cut through the stitches.

DART This stitched triangular fold is used to give shape and form to the fabric to fit body curves.

EDGE STITCH A row of topstitching placed very close (1/16–1/8") to an edge or an existing seamline.

FABRIC GRAIN The grain is created in a woven fabric by the threads that travel lengthwise and crosswise. The lengthwise grain runs parallel to the selvages; the crosswise grain should always be perpendicular to the lengthwise threads. If the grains aren't completely straight and perpendicular, grasp the fabric at diagonally

opposite corners and pull gently to restore the grain. In knit fabrics, the lengthwise grain runs along the wales (ribs), parallel to the selvages, with the crosswise grain running along the courses (perpendicular to the wales).

FINGER-PRESS Pressing a fold or crease with your fingers as opposed to using an iron.

FUSSY-CUT Cutting a specific motif from a commercial or hand-printed fabric. Generally used to center a motif in a patchwork pattern or to feature a specific motif in an appliqué design. Use a clear acrylic ruler or template plastic to isolate the selected motif and ensure that it will fit within the desired size, including seam allowances.

GRAINLINE A pattern marking showing the direction of the grain. Make sure the grainline marked on the pattern runs parallel to the lengthwise grain of your fabric, unless the grainline is specifically marked as crosswise or bias.

INTERFACING Material used to stabilize or reinforce fabrics. Fusible interfacing has an adhesive coating on one side that adheres to fabric when ironed.

LINING The inner fabric of a garment or bag, used to create a finished interior that covers the raw edges of the seams.

MITER Joining a seam or fold at an angle that bisects the project corner. Most common is a 45-degree angle, like a picture frame, but shapes other than squares or rectangles will have miters with different angles.

OVERCAST STITCH A machine stitch that wraps around the fabric raw edge to finish edges and prevent unraveling. Some sewing machines have several overcast stitch options; consult your sewing machine manual for information on stitch settings and the appropriate presser foot for the chosen stitch (often the standard presser foot can be used). A zigzag stitch can be used as an alternative to finish raw edges if your machine doesn't have an overcast stitch function.

PRESHRINK Many fabrics shrink when washed; you need to wash, dry, and press all your fabric before you start to sew, following the suggested cleaning method marked on the fabric bolt (keep in mind that the

appropriate cleaning method may not be machine washing). Don't skip this step!

RIGHT SIDE The front side, or the side that should be on the outside of a finished garment. On a print fabric, the print will be stronger on the right side of the fabric.

RIGHT SIDES TOGETHER The right sides of two fabric layers should be facing each other.

SATIN STITCH (MACHINE) This is a smooth, completely filled column of zigzag stitches achieved by setting the stitch length short enough for complete coverage but long enough to prevent bunching and thread buildup.

SEAM ALLOWANCE The amount of fabric between the raw edge and the seam.

SELVAGE This is the tightly woven border on the lengthwise edges of woven fabric and the finished lengthwise edges of knit fabric.

SQUARING UP After you have pieced together a fabric block or section, check to make sure the edges are straight and the measurements are correct. Use a rotary cutter and an acrylic ruler to trim the block if necessary.

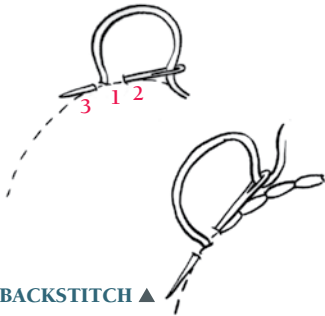
STITCH IN THE DITCH Lay the quilt sandwich right-side up under the presser foot and sew along the seamline "ditch." The stitches will fall between the two fabric pieces and disappear into the seam.

TOPSTITCH Used to hold pieces firmly in place and/or to add a decorative effect, a topstitch is simply a stitch that can be seen on the outside of the garment or piece. To topstitch, make a line of stitching on the outside (right side) of the piece, usually a set distance from an existing seam.

