

QUILT & social

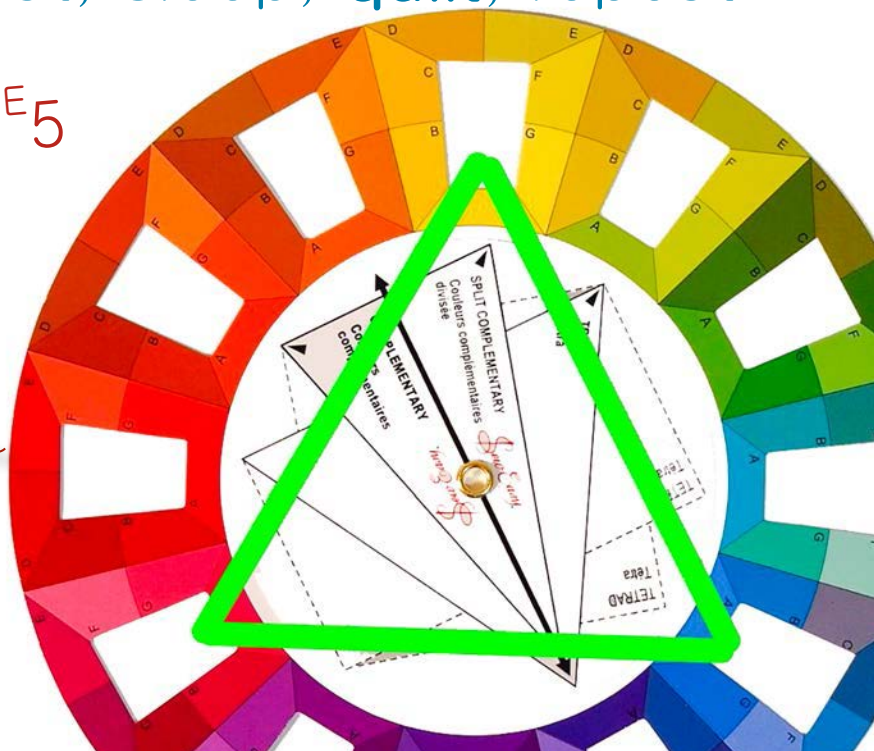
...eat, sleep, quilt, repeat

- essential tips for pressing
couching
modern quilting
effortless curved piecing
invisible machine applique
choosing fabrics for your quilt
- happiness is a hexie quilt
- sewing applique shapes
- how to make perfect prairie points

ISSUE 5

PLUS

Pockets Full of Blessings
Give Thanks Banner
3D Harvest





Gütermann creativ



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Look for Gütermann threads at your favourite fabric, sewing and quilting store!

{ editor's letter }



Busy? Yes, always busy. If I had to wait for an hour, an afternoon, a day, during which I'm not busy in order to quilt, well my dear, I'd never quilt. Needless to say I'd rather be quilting than mopping the floor, but even the floors have to get mopped, and dinner has to be prepared as well.

It really is a matter of priorities, but quilting is a priority that affects my heart-health specifically. Just like watching my cholesterol and sugar intake, I make sure I take the right amount of 'fiber' every day, by cutting, piecing, sewing seams and quilting. These aren't done all at once, but a little bit every day eventually leads to a quilt.

Christmas time is particularly busy. The plan is to retreat to my sewing space for an hour, if that's all I have, and work on my quilt (I have the theme to the Nutcracker playing in my head as I do this) and hopefully everyone in the house will think I've gone to bed. Progress can be slow, but it's not a race. I quilt because I love to see something beautiful evolve every day, until it's ready, which makes the moment of glory that much more intense.

Happiness is quilting a little every day, until the day I can quilt during the most part of the day. I think that's called bliss.

I hope you enjoy the quilting ideas and tips in this issue. There are a lot of quilting and sewing tools to explore and write on your wish list, and many fun projects to explore and expand on in 2016.

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...for those who gather with thread and fabric to
'eat, sleep, **quilt**, repeat'.



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A limited number of printed copies of **QUILTsocial** are available for purchase at select quilt shops and specialty stores. Ask for it at your local shop. **QUILTsocial** is not available by subscription.

QUILT SHOPS

If you are interested in carrying **QUILTsocial** in your store, please email john@QUILTsocial.com.

EDITORIAL

Designers and other contributors who would like to be considered for future issues please email carla@QUILTsocial.com with a brief description of your work and your proposed project for the magazine.

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Get more quilting fun in **A NEEDLE PULLING THREAD**



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QUILTsocial bloggers



Jennifer Houlden
quiltsbyjen.ca

Jennifer runs [Quilts by Jen](http://quiltsbyjen.ca), a fantastic educational resource for quilters with many great free tutorials ranging from how to choose fabrics, understanding the value of fabrics, pressing, building Bargello runs, pinning, binding, sandwiching, couching, quilting, and much more. Check them out!



Christine Baker
FairfieldRoadDesigns.com

Christine has been designing and publishing quilt patterns for the last 10 years under the business name Fairfield Road Designs. Her patterns range from fusible applique and piecing to felted wool applique and punchneedle. You can see all her patterns on her website.



Elaine Theriault
crazyquilteronabike.blogspot.com

Elaine made her first quilt at the tender age of 13. The urge to quilt resurfaced when her daughter moved from a crib. The rest is history – she now teaches several days a week, makes quilts on commission and quilts for others on the long-arm.



Nancy Devine
nancywhiskeynancyo.blogspot.com

Nancy Devine is a devoted user and collector of remnants, scraps, and vintage buttons. She lives in Aurora, Ontario, and can often be found working on her latest project, and playing around with her vintage (and much loved) Bernina machine. Find more of her work and musings on her blog.



Jackie White
jabotquilt.blogspot.ca

Jackie is a quilter who loves quilting outside the box especially when it comes to 3D and embellishments. Her work has been published in books and magazines and she currently sits on the Board of Directors for the Canadian Quilters' Association. When she's not in her studio, she's working as a Social Media Manager.



Jean Boyd
patternsbyjeanboyd.com

Jean has been designing and publishing patterns since 1997. Her work has been published in several magazines across North America. Jean holds a Fiber Arts Certificate in quilting and has taught extensively throughout Canada, including six national Quilt Canada conferences. She was named "Canadian Teacher of the Year" in 2003 by the Canadian Quilters Association and has won numerous awards for her quilts.

hooked on books

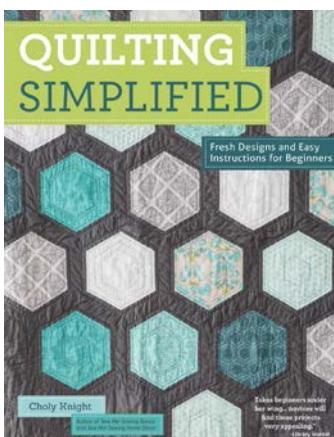


Sew-licious Little Things

By Kate Haxell

Bring color and style to your home with this beautiful collection of over 35 zacka sewing projects to make life more beautiful. Simple, and practical yet very attractive projects are easy to make and a great way to add color to your living space and you'll admire them every day. Includes a technique section, step-by-step artwork and all the templates you'll need.

144 Pages, Hardcover, ISBN 978-1-78249-190-3
Cico Books
www.thomasallen.ca

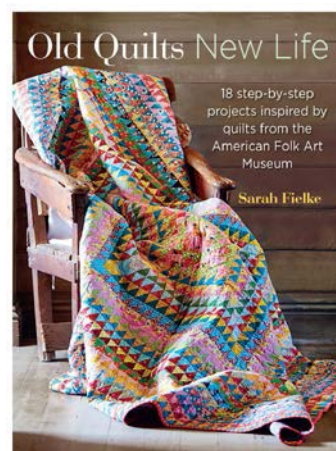


Quilting Simplified

By Choly Knight

Creating your own unique handmade quilt is one of the most satisfying and rewarding sewing activities you will ever experience. This ultimate beginner's guide shows you everything you need to know, with eight simple projects that let you quilt as you learn. Both "quilt-as-you-go" and traditional methods are covered, with easy-to-follow lessons in basic techniques.

136 Pages, ISBN 978-1-57421-902-9
Fox Chapel Publishing
www.thomasallen.ca



Old Quilts, New Life

by Sarah Fielke

Sarah has selected 10 beautiful quilts from The American Folk Art Museum and created two designs inspired by each quilt - the first, a sympathetic interpretation of the original piece and the second, a more contemporary creation. The book takes you through the history of the quilting tradition and explores the techniques and styles employed by quilters over the centuries. Features 20 stunning quilts!

160 Pages, ISBN 978-1-78249-239-9
Cico Books
www.thomasallen.ca



Kaffe Fassett's Heritage Quilts

20 Designs from Rowan for Patchwork and Quilting

You, too, can create the 20 remarkable, historic quilts recreated by Fassett. In addition to 100 rich photographs of the quilts themselves, which you will pore over again and again, Kaffe Fassett's Heritage Quilts contains full step-by-step piecing instructions, 80 detailed diagrams, and patchwork how-to tips to refresh techniques or build new ones. Each project is an individual master class featuring vivid photos of the original quilt as well as the new finished project, a materials list, plus detailed instruction including useful tips, color diagrams, and templates for piecing the quilt together.

152 Pages, ISBN 978-1-63186-155-0
Taunton Press
www.thomasallen.ca

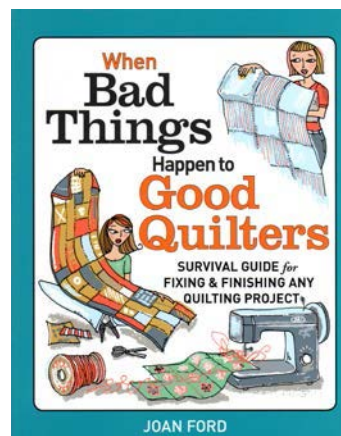


Scraps, Inc. (vol.1) ***15 Block-Based Designs for the Modern Quilter***

Compiled by Susanne Woods

If you have a mountain of scraps from projects-past, the new and inventive patterns in Scraps, Inc. will help you piece together your treasured scraps into a stunning new quilt. This project-based book features 15 unique quilt designs and their well-known designers (many are also best-selling quilt-making authors). Most quilters present their finished quilts as gifts, and all that remains of your artistry is extra fabric scraps that you just can't bear to toss out. Because these patterns will inspire you to tackle your stack of scraps, you can now make a quilt to keep that's a loving reminder of all the other quilts you have gifted over the years.

128 Pages, ISBN 978-1-940655-04-8
Lucky Spool
www.thomasallen.ca



When Bad Things Happen to Good Quilters ***Survival guide for fixing and finishing any quilting project***

by Joan Ford

We all start our quilting projects with the best intentions, but a difficult technique, mismatched fabrics, or a mistake in the pattern can bring the project to a screeching halt. Joan Ford's can-do advice and practical problem solving approach is exactly the help needed to get your projects back on track. You'll turn to this guide again and again because it is...

It's a comprehensive, emergency quilting instruction guide and perfect for first-time quilters, skilled quilters, and anyone who needs help when a quilting project has stalled.

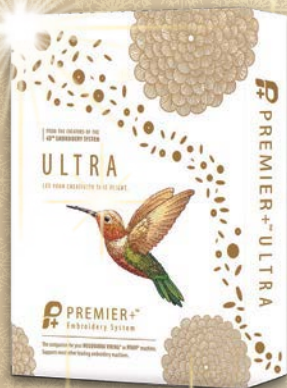
140 Pages, ISBN 978-1-62710-393-0
Taunton Press
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Give Thanks

Banner

Creating banners for different seasons, gives us an opportunity to explore many sewing, quilting, embroidery, and serging techniques that we may not normally try. Selecting a multitude of fabric variations gives us experience with embroidery and quilting, and we can pull out and dust off our sewing feet and see what all of their capabilities are. It's always great to discover something new that a foot can be used for.

Creating artistic textures give our projects depth and originality. It also gives us the opportunity for exploration. Sharing ideas, and experimenting with different creative tools, crossing over from sewing, to embroidery, quilting and then including yarn art using the serger, can open up an entire new palette for quilting.

skill level intermediate

finished measurements 24" x 24" [61 x 61cm]

materials

fabric

8" x 22" [20 x 56cm] waterfall background fabric

8" x 22" [20 x 56cm] floral vase background fabric

12" x 15" [30.5 x 38cm] embroidered silk

Dupioni with the embroidery Give Thanks

12" x 16" [30.5 x 40.5cm] floral Batik cotton for middle of banner

100% wool fabric for floral embroidery (size of fabric piece will depend on the amount of flowers embroidered)

27" x 27" [68.5 x 68.5cm] cotton quilt batting or INSPIRA® Sew Soft Fusible batting

1 cotton backing piece to extend beyond finished banner edges approximately 2" [5cm] on each edge

sewing feet used

embroidery foot

¼" piecing foot

free motion foot

multi-line decorative foot

serger foot

general sewing foot

topstitching or stitch in the ditch foot with guide

software

6D Embroidery Fonts: Patricia Script Font 35mm or desired font

Pfaff® Delicate Lines #472 for beige flowers embroidered on thick wool

Husqvarna Viking® Felted nature #279 for leaves, apples, pumpkins

needles

INSPIRA® microtex needle size 80 or 90

INSPIRA® embroidery needles

INSPIRA® quilting needles

INSPIRA® serger needles

threads

assorted colors of Robison-Anton® 40wt Rayon thread for topstitching, free motion, decorative stitches, fonts and lettering, and embroidered flowers

assorted colors of Sulky® 30wt Blendable threads for topstitching and piecing

other

assorted embroidery hoops Give Thanks and flowers

cutting tools to include rotary cutter, cutting mat, and INSPIRA® scissors

marking tools

Sew Slip Sheet

Grab A Roo's quilting gloves

Shiva Artist Paint sticks

fabric glue assorted embroidery hoops

quilting extension table for sewing

machine photos to inspire waterfall colors

stabilizers

INSPIRA® Soft Fuse On

INSPIRA® Cut Away light

INSPIRA® Aqua Magic

INSPIRA® Dissolve Away light

embellishments

assorted beads for floral fabric

embellishment wool flowers

assorted felt and wool roving pieces

yarn pieces for waterfall and vase

needle felting kit for machine embroidery

instructions

Give Thanks embroidery

1. Fuse a piece of INSPIRA® Soft Fuse On behind the silk to stabilize it first. This stabilizer will adhere at a moderate heat setting.
2. Hoop the INSPIRA® Cut Away light behind the silk Dupioni piece 12" x 15". You may choose to hoop the stabilizer only and use an embroidery basting feature to baste fabric to the stabilizer for all of the embroideries.
3. Audit the layout of the lettering before embroidery. Choose the thread combinations you would like to work with.
4. The embroidery font was chosen from 6D Embroidery Software or you may have embroidery fonts built into the machine.
5. The Patricia Script Font 35mm was selected for the wording in the sample. The font had a very seasonal appeal to it and was perfect for an autumn look.
6. Machine embroider the lettering, and cut piece to desired size. Set aside.

Wool flower embroidery

1. Choose Pfaff® Delicate Lines #472 for the beige flowers on wool.
2. Hoop the wool piece and INSPIRA® Dissolve Away light on the lower and upper surface of the wool. Embroider flowers onto the wool. When the embroidery is complete, cut a circle around the flowers.
3. Place the flowers in water and soft detergent soak. Rinse Away stabilizer and let flowers dry.
4. Cut around outer edge close to the outer limits of the petals. Cutting the flowers without precision in the beginning allows a small bit of shrinkage with the wool.
5. Using Shiva Paint sticks in assorted colors, rub color from the paint stick onto the wool flowers for an added effect. Follow manufacturer's instructions for paint stick use.
6. Glue or stitch beaded embellishments to the flower centers.



Wool roving



Stabilizer on surface of roving



Embroidery preparation



Embroidered flower with stabilizer on wool



Flowers before and after paint stick



Right side of leaves with roving showing through



Stitched leaves



Felted pumpkins



Specialty serger foot



Flat trim foot used for channel quilting as a guide for rows

Leaves and pumpkin embroidery

1. Choose Husqvarna Viking® Felted nature #279 for leaves, pumpkins and other assorted choices.
2. Hoop one layer of felt, then on top of that layer, add assorted wool roving pieces spread onto the surface. The last upper surface layer should be INSPIRA® Dissolve Away light.

Notes:

Remember that when you're embroidery felting, the right side of the felting is actually being made on the underside of the hoop, so you really can't see the finished pumpkins and leaves until the felting is complete and the hoop is removed and you turn the hoop over to look at it.

Also remember that when the embroidery requires the rayon thread and regular embroidery needle, place the rayon thread also in the bobbin, because it's the bobbin thread that shows up on the right side of the felted piece.

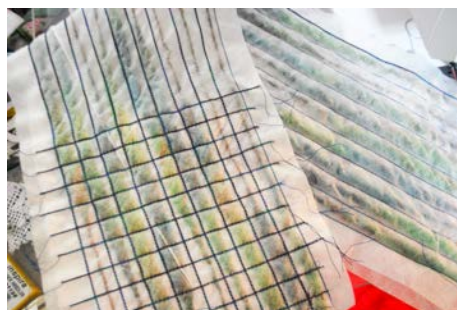
3. If you choose a larger hoop it's easy to felt many of the leaves and pumpkins together in the same embroidery. Install the needle felting kit according to manufacturer's instructions. Embroidery felt all of the components, and then they will also require embroidering using embroider rayon thread in the embroidery steps. When these are completed once again rough cut around the leaves and pumpkins. Place them in a water and soft detergent soak. Rinse away stabilizer and let dry.
4. Cut around outer edge close to the outer limits of the leaves and pumpkins. Put aside until you're ready to audition all of the embellishments together. They can be stitched to the banner or glued using fabric glue.

Serger artistic embellishment

1. Thread the serger for a chain stitch according to suggested manual or built in settings on the display screen.
2. Use 100% good quality Polyester thread in the needle and Sulky® Blendable thread 30wt in the looper.
3. Cut two pieces of Inspira® Aqua Magic the same size, basically the length of the desired waterfall and desired width.
4. Place them together and mark a vertical starting line about 1" in from the edge of the stabilizer. Stitch a chain stitch vertically down the length of



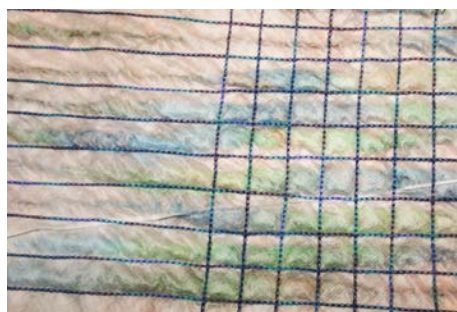
Vertical channels serged with chain stitch



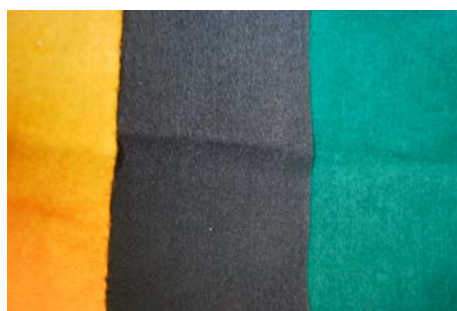
Serged channels of yarn



Two pieces serged with yarn



Channel quilting lines



Felt, then roving, then stabilizer

the stabilizer pieces. Take long strands of a few yarns and place in between layers beside the vertical stitch line. There are a few ways you can continue the vertical channels. You can pre-mark the stitching lines on the stabilizer the desired distance apart or you can use a flat trim foot which can be adjusted like a guide at the front of the foot. Use the foot as a channel guide for each row by matching each stitched chain line to the right or left edge of the foot front. This will allow wider channels for thicker yarns. This foot gives more flexibility than the standard serger foot.

TIP It's always great to discover new uses for the sewing and serger feet. Normally this foot would be used to add flat trim to the edge of a fabric and it can finish the fabric edge with a cover stitch at the same time. Experiment and discover new uses.

- When the yarn is placed between the layers, repeat another line of chain stitching to encase it within the channel. Repeat with the yarn between and the layers, and stitch chain stitching rows repeatedly until all of the yarn has been channeled in vertical positions.
- When this is complete you will then serge the same chain stitch across the width of the stabilizer row after row. This will hold all the yarn strips in position. Use this technique for making scarves, table runners with a weave look, artistic pieces.
- When all of the rows have been stitched and all of the yarn pieces are encased, soak and then rinse the water soluble stabilizer away. Hang to dry.
- You will need to create two artistic serger embellishments. One for the waterfall and one for the vase. It's better to make them longer than needed as they can be cut to size. Once they are complete, set them aside.

Piecing the blocks

Use Sulky Blendable thread 30wt to stitch each of the blocks together using the piecing foot. Press all seams.

Batting

- Cut the batting piece a bit larger than the banner, and place it behind the banner.

- Baste it into position and prepare any decorative stitches that you would like to use on the banner, to include an assortment of free motion stitching on the batik floral piece.
- Using quilting gloves and the sew slip sheet will allow easier movement of the piece when stitching around the flowers and pattern on the batik. A metallic thread was used which creates a nice sheen on the surface of the cotton print.
- Select a decorative stitch for any vertical seams for topstitching. A topstitching needle is always preferable along with a topstitching foot.

TIP It's always important to use stabilizer behind all of the decorative stitches.

Channel quilting lines on the back-ground pieces

- 30wt Sulky Blendable thread can be used for the channel quilting using the multi-line decorative foot, or by pre-marking the lines on the fabric. Stitch the channel quilted pieces, in this case the waterfall background piece and the vase and flower background piece.
- Audition all of the embellishments to include the waterfall, the embroidered wool flowers, the felted leaves and pumpkins. Once you have placed them in the desired locations they can be stitched down using straight stitches, or free motion stitches, or of course some of the pieces may be glued with fabric glue depending on the complexity of the pieces. Any excess batting will be trimmed away when you square up the banner.
- Place the backing fabric behind the banner, and press and fold the edges into position onto the front of the banner, choose any assorted widths of borders.
- Place any additional embellishments like buttons on the banner, and stitch into place. Tie the vase with a piece of yarn near the upper part of the vase.
- Pin, stitch and press the edges into position. Stitch using straight or decorative stitch and free motion any additional areas desired.

Cheryl Stranges

Product & Event Specialist, Husqvarna Viking
husqvarnaviking.com
seecherylsew.blogspot.com

Husqvarna Viking® provided the following sewing machine and products to make the sample:

Designer Diamond Royale sewing/embroidery, machine/extension table
 Husqvarna Viking® S25 Serger
 6D Embroidery Software
 INSPIRA® Stabilizers
 INSPIRA® Machine Needles
 INSPIRA® Scissors
 Robison Anton Threads
 Sulky™ Threads
 Hoops



Find your source of
 inspiration and have fun
 with this!



3D HARVEST

Fibre Art Designs



skill level easy

finished measurements

corn cob 3" x 10" [7.5 x 25.5cm]

leaf 4½" x 9" [11.5 x 23cm]

materials

Sulky Sticky Fabri-Solvy or Printable Sticky

Fabri-Solvy stabilizer

Sulky Solvy stabilizer

Assortment of fabrics (batiks are easy to work with)

Assortment of ribbons

Assortment of thread

Rayon

Metallic threads add sparkle to the project!

Sulky Holoshimmer for even more shine

notions

fabric marker to mark on the Fabric-Solvy

Heirloom Sew Smooth

Scissors

Topstitch needle

Extra bobbins (before starting to stitch pre-wind bobbins with decorative threads)

INSTRUCTIONS

Pattern

1. Trace the outline of a leaf, corn cob or any other shape onto the fabric side of Sticky Fabri-Solvy.

TIP Lots of basic shapes can be found in children's coloring books, and the internet has thousands of clip art images that are simple and easy to re-size.

2. If you have an ink jet printer, print the design onto an 8½" x 11" piece of Printable Sticky Fabri-Solvy. Follow the directions on the package and print on the fabric side.

Create the design

1. Remove the backing paper from the Sticky Fabri-Solvy. Lay the Sticky Fabric-Solvy with design facing down and the sticky side up on the table.
2. Using small snipped pieces of fabric, ribbon and threads in chosen colors, arrange them willy-nilly over the entire design.

3. Cover the entire design including the outline. The design will be trimmed to the correct size and shape, so ensure the edges are completely covered to make a nice finish. The more layers of filler materials are added, the thicker and denser the 3D design will be.
4. Once the placement of all of the bits is done, cut a piece of Solvy that is large enough to cover the entire sticky area of the pattern.
5. Create a sandwich by lightly spraying one side of the Solvy with KK2000 and stick it on the top of the design. The sandwich is made up of the Sticky Fabri-Solvy on the bottom, bits of fabric, ribbon and threads in the middle, and Solvy on the top.
6. Turn the sandwich over so the Sticky Fabri-Solvy is now on top and the design can be seen.
7. Thread the machine with all purpose, rayon or metallic thread. Experiment with different threads on the top and in the bobbin. The stitching can be done with co-ordinating colors or contrasting colors.

Needle

Choose a needle that will work well with the chosen threads for stitching. A size 90/12 topstitch needle works well with most decorative threads.

Stitching

Now it's time to have fun.

1. Using a 2.5 or 3.0 straight stitch, stitch 2 lines around the outline of the design. This is not the time to stress about staying in or on the lines; the printed pattern lines will disappear when the Fabri-Solvy is rinsed away!
2. Stitch curvy lines all over the design, criss-crossing them as you turn your sandwich under the pressure foot. In the sample the stitches follow the natural contours of the designs. The more lines are stitched the more stable 3D design will be. Change threads as often as desired. The bobbin thread is just as important as the top thread as it will show through the thread web from both sides of the 3D design.

TIP To ensure enough lines are sewn, hold the sandwich up to the light and check to see that all of the filler material has been caught in the stitching web. If a piece of fabric or ribbon isn't caught it will fall away when rinsed out of the Fabri-Solvy. Add more lines of stitching if needed.

3. For the corn cob gold metallic thread was used on top and yellow rayon in the bobbin and green Holoshimmer on the top and green rayon in the bobbin for the husks. On the Oak Leaf copper metallic was used for the top and bobbin.