UNDERSTITCHING A line of stitches placed on a facing (or lining), very near the facing/garment seam. Understitching is used to hold the seam allowances and facing together and to prevent the facing from rolling toward the outside of the garment.

WRONG SIDE The wrong side of the fabric is the underside, or the side that should be on the inside of a finished garment. On a print fabric, the print will be lighter or less obvious on the wrong side of the fabric.

STITCH GLOSSARY

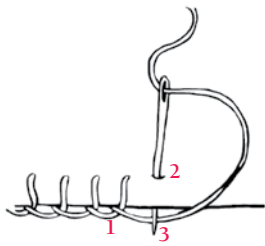


BACKSTITCH ▲

Working from right to left, bring the needle up at **1** and insert behind the starting point at **2**. Bring the needle up at **3**, repeat by inserting at **1** and bringing the needle up at a point that is a stitch length beyond **3**.

BASTING STITCH

Using the longest straight stitch length on your machine, baste to temporarily hold fabric layers and seams in position for final stitching. It can also be done by hand. When basting, use a contrasting thread to make it easier to spot when you're taking it out.

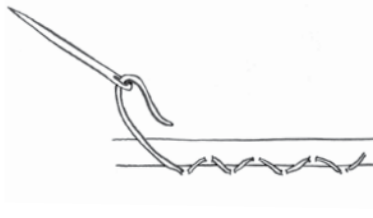


BLANKET STITCH ▲

Working from left to right, bring the needle up at **1** and insert at **2**. Bring the needle back up at **3** and over the working thread. Repeat by making the next stitch in the same manner, keeping the spacing even.

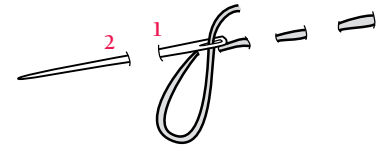
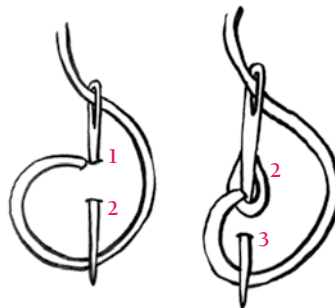
BLINDSTITCH/ BLIND-HEM STITCH ▼

Used mainly for hemming fabrics where an inconspicuous hem is difficult to achieve (this stitch is also useful for securing binding on the wrong side). Fold the hem edge back about $\frac{1}{4}$ ". Take a small stitch in the garment, picking up only a few threads of the fabric, then take the next stitch $\frac{1}{4}$ " ahead in the hem. Continue, alternating stitches between the hem and the garment (if using for a non-hemming application, simply alternate stitches between the two fabric edges being joined).



CHAIN STITCH ▼

Working from top to bottom, bring the needle up at and reinsert at **1** to create a loop; do not pull the thread taut. Bring the needle back up at **2**, keeping the needle above the loop and gently pulling the needle toward you to tighten the loop flush to the fabric. Repeat by inserting the needle at **2** to form a loop and bring the needle up at **3**. Tack the last loop down with a straight stitch.

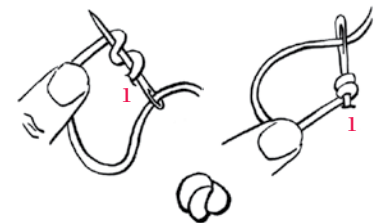


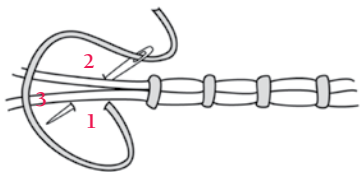
STRAIGHT STITCH + RUNNING STITCH ▲

Working from right to left, make a straight stitch by bringing the needle up and insert at **1**, $\frac{1}{8}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$ " from the starting point. To make a line of running stitches (a row of straight stitches worked one after the other), bring the needle up at **2** and repeat.