Rinsing and shaping the decoration

1. Trim around the design with scissors when pleased with your stitching. I like to trim just outside the original 2 rows of stitching. Remember this isn't a precise project so relax and enjoy the process.
2. Take a few minutes to think about the shape of the finished design and then start searching for a "mould" that will help achieve that shape. For the corn cob a small spray can was used (the KK2000 can was perfect!). For an apple design use a small bowl. Cover the 'mould' with a layer of plastic wrap.
3. Use a basin of warm water to rinse the project until most of the Fabri-Solvy and Solvy is dissolved. The pattern will dissolve away with the Fabri-Solvy so if you didn't stay in or on the lines no one will know. Ensure the design still feels gooey. Note: If you rinse away the entire stabilizer the design will not hold its 3 dimensional shape. Shape your design over the 'mould' and let dry overnight.
4. In the morning peel the ornament off of the mould and voilà... your beautiful 3D Harvest Fibre Art Design is complete!

Donna Housley
www.hakidd.com

6 PRESSING TIPS

Rulers and rotary cutters are important tools, but nothing beats pressing your work, seams and fabric for a professional looking job. How do you press your seams? What tool do you use? Let's go over 6 pressing tips for perfect seams.

for perfect seams

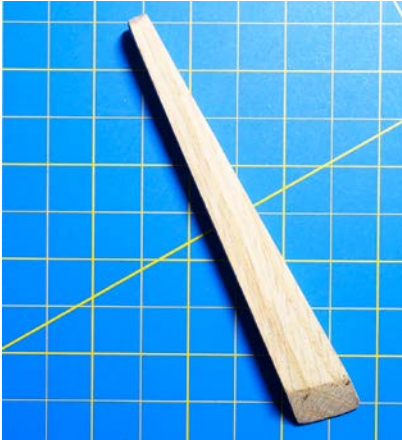
Jennifer Houlden



Tools for Pressing

Do you have a favorite pressing tool? My favorite tools are an iron or finger presser.

Wooden finger presser



Finger Presser

The *finger presser* from Unique is a wooden tool with a flat bottom to run along the seam. Some benefits to this tool is that it doesn't distort fabric, it's great for the cottage if you do not have power and it's small and fits into your sewing kit easily.

A drawback of the finger presser is it takes longer to press the seams but in my opinion does a wonderful job which out ways the time factor.

As well, a hard, flat and non flexible surface is required for optimal results like a cutting mat.



Finger presser in action

Iron

I have this amazing little travel iron called the *Goiron*, I've seen many other quilters with it at classes and retreats and thought, "Isn't that a cute little iron!" I normally don't take an iron to class or retreats but now that I have this great little travel iron I'll be taking it to class and retreats with me, not to mention using it in my studio

As well as being cute it's very functional.

Features of the Goiron

Some of the features include:

- three temperature settings – low, medium and high
- heats up in 30 seconds
- steam with a 40 ml water reservoir
- ergonomic handle
- non-stick sole-plate
- only 400 watts – the low wattage will make it perfect for when I go to the cottage to sew once we have a solar power system as the 400 watts won't drain the batteries like a full size iron
- dual voltage which means it can be used anywhere in the world

Plus it comes with a carry pouch and fits perfectly into a suitcase or sewing bag.



Goiron and accessories



One strip set completed



Strip sets sub cut into strips



Setting the seam



Press long seams starting in the middle

Pressing Tips

For the purpose of demonstrating proper pressing tips I'm creating a checkerboard background. The example shows two sets of strips alternating two different fabrics. Each set will have 3 strips of one fabric and 2 of another fabric – so a total of 5 strips in each.

Now that I've sewn the strips together I'm heading back to the cutting table to sub cut the strip sets into $5 - 3\frac{1}{2}$ " x $15\frac{1}{2}$ " for a total of 10 strips.

1. Set the seam

Set the seam first by pressing the seam with the two pieces lying RS together as they came off the sewing machine – this will set the stitches and fabric allowing for a flatter seam.

2. Press to the darkest fabric

Always press the seam towards the darkest fabric. By doing this it will ensure that the seam allowance does not show the dark fabric through a lighter fabric.

3. Press from the middle

When pressing long strips, rows or borders start in the middle of the section and work out one way to the end of the seam then return to the middle and work out the other direction to the end of the seam. This will help to eliminate waves in the seams so that your seams are not wonky – nobody likes a wonky seam.

4. Butting seams – press in opposite directions

When seams need to butt together it's best that the seams have been pressed in opposite directions so that they'll nest together – this helps ensure the join of the two seams on the top of the quilt will be perfect. Since I'm making a checkerboard background, the seams will be nesting together. By pressing all the seams towards the darkest fabric it ensures that the seams will be opposite when the pieces are placed together on this background piece.

5. Press towards the least bulk

Press the seam to the side with the least amount of bulk if there are several seams in the area. Sometimes this may mean that you have to press the seam towards the lighter colored fabrics which is okay if it means that the seam is going to lie flatter.

Pressing seams open may also help to reduce the bulk. Extra bulk from seams can also cause problems when quilting, such as skipped stitches, teeny tiny stitches due to the foot getting caught up on the machine and unwanted bulges.

6. No Steam

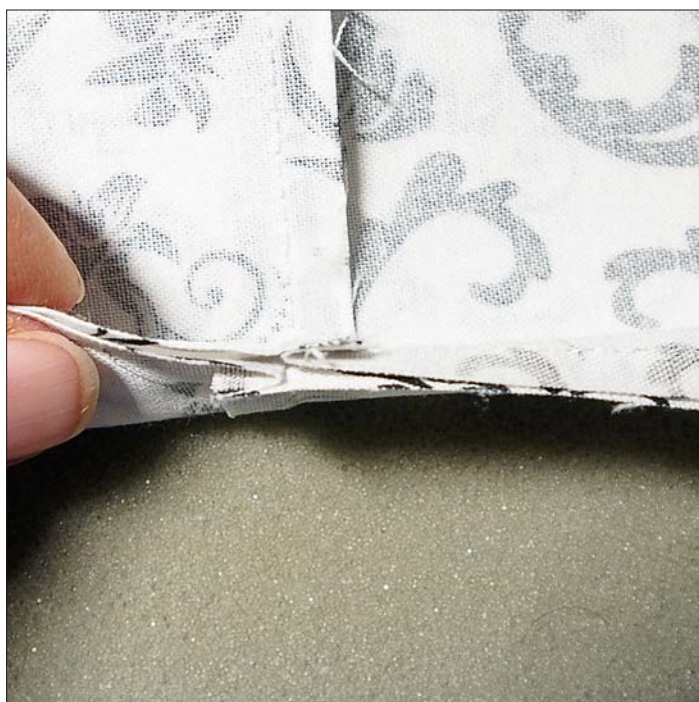
Use a dry iron when pressing seams. Steam can distort and change the shape of the fabric especially cotton. If there's distortion in the seams there will be distortion in the finished block which in turn results in distortion in the quilt. It's a domino effect.

Do I ever use steam? The answer to that is **yes**. I use it when I'm pressing my fabrics prior to cutting and when the piece is finished to give it a nice crisp and flat look.

The image below has had no steam applied to it. I just followed these great tips for pressing.

The checkerboard top is all sewn together with perfectly pressed seams thanks to these six pressing tips for perfect seams. I can now move onto the applique. Tomorrow I'll be looking at creating some applique shapes for the top of the runner and highlighting another super tool I found at my favorite fabric store. I'm not going to tell you what it is – you'll have to tune in and find out. Trust me it's a real cool one.

Seamed pressed to the dark fabric



Nested seams



Perfectly pressed and matched seams

YEAH, is applique day! Applique is one of my favorite ways to embellish a quilt. My favorite method of applique is with fusible web and stitching everything down with the machine. If I had to do needle turn applique which I think is just gorgeous we wouldn't finish this project quickly. I'm going to jump right in and get down to business with what you should know about fusible web.

Prior to starting to build the flowers I added *Rick Rack* to a quilted runner. The green rick rack would be the stems for each flower. And by having it run the total width of the runner it wouldn't matter which way you were looking at the runner as there would be no top or bottom. It would look the same from either side.



Rick rack sewn to quilted runner

What you should know about fusible web

Jennifer Houlden



What fusible do you use?

There are many different manufacturers of fusibles on the market and each one says it's the best. I'm going to work with and talk about the *HeatnBond family* of fusible web. Even the choices within the HeatnBond family are many.

HeatnBond Fusibles

Ultra Hold – this product is a no sew product and has a very strong bond and work swell on medium to heavy weight materials

Lite – this product is made especially for light and medium weight fabrics with a special formula for securing these fabrics onto other fabric surfaces – they then can be machine or hand sewn around the raw edge

Feather Lite – this product has a strong bond and is very light weight resulting in very little stiffness added to the project – great for layering applique shapes

These three products come either as a sheet, on a roll or by the yard. And to make things easy to distinguish the different products each package is a different color.

After reviewing the three different products I decided to use the Lite version of HeatnBond.

Photos by Jennifer Houlden.

What you should know...

1. It's very important to read the manufacturer's instructions regarding how to use the product as each product is a little bit different and requires different heat settings.
2. It's recommended to pre-wash all fabrics prior to applying fusible but do not use fabric softeners.
3. Use either a low or medium heat setting depending on which version of HeatnBond is being used – heat is what activates the adhesive.
4. No steam is required.
5. Make sure to only iron for the amount of time instructed as over heating can reduce the efficacy of the adhesive resulting in poor adhesion to the fabric.
6. If using thicker fabrics than cotton extra time is needed to activate the adhesive.
7. All the products are washable.

Using Fusible

The paper back products make it easy to trace or draw the design right on the fusible, cut it out and then fuse to the fabric.

The fusible sheets allow you to print the image on the paper with an ink jet printer. This saves time especially if the shapes are small and there are many of them.

It's recommended to use a [Teflon pressing sheet](#) with fusible to protect your ironing board and iron from any unwanted residue. Nothing will stick to Teflon and if glue gets on it all you have to do is wipe it off.

If unwanted residue does get on the iron it can be removed with a fabric softener sheet – yes it really does work but the iron has to be hot to remove the glue so watch that you don't burn your fingers.

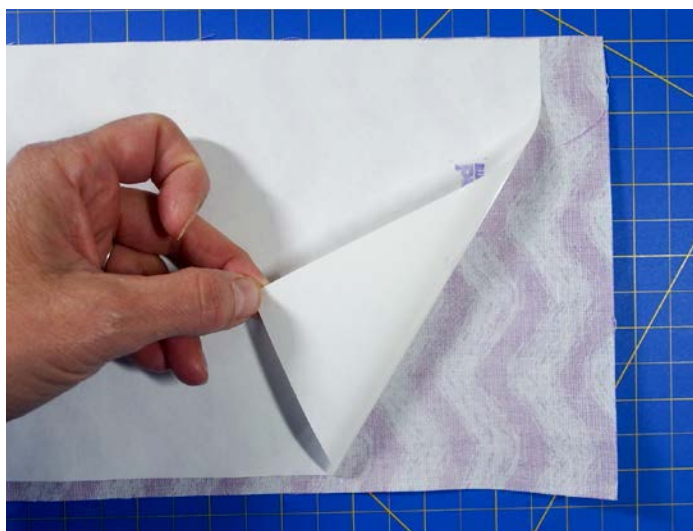
Creating the flowers

I chose to use **HeatnBond Lite** which I fused to the back of a rectangle of each fabric before cutting the circles with the TrueCut 360° Circle Cutter.

Peeling off the paper backing is easy and smooth. I could have left the paper on to cut the circles but I didn't want to dull the blade prematurely.



Fusible fused to back of fabric with remaining fabrics folded neatly



Peeling paper backing off



Second pressing sheet on top of flower



Circles arranged in flower shape



Flowers fused to quilt top



Sulky Blendable threads to match each fabric color



When shapes are drawn on the paper they are then cut out on the line and by doing this the glue is then right to the edge of the applique piece which prevents any unwanted fraying.

I like to build the flowers right on the pressing sheet so all the pieces become one big piece and are easier to place on the background and work with.

I arranged the circles on the pressing sheet to create a flower with two centers. Originally I had only planned on having one center but then I liked the blue in the middle. In hindsight I should have used the Feather Lite version as now my shapes are a bit stiffer than I wanted with the 3 layers of the Lite version.

Placing a second pressing sheet over top of the applique pieces I followed the instructions and heated the shapes for 3-5 sec to bond them together to create one shape.

After the pressing sheet had cooled I used a plastic spatula to lift the shapes off the pressing sheet. When using the Teflon pressing sheets they get very hot, so be very careful handling them before they cool.

This is a great way to build multi-piece shapes and designs and by doing this it allows for easier placement of the whole shape on the background fabric.

Once all the flowers were made I fused them to the quilted runner.

Stitching down the edges

With the thread choices made for each color of fabric I stitched all the edges down with a free motion satin stitch. This is one of my favorite stitches to use when stitching around applique shapes. Other stitches that can be used are zig-zag or blanket stitch.

The *Sulky Blendables* cotton variegated thread looks great and makes each edge stand out.

Often times when stitching through multiple layers of fusible a gummy residue can build up on the machine needle. I didn't find this to happen with the *HeatnBond fusible*.

If you do find that there is a gummy residue from the fusible you're using just wipe your needle off with an alcohol wipe and continue on stitching. The gummy residue can cause skipped stitches.

Wow, that's a lot of info on what you should know about fusible. I hope I haven't overwhelmed you. It really is a very easy technique and lots of fun with so many ideas and projects to create. Make sure to join me tomorrow for some great tips on binding and finishing the piece.



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6 steps to picking fabrics for your next quilt

Christine Baker



Oh the possibilities!!!



Different scale prints in a selection of coordinating colors



Laurel Burch elephant fabric

If you're like many quilters, you may be overwhelmed when it comes to picking fabrics for your quilting projects. But for me, that's one of my favorite parts!! I just LOVE digging through my stash to find the right combination of fabrics or hanging out at the quilt shop piling bolts of fabrics onto the cutting table until I find just the right ones that I just can't live without! When I'm teaching quilting classes, we almost always end up discussing tips for selecting fabrics. Here are 6 steps to picking fabrics for your next quilt that will surely facilitate the process.

Photos by Christine Baker.

Start with 1 fabric you absolutely LOVE!

You know you have them in your stash – those fabrics that you just had to buy, but had no project in mind. Well, here's your chance – grab one of those favorite fabrics and let's find some others to go with it!!

Here's one of my favorites from my stash. I have always loved [Laurel Burch](#) fabrics and over the years I have acquired a little collection of them. I thought that this cute elephant fabric would be a great place to start for my summer project.

Pick out fabrics that are the same colors as the print in your fabric

Next, pull out some fabrics in the same colors as the print in your fabric.

"Audition" them by laying them down on top of your main fabric to see if they "work". Don't stress about everything being "matchy-matchy" but try to keep the colors the same vibrancy. Usually you would keep clear, bright hues together or dusty, muted hues together.

Stand back as you add each fabric and evaluate it. If you don't like it, don't use it! Here are some of the fabrics that I auditioned for my project.

Contrast between the fabrics

When you're picking fabrics, you want to make sure that there is enough contrast between the fabrics so that you'll be able to see the piecing when it's completed. Although these two fabrics matched my elephants, they were too close in color and didn't provide enough contrast to the main fabric.

Making the final selection

Once you found a bunch of fabrics that will work, you'll probably need to take out a few so that the number of fabrics you're working with is more manageable.

Try to have an assortment of fabrics with different scale prints to make the quilt more interesting but make sure that there are some solids or tone-on-tone fabrics that will give the eye a place to rest.

Too many prints in the same scale will make the quilt too busy and will distract from the piecing.

Determine the "feeling" of your quilt

For my table runner, I decided on a 'more modern' feeling. In order to accomplish this, I selected hand dyed fabrics by fellow quilter [Elaine Quehl](#). I've been saving these for a special art quilt project, but since I'll only need a little strip from each, I'm going to use them for my table runner. If I wanted a more *playful* feeling, I would have used the selection of fabrics in the above picture. If I had wanted a more *traditional*, or *country* feeling I would have selected fabrics with a more dusty or muted hues.

Still struggling? Try pre-cuts!

If you're still struggling with fabric selection, why not try one of the many pre-cuts that are now available? Pre-cuts come in a variety of sizes and contain a whole collection of fabric cut by machine, stacked into piles or rolled up, and tied together. The fabrics are all co-ordinated and are ready to be pieced into a quilt. There are also many patterns available to use pre-cuts. Here are the main pre-cuts available:

- Fat quarters – 18" x 22"
- Layer cakes – 10" squares
- Charm packs – 5" squares
- Jelly rolls – 2.5" strips
- Honeybuns – 1.5" strips



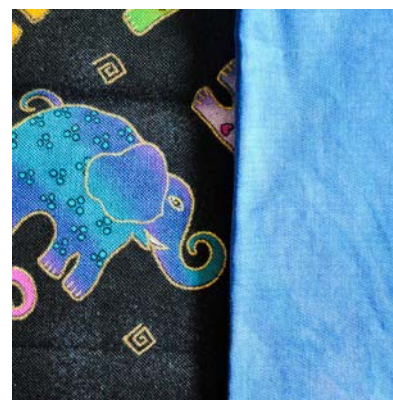
Charm pack of 5" squares



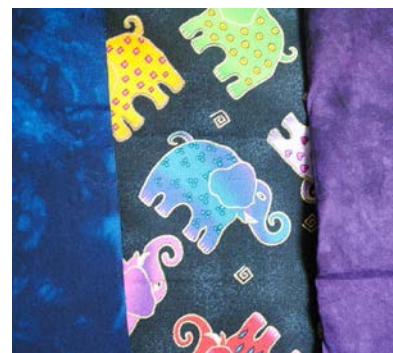
Fat quarter bundle



A perfect match for the purple elephant!



A beautiful blue that matches perfectly!



Fabrics that didn't make the cut.

My final fabric selection



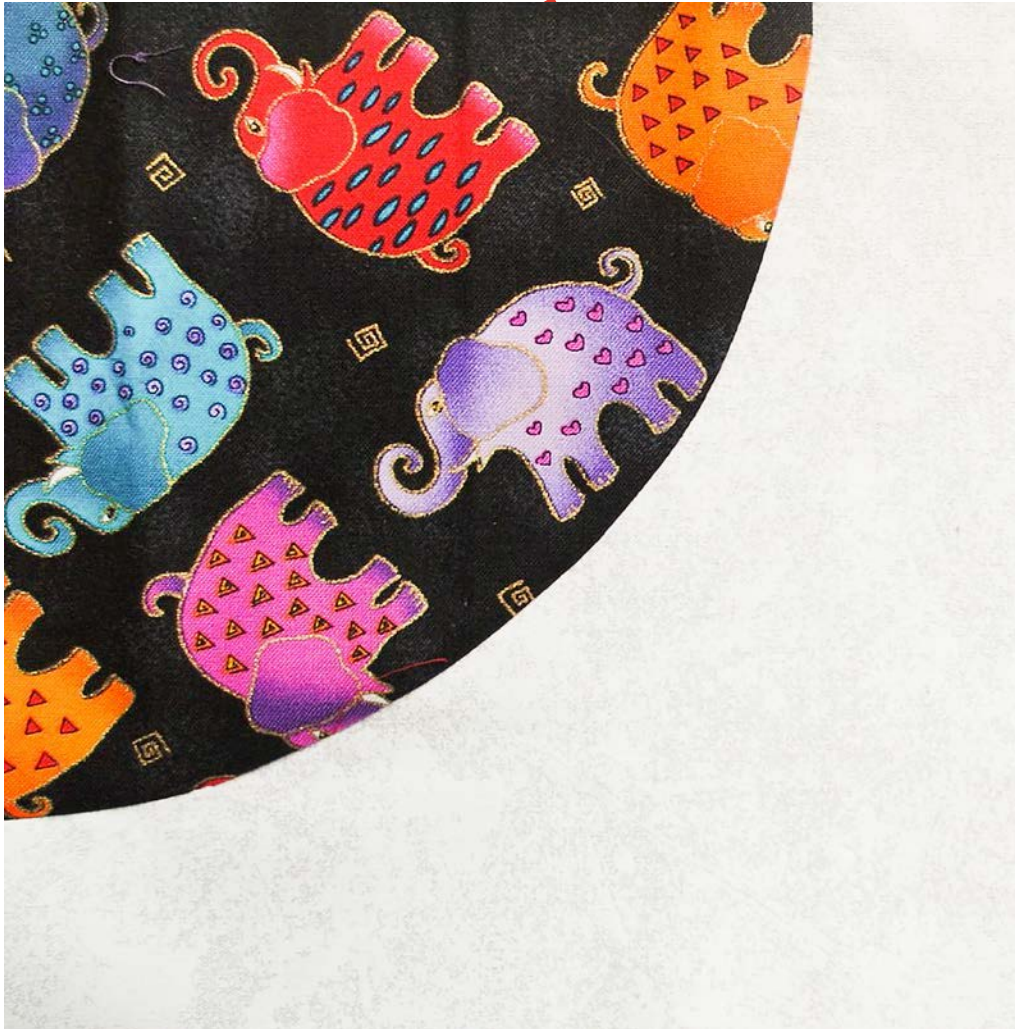
Still stuck – get professional help!

Don't forget that your local quilt shop is a great source of help for selecting fabrics. Or get a quilting buddy to help and then perhaps have tea together!

But remember, these are 6 great steps to pick fabrics for your next quilt, but it's YOUR quilt and if YOU like it, that's what is most important. Try to select fabrics that make you feel good about your project.

5 top tips for effortless curved piecing

Christine Baker



The finished Drunkard's Path block

I've been quilting for over 15 years and up until recently had never tackled curved piecing. I guess I was always afraid that it would be too hard or that it would take too long to cut out the pieces. After I purchased my Accuquilt cutting machine, and saw the dies available to make blocks with curved piecing, I decided to give it a try and was pleasantly surprised by how easy it was! As I got comfortable with the technique I came up with the following 5 top tips for effortless curved piecing.

The best thing to do if you're just trying curved piecing for the first time is to select a block with large pieces that have gentle curves and to follow these top tips for effortless curved piecing.

Photos by Christine Baker.

Cut your pieces accurately

The easiest way to cut accurate pieces for any block is to use a die cutting machine but if you don't have one of those you'll need to use either scissors or a rotary cutter and a template. Below is the pattern to make a template for the Drunkard's Path block we'll be using for the table runner. Templates can be made from template plastic or freezer paper. Purchased acrylic templates may also be used for the common shapes that require curved piecing.

Trace the pattern carefully onto your chosen template material and then cut on the drawn line. The little triangle in the center of each template shape is used to match the fabric pieces together, so make sure that you cut that part accurately

If you're cutting the pieces by hand, be sure to follow your pattern or template as closely as you can to keep variations in your pieces to a minimum.

Freezer paper templates may not last as long as ones made from plastic template material but since they are ironed to the fabric, you may be able to cut your pieces more accurately than with templates that may slip.

When working with a rotary cutter, using the smallest size available will make it easier to cut around the curves. When using scissors to cut templates, be sure to move the template material (if it's ironed/stuck to the fabric) — not the scissors — to ensure an accurate cut.

Handle with care

When you're dealing with fabrics pieces that have curves, you'll be dealing with some bias edges. This means that the fabric pieces can be more easy to stretch out of shape than fabric pieces that are cut on the straight of grain. Be careful when you're handling these pieces and be sure not to stretch fabrics to try to make them "fit."

Pinning is important

You'll find that many quilters don't like to pin their pieces together, even when doing curved piecing but I find that I'm much happier with my blocks if I pin before stitching.

By pinning your fabrics, it's easier to "ease" the fabrics together to create even seams. Some quilters will only use one pin (in the center of the seam) but I personally like to use three pins. I match the centers of the two pieces of fabric and put my first pin there.

Note: For the Accuquilt shapes and shapes cut with the template I've provided, the center is the place with the little triangle. The second and third are used to line up the two ends of both shapes.

Go slow, use your needle down position

When you're curved piecing you're looking for accuracy not speed, so take your time. Start at one end of the seam and if you like, you can back stitch to secure. Sew slowly and as you round the curve, pull the other end of the seam to "ease" the fabrics together.

If you have needle down function on your machine, use it. The benefit of using needle down is that you can randomly pick up the foot and make sure that everything is still lined up and make adjustments if needed. As you approach the middle pin pull it out. When you get to the other end of the seam back stitch again to secure.

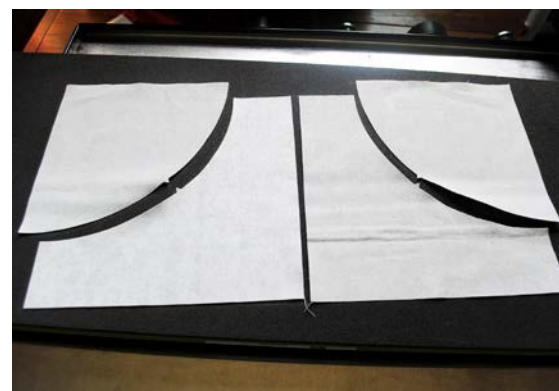
Press gently

Once your block is sewn, press it gently and use steam if you think it is needed. You won't need to clip the curves, so don't worry about that, but press toward the piece that was on the top and your block should lie flat.

Making the blocks for our table runner

For the table runner we need a total of four Drunkard's Path blocks. I've decided to make mine so that my focus fabric (the elephants) will be the small 1/4 circle shape and my white fabric will be the background of the block. Follow the directions above and the top tips for effortless curved piecing to make your four blocks and tomorrow we'll start putting everything together to make the top of our table runner.

Keep in mind these 5 top tips for effortless curved piecing, and the task will be a lot easier!