FRENCH KNOT ▼

Bring the needle up at **1** and hold the thread taut above the fabric. Point the needle toward your fingers and move the needle in a circular motion to wrap the thread around the needle once or twice. Insert the needle near **1** and hold the thread taut near the knot as you pull the needle and thread through the knot and the fabric to complete.

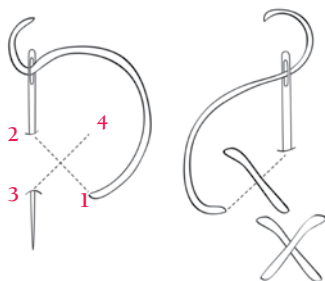


**COUCHING ▲**

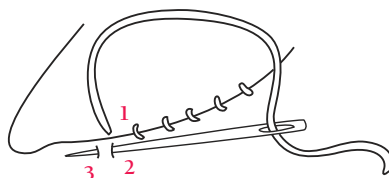
Working from right to left, use one thread, known as the couching or working thread, to tack down one or more strands of fiber, known as the couched fibers. Bring the working thread up at **1** and insert at **2**, over the fibers to tack them down, bringing the needle back up at **3**. The fibers are now encircled by the couching thread. Repeat to couch the desired length of fiber(s). This stitch may also be worked from left to right, and the spacing between the couching threads may vary for different design effects.

CROSS-STITCH ▼

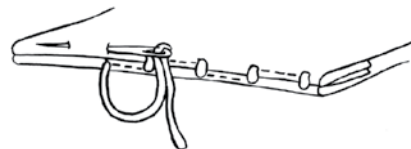
Working from right to left, bring the needle up at **1**, insert at **2**, then bring the needle back up at **3**. Finish by inserting the needle at **4**. Repeat for the desired number of stitches.

**STANDARD HAND-APPLIQUÉ STITCH ▼**

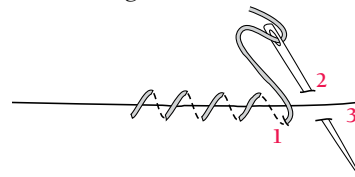
Cut a length of thread 12"–18". Thread the newly cut end through the eye of the needle, pull this end through, and knot it. Use this technique to thread the needle and knot the thread to help keep the thread's "twist" intact and to reduce knotting. Beginning at the straightest edge of the appliqué and working from right to left, bring the needle up from the underside, through the background fabric and the very edge of the appliqué at **1**, catching only a few threads of the appliqué fabric. Pull the thread taut, then insert the needle into the background fabric at **2**, as close as possible to **1**. Bring the needle up through the background fabric at **3**, $\frac{1}{8}$ " beyond **2**. Continue in this manner, keeping the thread taut (do not pull it so tight that the fabric puckers) to keep the stitching as invisible as possible.

**SLIPSTITCH ▼**

Working from right to left, join two pieces of fabric by taking a $\frac{1}{16}$ – $\frac{1}{4}$ " long stitch into the folded edge of one piece of fabric and bringing the needle out. Insert the needle into the folded edge of the other piece of fabric, directly across from the point where the thread emerged from the previous stitch. Repeat by inserting the needle into the first piece of fabric. The thread will be almost entirely hidden inside the folds of the fabrics.

**WHIPSTITCH ▼**

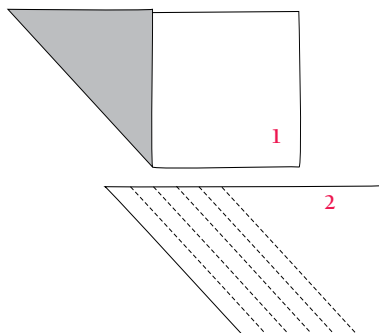
Bring the needle up at **1**, insert at **2**, and bring up at **3**. These quick stitches do not have to be very tight or close together.



CREATE BINDING

CUTTING STRAIGHT STRIPS

Cut strips on the crosswise grain, from selvedge to selvedge. Use a rotary cutter and straightedge to obtain a straight cut. Remove the selvedges and join the strips with diagonal seams (see instructions at right).