Drunkards path shapes on Accuquilt cutter



Match the centers and pin together



Pin the ends

Using the needle down position on the sewing machine



5 elements for modern quilt making

Jean Boyd

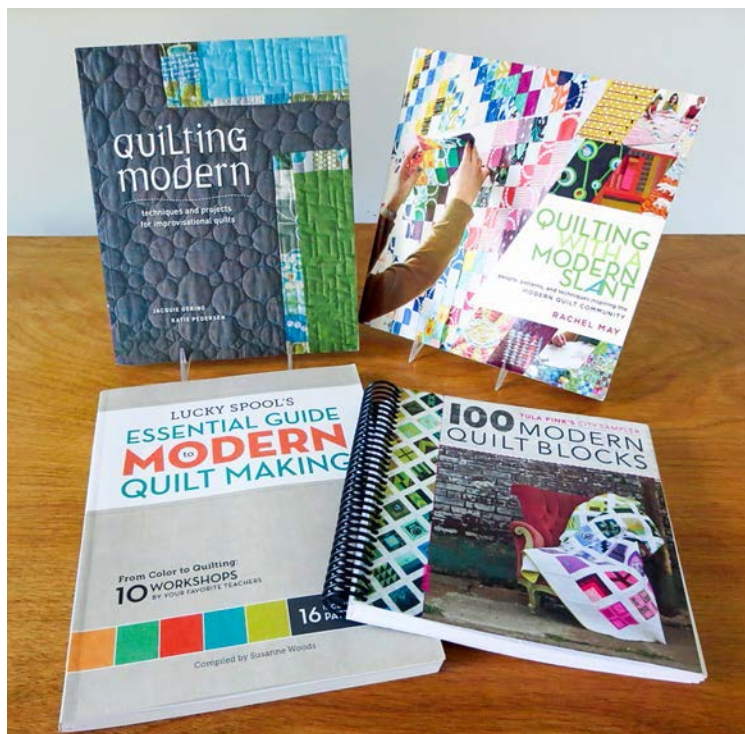
Modern quilting – what’s it all about? Are modern quilts really so different from traditional or art quilts? Everyone has his/her own definition of modern quilts, but there are a few techniques and styles that seem to appear in most of them. Are you ready to make it modern? Let’s see if we can learn more about this relatively new genre of quilting. 5 elements for modern quilt making to help you with the process.

Modern quilts began to appear on web sites and blogs just a few years ago. Interest was high and with the ease of using social media, modern quilters were able to see what others with similar interests were creating. Modern Quilt Guilds were soon formed and many of them have on-line sites as well. Do a Google search for a Modern Quilt Guild in your area and you’ll probably find one!

Many books, magazines and patterns for modern quilts are now available. Check out your local bookstore or on-line source and you’ll find a long list of them.

Here are a few of my favorite books.

Let’s look at some general guidelines for modern quilt making.



Quilting Modern by Gering and Pedersen, Quilting With a Modern Slant by Rachel May, Lucky Spool's Essential Guide to Modern Quilt Making by Susanne Woods and 100 Modern Quilt Blocks by Tula Pink



"Fiesta" by Jean Boyd

Negative Space

Modern quilts tend to have more negative space, or background, around the pieced or appliqued elements. These negative spaces also allow you to showcase your quilting designs.

Simplicity of Design

Simple shapes and fewer blocks are commonly seen in modern quilts.

Asymmetrical Designs

Modern quilts often feature off-kilter or not-quite-square blocks or designs. Improvisational piecing is very common.

Fabrics

Fabrics with stylized flower shapes, bright, clear colors and over sized geometric designs are found in many modern quilts. Solid colors are also used extensively. To get a feel for these great fabrics, check out a few of my favorite designers: Jane Sassaman, Amy Butler and Kaffe Fassett, to name just a few.

Quilting

Straight line quilting, echo quilting and graphic designs are often found on modern quilts. But the quilting style is definitely not limited to just those designs. Be brave and try something new and different for you!

To give you a feel for modern quilt making, I've designed some place mats with a modern look. Here's your chance to make 4 small "quilts" and learn something new!

I chose to make my place mats with solid colors, but of course you can use whatever makes you happy. It's all part of modern quilt making.

Are you ready to make it modern?



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3 easy steps to perfect couching

Jennifer Houlden



Variety of yarns, floss and cording which can be used for couching

In August on QUILTsocal, I talked about color and the [color wheel](#). I made a monochromatic pillow using different elements of design. I'm going to continue on with the color series as we only touched on a couple of different color schemes that the color wheel has to offer. I have some more projects to make to tie in a few more color schemes and [elements of contrast](#). More great techniques and tools to use as well. Today I'm going to introduce you all to 3 easy steps to perfect couching using the [complementary color scheme](#) I left off with last month.

Did you pick which was your favorite combo? I'm still sticking with the blue/orange combo and adding white to help the complementary color scheme to add pop to the pillow.

I gathered up a few supplies that I'm going to need over the next couple of days to create my project. Some fabrics to create the pillow cover – white, blue and orange. A ball of yarn and some cording in orange and blue to go with the fabrics. Quilting thread, a pillow form and of course the other usual quilting tools – a [rotary cutter](#), [ruler](#) and [mat](#).

What is COUCHING?

Couching is a form of embellishment done on the top of a fabric with yarn, cording or ribbon. This material is laid out on top of the fabric it needs to be attached to and then sewn down with either a straight stitch or a zigzag stitch. It's most often used in art quilts. It's also very common in embroidery. The couching adds texture and dimension to the fabric as well as the quilt.



Cording couched in place with rayon thread which gives it a shine

Photos by Jennifer Houlden.

What Yarn to Use

Just about any yarn can be used for couching.

Chunky yarn will give a bit of height and lots of dimension.

Flat yarn will sit right against the fabric. This type of yarn is great for covering raw edges of applique.

Knobby yarn makes for a very interesting texture especially the more knobby it is. This yarn is a bit harder to work with due to the knobs and inconsistent size of the yarn.

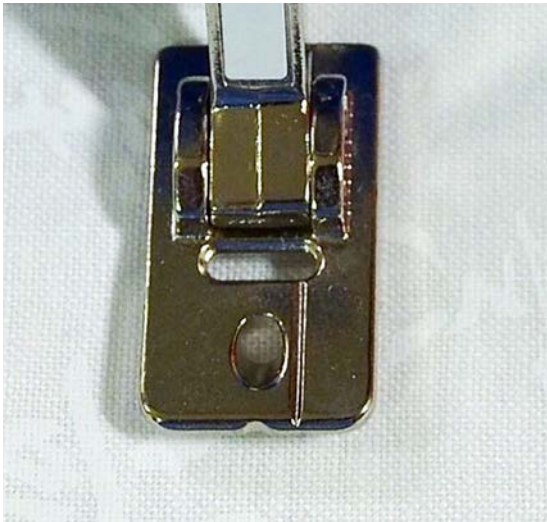
Cording can also be used which is more rigid than yarn. Cording gives a very definitive line look.

Heavy weight embroidery floss can also be used such as pearl cotton. This is not as heavy as yarn and gives a more delicate and fine line of couching.

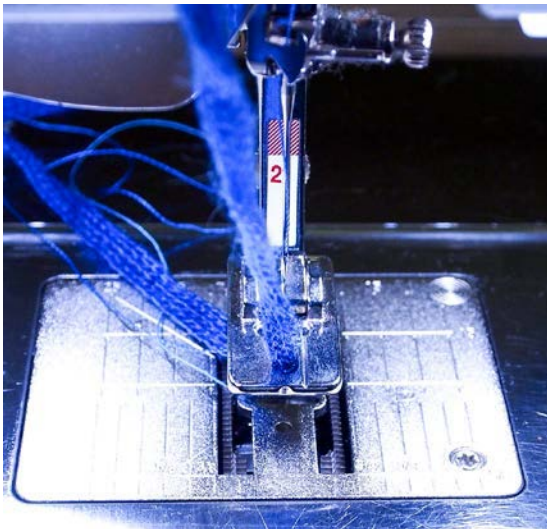
As you see the possibilities are endless since the number of yarns out there are pretty much endless. *DMC* has a huge variety of yarns appropriate for couching.



A complementary color scheme of supplies in blue and orange



A couching foot with a hole to feed the yarn through



Couching foot threaded with yarn

Step 1: using an appropriate foot for the job

A couching foot, also known as a braiding foot, can usually be purchased as an extra foot for your machine.

The couching foot has a hole for threading the yarn through and allows for even feed of the yarn under the foot of the machine when stitching in place.

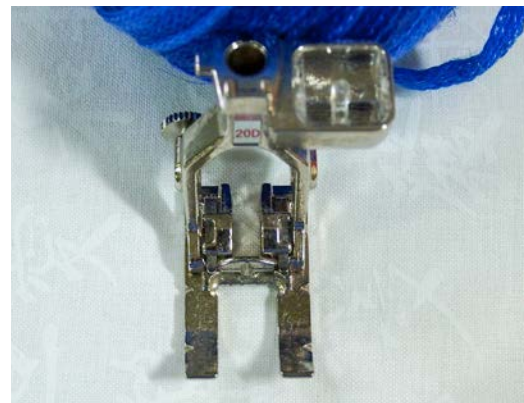
The yarn comes from the back of the machine over the top and through the foot when using a couching foot. There's a bit more control of the yarn when using a couching foot.

But...

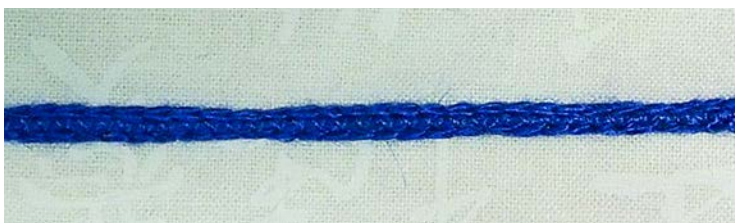
an open toed embroidery foot can also be used in place of a couching foot.

When using this foot the yarn sits in your lap and is thread from the front and under the foot to be stitched in place. Using this type of foot means that you have to guide and control the yarn as it's being stitched to ensure proper placement of the stitching and yarn.

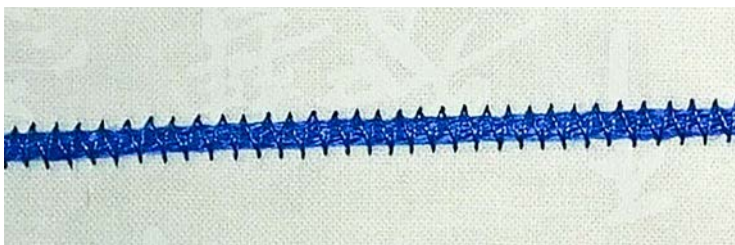
A couching foot is the best option but if not available then the open toed foot will do the job.



Open toed embroidery foot



Too narrow of stitch width



Stitch width is too wide



Stitch width is perfect



A variety of blue and orange Gütermann thread



A spool of Sulky PolyLite thread

Step 2: using the appropriate sized zigzag stitch

The zigzag stitch is used to attach the yarn to the quilt. A straight stitch can also be used but I prefer the look of the zigzag stitch as it has a nice clean and smooth finish to it.

If the width of the stitch is too narrow then the yarn will have rolled up edges.

If the width of the stitch is too wide then the stitching will be seen beyond the edges of the yarn.

The key is to have the width of the stitch just at the outside of the edge of the yarn to secure it in place.

Step 3: using the appropriate thread

I just mentioned that it's the yarn we want to see not the thread so how does one accomplish this. Well, there are a couple of ways.

Use a color of thread that blends in perfectly with the yarn as it's being stitched in place. [Gütermann](#) thread comes in a huge variety of colors which makes it easy to find one that will blend in with the yarn being used. Either cotton or polyester will work for stitching the yarn in place.

Use a 60 weight polyester thread such as [Sulky PolyLite](#). The finer weight thread will blend in very well with the yarn and hardly be seen since it's so fine.

But conversely a rayon or metallic thread can be used to give a bit of shine to the yarn and allow the stitching to stand out slightly. I'm going to use a [Sulky rayon thread](#) for my couching which will add just a touch of shine. These threads are a 30 weight which means they are heavier but because they blend in well with the color of the yarn they won't stand out too much.

I started the couching on my pillow top and am very pleased with how it's turning out. I love the shine from the rayon thread I used for the zigzag stitch.

Who knew it only took 3 easy steps to perfect couching to embellish a cushion!



Sulky rayon threads in blue and orange



Designed for the details.

Featuring Dual Duty Plus®
Hand Quilting Thread.



Make it

COATS



For more information visit:
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Pattern "Modern Traditional" courtesy of Cheryl A. Adam
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2 more tips you should know for perfect couching

Jennifer Houlden

The 3 easy steps to perfect couching we just covered previously are essential to achieving perfect couching. As a bonus, here are two more tips that will assure you great and hassle-free results for all your couching projects.

Bonus Tip 1

Sewing machines have become very streamlined and sleek in their looks with no extra pieces sticking up on top which makes it hard to guide the wool or yarn over the top of the machine into the couching foot.

A piece of a wide diameter straw such as a milkshake straw works wonders as the yarn guide.

Placing the straw on the top of the machine with a piece of tape allows for the yarn to be guided through the straw and down the front of the machine into the couching foot.

The straw as a yarn's guide only works with the couching foot as the yarn is fed from the back of the machine.



Straw as the yarn guide



Fusible non-woven interfacing in three different weights

Bonus Tip 2

Couching results will be much improved if the couching is done on a stabilized piece of fabric. The stabilizer can be one that stays in the quilt or is removed after the couching is completed. By using a stabilizer the zig zag stitches have more layers to attach themselves to resulting in a nice even and smooth stitch which means the yarn will lie evenly along the fabric.

I personally prefer to use a leave-in fusible non-woven stabilizer when a stabilizer is used. No extra work of tearing off the stabilizer after the stitching is done.

Heat N Bond has a great product that comes in three different weights – light, medium and heavy depending on the project and type of fabrics being used.

It can be purchased by the yard or in a package.

But for this project I chose to use the three layers of the quilt sandwich as the stabilizer because I decided that the couching would also act as the quilting. When a piece is this small and if enough couching is done then no further quilting will be needed.

Note that the batting is white. I normally use a natural colored batting except when working with white fabrics. I don't want to take the chance of the cream or natural color showing through the white fabric as it will alter the white color.



The three layers with white batting between

Photos by Jennifer Houlden.

Stopping the Frays

Along with the curved lines of couching I did a few circles to fill in some of the negative space and give a bit more contrast to the piece. I even tried my hand at a spiral. When circles are made with couching it means that there are two ends to the circle – one at the beginning and one at the end that need to be secured in some manner so that the yarn does not fray.

Fray Stop 2 from Unique is the perfect tool for the job. It's easy to apply with a built in applicator, dries clear and any residue will wash away in the wash.

After cutting off all the ends of yarn I applied the Fray Stop – one drop per area. You can see it as a dark spot on the blue circles in the photo below.

No More Color Running

Speaking of washing I would probably add a *Dylon Dye Capture* sheet to the wash when I wash this piece seeing how I didn't pre-wash any of my fabrics and I wouldn't want any of the orange or blue colors running into the white background fabric. The sheets capture any loose dye in the wash preventing color runs. A simple and easy way to ensure the piece comes out as it went in.

I figured I would add a few buttons to the piece with some DMC floss seeing how I have them and I love buttons. Not to mention these Elan buttons look great.

Perfect Corners

Now that the pillow top is all done it's time to turn it right side out and put the pillow form in. I've got a great little tool here to make sure all the corners are pushed out and looking perfect. It's called the *Point Turner* from Unique. Use the pointed end to pop out those corners – better than your fingers as it gets right in there and does the job perfectly.

Hopefully these 2 more tips you should know for perfect couching will make your couching experience a breeze and it will be a technique you use over and over again.



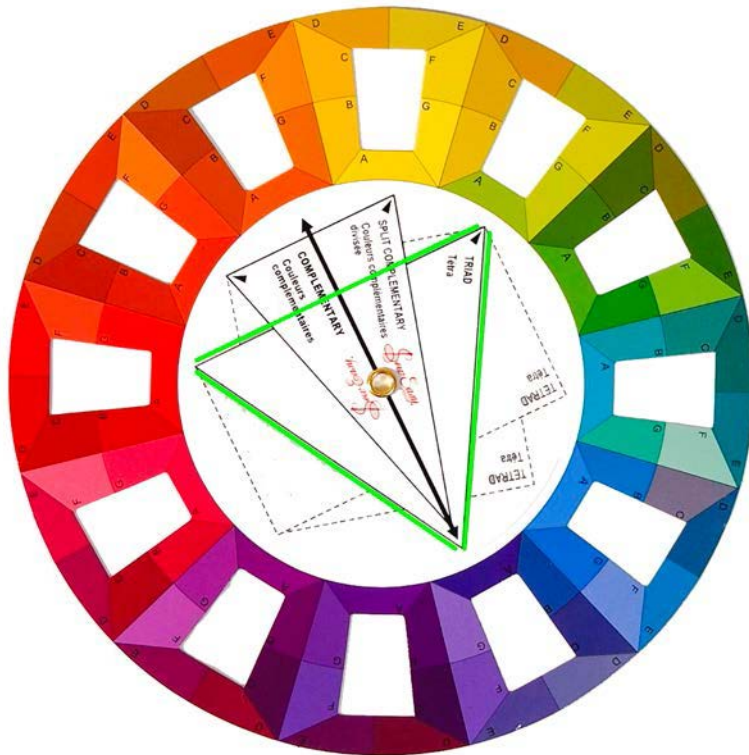
Fray stop applied at yarn ends



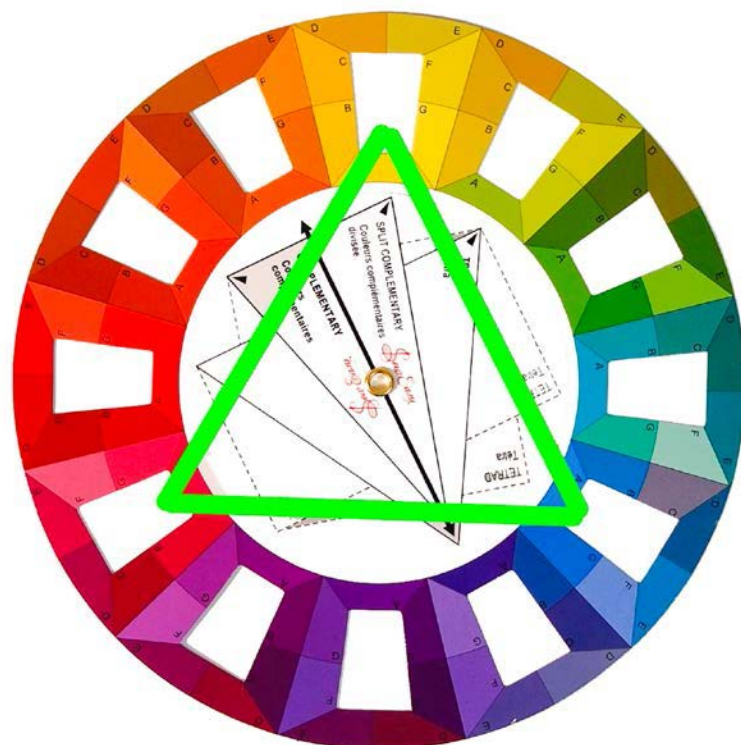
Completed complementary pillow top

Triangles & triads in quilting

Jennifer Houlden



Triadic color scheme depicted on color wheel with an equilateral triangle



Green triangle depicts the primary triadic color scheme

It's been so much fun talking about color and contrast. Color is one of my passions and creating contrast within my quilts is another passion. How do we use triangles and triads in quilting and what do they have in common? And what does it have to do with color and contrast?

What is a Triad?

A triad means three. Associated with the color wheel the triadic color scheme is made up of three different colors. These colors are spaced evenly around the color wheel.

Triangle Shape

If lines were to be drawn between the three colors on the color wheel an equilateral triangle shape would appear.

Now that we know what triangles and triads have in common let's delve into the triadic color scheme just a little bit further

On the Wheel

On the center of the color wheel is an equilateral triangle to depict the triad scheme with each point of the triangle pointing to the color that makes up that triadic color scheme.

This color scheme can make for a very powerful and eye-catching quilt. The key is to use different [values of each color](#) to create contrast as well as to keep it all balanced by having one of the colors take the lead role and the others supporting it.

Photos by Jennifer Houlden.



Primary triadic color scheme



Secondary colors form a triadic color scheme



A tertiary combo



The second tertiary combo

Twisted log cabin in secondary colors



A triadic color scheme of tertiary colors



How many different triadic schemes are there on the color wheel?

All together the color wheel has 4 different triadic color schemes. Along with the primary colors, the secondary colors complete a scheme and the tertiary colors make up the other two schemes.

What is the most well known triad of colors?

That's right, the primary colors – red, blue and yellow.

The other three triadic schemes are not quite as well known unless you have studied color.

Secondary colors – green, purple & orange

Tertiary colors – orange/yellow, blue/green & red/violet

Tertiary colors – yellow/green, blue/violet & red/orange

Have you made quilts with a triadic color scheme?

I've actually only made a couple.

One with the secondary colors which uses 6 values of each color in the twisted log cabin center with great visual effect.

And the other with a tertiary color combo. I chose this combo because it was different and not one that most people would put together. It uses 4 fabrics each with a varying value. The turquoise has both a medium and light value. The lines appear to be floating on the turquoise background making for interesting dimension within the design.

I've never made one with the primary colors which is the most common triadic scheme – maybe it's time that I should. I gathered up some supplies for my next project from one of my LQS.

In the following feature, I create another pillow cover using triangles and the primary triadic color scheme.

Using Stitch-N-Steam is as simple as

1-2-3

Jennifer Houlden



Package of Stitch-N-Steam



Array of supplies from my LQS for the next project

Let's apply what we just learned about color in a quilted project. This one is going to be made using a triadic color scheme and triangles and adding some contrast to this little project. Have you heard of Stitch-N-Steam? If yes that's great you know how much fun it is and if not then you're going to find out how much fun it is. Using Stitch-N-Steam is as simple as 1-2-3.

Let the fun begin.

What is Stitch-N-Steam

Stitch-N-Steam is a 100% polyester product that is activated by steam and used to add texture to any piece of fabric.

Spice up the life of a boring fabric. Add texture to home decor projects. Use it to add contrast to your quilts. Create interesting craft projects with it.

It's as simple as 1-2-3.

How does it work?

It's activated by steam. As the polyester fabric is steamed, it and the fabric shrinks together creating texture. Overall shrinkage is approximately 30%. Make sure to take this into account when cutting your pieces.

Time to play!



Gütermann polyester thread to match each fabric

Step 1 – adding Stitch-N-Steam to the fabric

Place a piece of Stitch-N-Steam on the back side of a piece of fabric.

Stitching lines can be drawn on the polyester fabric if you need guidelines to stitch by. I just used a marker to draw the lines since they won't ever be seen.

Depending on the size of the piece being stitched a couple of pins may be needed to hold the piece together as the polyester is quite slippery.

Step 2 – stitch the two pieces together

Any stitch can be used – straight line stitching or free motion stitching.

Any type of thread can be used for the stitching. Just make sure to use the same thread in both the top and bobbin of the machine especially if you're going to stitch with the Stitch-N-Steam facing up.

I decided to use a polyester thread in the solid color to match each fabric but a variegated thread would look good too. The thread I chose will blend right in.

The closer the stitches are together the more texture there will be. Multi directional lines will give better texture.

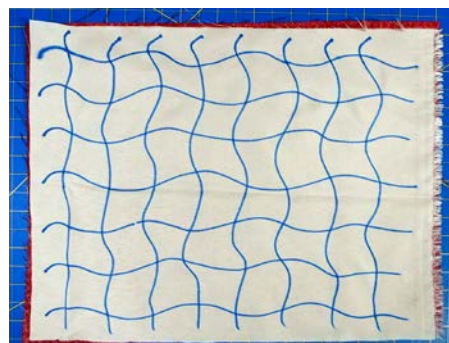
I stitched along the blue grid lines but then decided that they were too far apart and stitched between each one to get better texture.

Step 3 – activate with steam

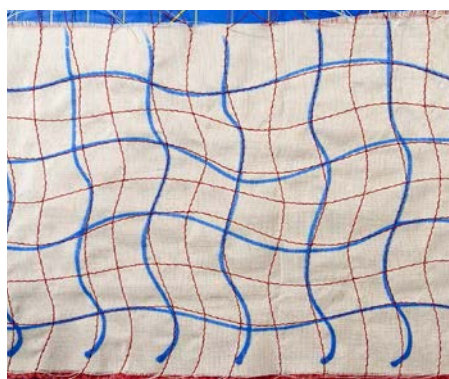
Once the stitching is done place the piece on the ironing board with fabric side up as per the manufacturer's instructions. Hold the iron just over top of the fabric – **do not press just let the steam do it's thing.** The iron should be on the highest steam setting for optimal results. I tend to press the extra steam button for more steam. As the steam is applied to the fabric, it shrinks and crinkles, and adds texture to a once flat piece of fabric.



Layering the fabric & Stitch-N-Steam



Stitching lines drawn on Stitch-N-Steam



Stitching done



Shrinking with steam

Bonus Tips

Tip 1 – add extra loft

Do this by putting a piece of 100% cotton batting between the piece of fabric and the Stitch-N-Steam. When stitching the three layers together make sure to have closer stitching to ensure good shrinkage and texture.

Tip 2 – use a cooling rack

In step 3 above the Stitch-N-Steam instructions say to steam with the fabric side facing up but I like to apply steam with the Stitch-N-Steam product facing up. The only problem is that if the iron touches the polyester fabric it will melt hence I had to come up with a solution to prevent melting and optimal steaming. Someone suggested I place a cooling rack for cookies on top of the piece so I could have the Stitch-N-Steam facing up. Using the cooling rack means that I can get the iron close to the fabric but not touch it and optimize the steaming and shrinking process.

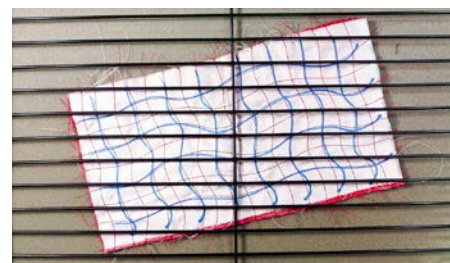
By the way, Stitch-N-Steam is completely washer, dryer and dry-clean safe so if you're embellishing a piece of clothing you'll be able to wash it.

This is so much fun. I can't wait to get the rest of my fabrics textured for my cushion top. With the red piece done I can move onto the blue and yellow. And then put it all together tomorrow to create another fantastic project for my color series posts.

No 'ifs', 'ands' or 'buts', using Stitch-N-Steam is as simple as 1-2-3.



Extra loft between fabric & Stitch-N-Steam



Stitched piece under cooling rack

Making the quilted triangle cushion top



Top piece without batting and bottom piece with batting

The stitching I did on each piece was free motion – each with a different motif. And I put batting in each sandwich as well as I wanted a bit of loft and softness to the piece.

This photo shows two pieces, one made with batting and one without.

Both had the same stitching motif. Now one piece is smaller than the other but the difference with and without batting is pretty evident. With batting it's a bit softer and more pillow-like. The one without batting is more crinkly and not as soft looking.