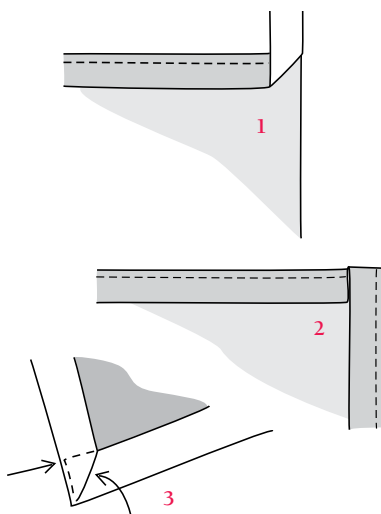
CUTTING BIAS STRIPS ▲

Fold one cut end of the fabric to meet one selvedge, forming a fold at a 45-degree angle to the selvedge (1). With the fabric placed on a self-healing mat, cut off the fold with a rotary cutter, using a straight edge as a guide to make a straight cut. With the straightedge and rotary cutter, cut strips to the appropriate width (2). Join the strips with diagonal seams.

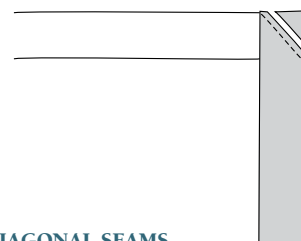
BINDING WITH MITERED CORNERS ▼

Decide whether you will use a Double-fold Binding (option A at right) or a Double-layer Binding (option B at right). *If using double-layer binding follow the alternate italicized instructions in parenthesis.*

Open the binding and press $\frac{1}{2}$ " to the wrong side at one short end (*refold the binding at the center crease and proceed*). Starting with the folded-under end of the binding, place it near the center of the first edge of the project to be bound, matching the raw edges, and pin in place. Begin sewing near the center of one edge of the project, along the



first crease (*at the appropriate distance from the raw edge*), leaving several inches of the binding fabric free at the beginning. Stop sewing $\frac{1}{4}$ " before reaching the corner, back-stitch, and cut the threads. Rotate the project 90 degrees to position it for sewing the next side. Fold the binding fabric up, away from the project, at a 45-degree angle (1), then fold it back down along the project raw edge (2). This forms a miter at the corner. Stitch the second side, beginning at the project raw edge (2) and ending $\frac{1}{4}$ " from the next corner, as before. Continue as established until you have completed the last corner. Continue stitching until you are a few inches from the beginning edge of the binding fabric. Overlap the pressed beginning edge of the binding by $\frac{1}{2}$ " (or overlap more as necessary for security) and trim the working edge to fit. Finish sewing the binding (*opening the center fold and tucking the raw edge inside the pressed end of the binding strip*). Refold the binding along all the creases and then fold it over the project raw edges to the back, enclosing the raw edges (*there are no creases to worry about with option B*). The folded edge of the binding strip should just cover the stitches visible on the project back. Slipstitch or blindstitch the binding in place, tucking in the corners to complete the miters as you go (3).



DIAGONAL SEAMS FOR JOINING STRIPS ▲

Lay two strips right sides together, at right angles. The area where the strips overlap forms a square. Sew diagonally across the square as shown above. Trim the excess fabric $\frac{1}{4}$ " away from the seamline and press the seam allowances open. Repeat to join all the strips, forming one long fabric band.

FOLD BINDING ▼

A. Double-fold Binding This option will create binding that is similar to packaged double-fold bias tape/binding. Fold the strip in half lengthwise, with wrong sides together; press. Open up the fold and then fold each long edge toward the wrong side, so that the raw edges meet in the middle (1). Refold the binding along the existing center crease, enclosing the raw edges (2), and press again.

B. Double-layer Binding This option creates a double-thick binding with only one fold. This binding is often favored by quilters. Fold the strip in half lengthwise with wrong sides together; press.