To ensure that I had control of my fabric sandwich while doing the free motion quilting I made sure to wear my [quilting gloves](#). The gloves have little rubber dots on them that allow me to grip the fabric lightly and be able to control where it goes making for smooth quilting. They come in different sizes and are color coded for each size.

Three different motifs – three different textures

Here's the front of the three pieces. The yellow was done with stippling, the blue with stippling and triangles and the red with wavy lines.

The red design is definitely different from the other two whereas the yellow and blue, even though were stitched with different motifs, look a lot more alike.

Turning them over you can see the quilting motif much better. Sure looks different than the front.



Three fabrics – three textures



Three pieces – three different motifs

Adding Triangles

I drew an equilateral triangle on the back of each textured fabric piece with a Fabric Fun marker. I knew that it would mark well on the polyester fabric and I didn't worry about it being permanent. Nobody would ever see the markings as they were on the back.

After cutting out my pieces I pinned them to the quilted pillow top with a flower headed pin. I couldn't fuse them in place because the polyester fabric on the back would melt if I added fusible web to it. And that wouldn't be a good thing after all the work I went to to create these textured pieces of fabric.

Quilting the pillow top prior to adding the embellishments is much easier than trying to quilt around the triangles after they have been stitched in place. Too much stopping and starting which means lots of thread ends. But these thread ends can be dealt with easily by using [Self-Threading needles](#) to pull the threads to the back and bury under the backing. I love self-threading needles and think they are the greatest thing since sliced bread.

Now that the triangles are pinned in place the next step is to stitch them in place. I used the same Gütermann threads to do a satin stitch around each piece as I used for the free motion quilting. I was keeping everything simple. Simple is good.

I used a free motion satin stitch but in hindsight I think I would do a regular satin stitch next time as I would get better coverage on the uneven edges. A wide stitch width is needed for optimal coverage.

Using your handy dandy [thread snips by Titech](#) snip away the thread ends once the satin stitching is done.

The pillow top is now complete and uses a 12" pillow form.

It's been a thrill talking about color, contrast and texture. I hope you've had as much fun as I have creating the quilted triangle cushion top and learning all sorts of great tips and techniques.



Fabric Fun marker



Triangles pinned in place



Happiness is a hexie quilt

Jackie White



Fabric hexies ready to use.

Have you discovered fabric hexagons, or hexies for short? Every quilter needs to know the happy giddy feeling of quilting with hexies! This article boasts of hexie happiness for any quilter. See how you can use hexies in modern quilts or as quilted embellishments and Also a way to do a hexie in 15 seconds flat! No joke, that's how fast I can do one using this simple, fast and modern method! Ah yes...happiness is a hexie quilt!

The traditional way to use hexies was to create hundreds of them and stitch them together into a pattern usually done by color. A tiny blind stitch was done to join each hexagon to its mate.

With modern quilting and different trends, hexagons can still be found in this beautiful traditional manner but are also popping up in new and unique ways.

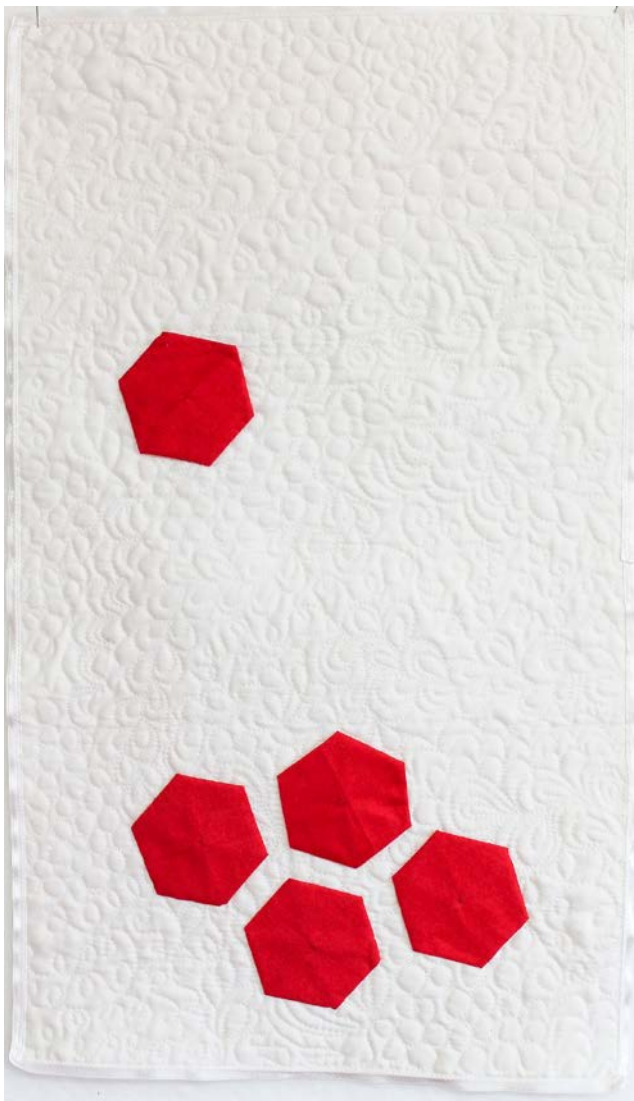
First off would be the way they are created. While still most use the paper method in which a larger hexagon is glued or thread basted to a smaller paper shaped hexagon, there's a simple and very fast method of making them.

I created a [2 minute video](#) with my 10 year old son as the camera man to show you how. Now watch carefully, we even got photobombed by cows!

[Tutorial on how to make fast and easy hexagons \(hexies\) from circles.](#)

One of the great perks with hexies is you can take them anywhere and work on them whenever you have a moment. I pack my circles and needle and thread in a pencil case and tuck it in my purse. To date, I have made them at the hairdresser's, garage, sports games, dentist office, and even the emergency room. Literally they go where you go!

Photos by Jackie White.



Create fun modern wall hangings with hexies.



Now what can you do with them if you don't want to quilt a big hexagon quilt?!

Well, there are so many possibilities. Many quilters are putting the hexies on back-grounds and stitching them to that rather than to each other and forming unique shapes and collages with them.

With the modern movement so strong, simple solid hexagons on a white back-ground make a fun wall hanging.

For small projects with hexies, try making some fun mug rugs or quilted coasters!

Happiness is a hexie quilt! I encourage you to give hexies a try! Once you start, you won't be able to stop and I'll recognize a hexie lover when I see you at the doctor's office stitching up your hexies!

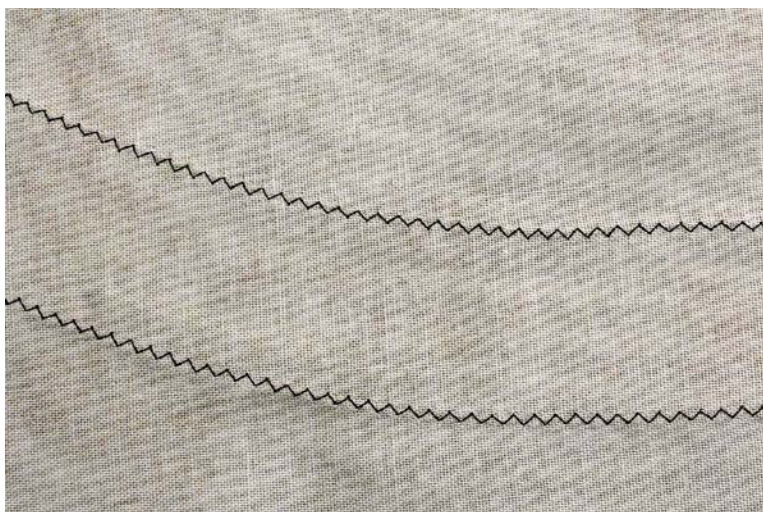
Happiness

10 tips for invisible machine applique

Elaine Theriault



Sample of invisible applique stitched on the Sapphire 930



The underside of the sample of machine invisible applique

Buying a new sewing machine is a confusing task. The first thing I'd do is compile a list of tasks that I want my sewing machine to perform and then check out those tasks against the features of available sewing machines in my price range.

One of the tasks that's pretty close to the top of my list is the applique capabilities of a sewing machine.

We're going to explore the world of an applique style that I call invisible applique using the zig zag stitch and in doing so, discover how the Husqvarna Viking Sapphire 930 passes all the tests with flying colors. There's nothing that you can't applique with the Sapphire 930. Let me rephrase that – there's nothing that you can't applique with amazing results with the Sapphire 930.

Let's have a look and see what you can do.

1 – Choose the appropriate stitch

When one is deciding on the applique method, you have to think of the desired look of the finished piece. I choose the invisible applique stitch when I want the look of hand stitching, but don't have the time to do all that stitching by hand. I wouldn't do this technique on a project that had a lot of complex pieces. I like to turn the edges of the applique shapes under to do the invisible applique stitch and the more complex the pieces are, I find that I have better control doing the stitching by hand. I'm not saying it can't be done by machine, because anything is possible – it just requires a tad more skill.

Having said that – when I do invisible applique by sewing machine – I choose to use an elongated zig zag stitch. I turn the edges of my applique under by using starch.

If you look really really closely at the picture on the left, you can see that it's stitched down and if you still don't believe me, below is a picture of the underside where you can really see the stitching.

If you're not familiar with the starch method of turning the edges under, here's a link to [my tutorial](#) on prepping applique pieces using the starch method.



Invisible machine applique (using monofilament thread) on fused (raw edge) flannel applique shapes

The one thing to keep in mind about applique is that there are no rules. There are always guidelines that people (including me) prepare for you. Those guidelines are made based on hours and hours of failure – okay, failure is a harsh word. How about hours and hours of experimenting and having fun? Yes – that sounds much better. However, there are times when one bends their own guidelines for the sake of time.

In the example above, I was teaching a jacket class and the jacket had applique on it. The jacket had to be prepped for class and there wasn't enough time to do a blanket stitch around the raw edges of this applique. So I loaded invisible thread on the sewing machine and did an invisible applique stitch around these shapes using the elongated zig zag.

While the job got done, I wish I hadn't been so hasty. I think the applique would've looked much better with a different stitch. But considering that the applique shapes are flannel (they were fused down with a fusible web) and the shapes have a raw edge, there really isn't a lot of fraying.

Why was the invisible stitch faster? Well I didn't have to fuss with neatness on turning the corners because you can't see the stitching. That saved a huge amount of time.

With that in mind, as we move forward with these guidelines, feel free to change them up, break the rules and do what works for you. My only advice is to experiment, make samples and try everything. The more you try, the more you'll know what you like and that means you'll be happy with your end result.



Husqvarna Viking Sapphire 930



Two samples of lightweight thread – lay out the thread on the fabric to choose the color.

2 – Choose the right thread

Here's a lesson for all of us. While I do try to keep all my supplies in their appropriate place, I've been known to keep threads and a few other small items with the particular project that I was working on. Hmmmm – then when you attempt to find your brown threads – the memory goes blank as to what project those threads are with!

For invisible machine applique, I like to match the thread color to the color of the applique shape. You can use invisible thread if you like, but I find that invisible does give off a bit of a shine and well – this is supposed to be invisible applique! However invisible thread (monofilament thread) is a good way to get started in invisible machine applique without investing hundreds of dollars in thread.

My preferred thread is a very fine thread – weight of 60 to 100 that matches the color of the applique shape. There are numerous brands of this fine thread out there and I have been collecting them over the years.

Before you panic and think that you have to buy hundreds of thread, remember my dilemma? I couldn't find my brown threads? Well no panic – let's see what else we have that is close. I found these two colors and while they do not look like a match when you look at the thread on the spools, have a look at a single strand of thread on the fabric and I think either one of them will work very nicely.

Actually I used the darker one and can you see the stitches on that sample I showed at the beginning? Nope – I didn't think so!

As I mentioned, you can also use monofilament thread or invisible thread. There are several brands of this thread, make sure you use a good quality one. Some of the invisible thread can be very coarse and you don't want that. You want the fine delicate ones. Monofilament comes in smoke and comes in clear.

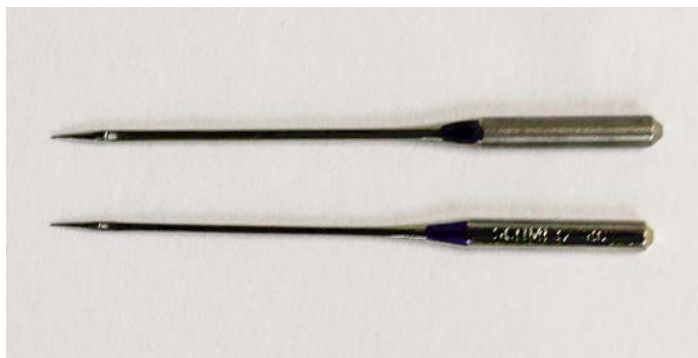


Invisible (monofilament) thread in clear and smoke with a pre-wound bobbin with bobbin weight thread

Personally I don't use monofilament in the bobbin – I use pre-wound bobbins (with bobbin weight thread) for my invisible machine applique and have been known to use two colors: black or white. If the tension is set properly on the sewing machine then you're good to go. Let's just say that I had **no** trouble getting a good tension on the Sapphire 930 which makes life so much easier. Sometimes I use the same lightweight (sometimes called bobbin weight) thread in the bobbin that I'm using in the top. In other words, I wind my own bobbins, but I might have one bobbin with red thread and one with green and I use it for any variation of those colors that I'm using on top.

Again for the color of the bobbin thread, if you don't have a matching thread, lay out what you have to see if it works. Here I'm using a pre-wound bobbin with a very fine bobbin weight black thread. You can also buy pre-wound bobbin thread in all the colors. I've seen these come in one package which makes it very economical to buy. I do use those bobbins from time to time, but I must confess that I'm lazy and if I can set the tension to work with the same color in the bobbin, it saves time having to change the bobbin.

I can't stress this enough – but choose your thread for the bobbin and the top wisely. Do not 'cheap out' on the threads. If you can't afford to go crazy (and who can?), then buy a couple of basic colors of the bobbin weight thread for your applique. You can get away with a lot when you use neutrals. Greys, browns and taupes will work on most fabrics. If your applique is bright – then you may want to look at buying one spool of each of the main colors. Whatever you do – don't buy cheap thread!



Top needle is a size 12, the bottom needle is a size 8

3 – Choose the needle wisely

The same way that you should use quality threads in the sewing machine, make sure that you're using quality sewing machine needles. I like the Inspira brand.

But once you've chosen the brand that you and your sewing machine like, there's a vast variety of needle types and sizes that one must choose from. For 99% of my work, I use the Microtex needles. That's the type of needle. The point is very sharp and I find that it works for most of my projects.

The other thing to consider with needles is the size of the needle. It's a good idea to match the size of the needle to the size of the thread. A huge percentage of problems with sewing is a mismatched combination of needle and thread. If you think about it, the sewing machine is literally punching a hole through your project. If the thread is too small, it can't fill the hole completely and the project doesn't look nice. If the thread is too big, you'll get fraying.

Since I'm using very fine thread, I go with the smallest needle available. That is a size 60/8. A word of caution – this needle is very small as you can see below. The needle threader won't work with it. You'll have to thread the needle by hand. If you can't seem to do this, then move up to a size 70/10. The needle threader will work with that size of needle.

4 – Set up the sewing machine space

Whether you have your sewing machine set up in a cabinet or with an extension table, you must have some additional work space on both sides of the needle. I can't stress this enough. If you don't have room to control the work, it's going to be much harder to control.

I moved this small sewing table to my office at work (yes – I get to sew most days at work!) and I love this table. It's small, so it fits nicely into a corner, but it's big enough to handle most projects very nicely.

Or use the extension table. Whatever works for you, but you need some space to work.



Sapphire 930 in a portable sewing cabinet



Extension table for the Sapphire 930



Loose thread can break a needle if it catches somewhere



Thread is now contained with netting

5 – Thread the sewing machine

Every time I blog, I always mention threading the sewing machine. You would be surprised at how much of a difference it makes if the sewing machine is not threaded properly. Broken needles, poor tension to name a few. Now that I've discovered this portable thread stand, I use it all the time. I love it and am going to have to invest in a couple more since I sew on different sewing machines depending on where I am.

You can see though that I have a potential problem. That fine weight thread wants to fall off the spool. This can become a problem if that thread gets caught somewhere. That can lead to a broken needle which I don't want as broken needles can damage the sewing machine.

I like to use these nets around my fine threads so the thread stays contained and won't get caught. In this case, the net was too tight and didn't want to stay on the spool thus defeating the purpose of the net. I fixed that problem by stretching out the net so it was loose, but not falling off the spool and it worked like a charm.

6 – Choose the appropriate foot

If you're going to do machine applique of any kind – you must buy an applique foot. In a pinch, you could use your clear foot, but you just can't do a good job if you don't have an open foot. Never try to applique with a regular piecing foot. You can't see right to the needle because of the bar across the front and this will prevent you from seeing to the corners and into points on your work.

This isn't a guideline – this is a MUST. Nuff said!

7 – Choose the appropriate needle plate

Although this makes sense, I'll mention it anyway. Make sure you have the general purpose throat plate on the sewing machine. You'll be doing a zig zag and you don't want to break a needle. You can see in the photo to the left, that the hole for the needle is a large oval to accommodate the width of the zig zag stitch.



Open toe applique foot and proper throat plate

8 – Set up the stitch on the sewing machine

We're almost ready to stitch!

Now is the time to set up the stitch on the sewing machine. On the touch panel of the Sapphire 930, the first 10 stitches of the first menu are featured. I'm choosing number 5 which is an ordinary zig zag.

Now here's where you'll have to play. I try to make that stitch as narrow as I can. But I have to make it wide enough so that it covers the edge of the applique. In this case, I'm using a stitch width of 1.0. Now to play with the length – I want an elongated zig zag. If I make the stitches too close together, the stitches will be much more visible. After playing around, I choose a stitch length of 3.0.

9 – Do a test stitch out

You must do sample stitch outs. There's no way around it – oh – you could just start stitching, but then be prepared to rip out. I usually start by stitching out the zig zag on a scrap of fabric and once I'm happy, I'll try that stitch on a sample of applique. I want to know if I can readily cover the edge of the applique – it isn't only what the sewing machine can do – it's what you can do. If you need a wider stitch because you're having trouble with the edge – then you might want to use a wider stitch.

I have stitched miles of invisible machine applique so I don't do that part of the stitch out any more. But all sewing machines are different. I always test the length and width until I'm happy.

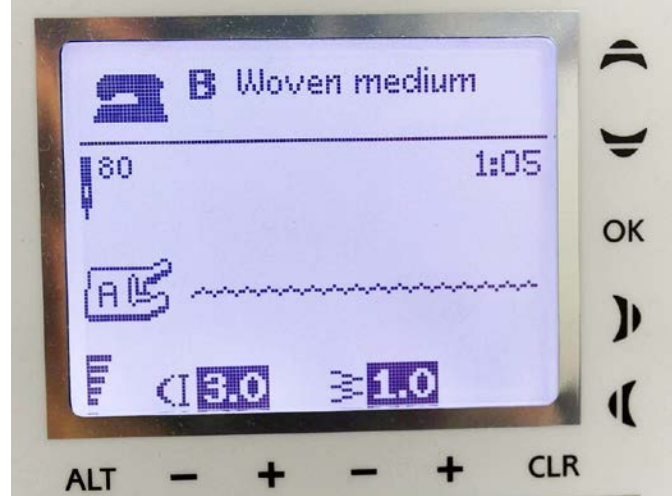
I still have the stitch outs from the raw edge applique that I showed you at the beginning of this post. I don't keep all my stitch outs, but if it's something new, I keep them. They're in a box labeled Machine Applique. They are very useful tools to me even now.

If I want to bend those guidelines, I use these stitch outs as a starting point. I can ask myself – what have I done in the past and did I like it? That can save a lot of time!

10 – Stitch!

At last we're ready to stitch. The bottom line is 99% of the zig zag stitch will be sitting on your applique piece. When the needle zags to the right of your work, the needle should not be in your applique shape. The needle should only go in the background. This will ensure that the edge of the applique is covered. If the edge of the applique shape is not covered, you'll get a visible ridge along the edge which isn't pretty.

There you have it – 10 tips for invisible machine applique. See [more features](#) of the Husqvarna Viking Sapphire 930 it shines when it comes to applique.



Stitch length is set to 3.0 and stitch width is set to 1.0 for an elongated zig zag.



Stitch out to test the stitch length and width



More stitch outs for machine applique

Pockets full of blessings

Nancy Devine



"When you're worried, and you can't sleep, just count your blessings instead of sheep, and you'll fall asleep, counting your blessings," sings Bing Crosby in *White Christmas*, one of my all-time favorite holiday movies.

That movie, and that silken voice, were the inspiration behind *Pockets Full of Blessings*, a wall quilt that can be used as an Advent Calendar to countdown the days until Christmas, and a hold-all for various things throughout the rest of the year. Use it to help organize a sewing room, office or dorm room.

It's all about the pockets.

Let's get started collecting up what you'll need for this project:

2 packages of 42 charm (5") squares

1 yard backing fabric

1/2 yard border fabric

1 yard cotton quilt batting

thread:

all purpose and machine embroidery

needles:

machine quilting and embroidery, hand-sewing

Unique flexible thimble

Heirloom finger pressing tool

chalk marking pen

Heirloom scissor snips

TrueCut rotary cutter and ruler

Sew Smooth

24 buttons

HeatnBond Feather Lite

applique press sheet

24 metal rimmed key tags (I found mine in an office supply store)

rubber number stamps

stamp pad

baker's twine

wooden dowel

a wall quilt

Photos by Nancy Devine



Charm squares are pre-cuts help cut the time it takes to make this pocket-full wall quilt.

Collecting charm squares

Normally, I like to wash, dry and press all my fabric before I start a project. With charm squares, this just isn't possible.

I like these little pre-cut squares, offering all the patterns in a particular line of fabric. They're fun to collect. Often, they offer good value when you really love a particular line of fabric, but can't decide which fabrics in the line to buy. They're also easier to store than fat quarters. I keep mine in re-purposed wooden wine crate, discovered for \$3 at a local thrift store.

For the Pockets Full of Blessings wall quilt, we are going to use 75 of the 84 squares in our two packages of squares.

You'll also need additional squares to create the hanging pockets for the wall quilt, as well as the label.



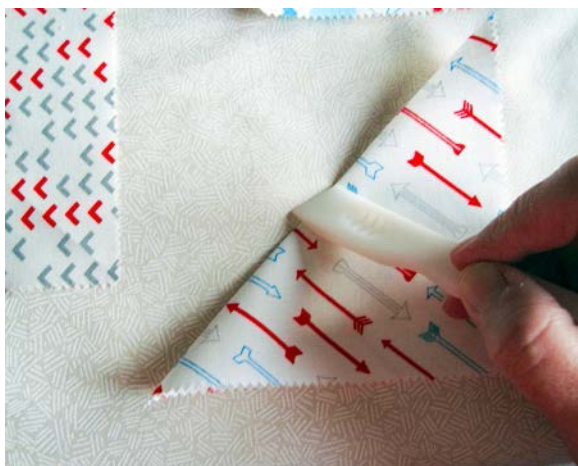
Photo by ANPTmag



So many days, so many blessings!

Folding and pressing is part of piecing

pockets full of blessings wall quilt



Fold charm squares on the diagonal to create a pocket unit -- 24 times!



The pocket units look like this -- before they are sewn together.



Pin the folded charm squares to the backing square.



Baste the unit together to ensure the folded elements stay properly aligned.

The beauty of this wall hanging is that it will be a multi-season project -- a count down calendar for Christmas and a hold-all quilt for the rest of the year.

Unwrap the two packages of charm squares and grab the top three.

Place one right side up in front of you. Fold the second on a diagonal, corner to corner. Lightly press the seam with a [finger pressing tool](#). Use a dry iron to set the seam.

While working on the diagonal like this, it's important not to use steam, which can stretch the fabric while it's on the bias.

Place the first triangle of fabric on the square, matching the corners and the edges.

Repeat the same folding and pressing procedure with the second triangle, but place it on the opposite side of the square as in the photo above.

Press the whole unit with a dry iron, then pin the triangles to the square on three sides.

Use a contrasting thread to baste the three sides together, and remove the pins.

You'll be making 24 of these pocket units.

This will take some time. It's a surprising challenge, mixing and matching all the colors found in the charm square pack.

There aren't any hard and fast rules to doing this, but I found picking three squares from the front, three from the back, and then three from the middle, was a good way to mix and match the overall pocket designs.

Row by row, this **pocket quilt** grows

Now that all 24 are finished, it's time to piece them together.

First, change your needle. You'll need a new, sharp, patchwork and quilting needle to negotiate the layers of these pockets, joined together. You'll be going through six layers of fabric at some points, so to ensure straight 1/4" seams, get a new needle.

Pin the pockets together so that not only the edges are aligned, but also the pocket diagonals.

I found it easier to align the pockets (right sides together) first and then pin it at the first meeting of two pockets, then align the rest of the unit. Make sure that all the pockets face the same way, with the openings toward the top of the wall quilt. *No really, take a minute to check this.*

As I was playing around with the pocket units' placement, I accidentally placed two or three units on their sides -- making them ineffective as pockets.

Sew two pockets together, and then join another two, making a row of four pocket units.

You'll be making six rows of four pocket units.

When you've got a row pieced together, press all the seams to one side -- it's okay to use some steam now that the diagonals are stabilized in the pocket units.

On the next row you piece, press the seams to the other side.

This is important once it's time to sew the rows together because it allows the seams to butt together (see photo above).

Sew the rows together and press the seams toward the bottom of the quilt.

Cut four borders strips, 3" wide, across the width of the fabric. Sew a border strip to the top and bottom of the wall quilt. Trim. Press the seam toward the quilt.

Sew the border strips to the sides of the quilt. Trim. Press the seam toward the quilt.

There! Your fabulous Pockets Full of Blessings wall quilt top is finished.



When joining the pockets together, press the seams to one side, and then the other.



Take your time to sew the rows together. There's a lot of fabric meeting in various seams as the pocket units go together.



Take your time to sew the rows together. There's a lot of fabric meeting in various seams as the pocket units go together.

That was fun, right?

Ready to quilt the

Pockets full of blessings



Making a quilt sandwich that's basted together with a light spray of 505.



Pin the corners with safety pins to prevent any surprise shifting while machine quilting.

It's always so satisfying when you've finished a quilt top -- like reaching the finish line of a long race. Let's make a quilt sandwich and use some decorative machine stitches then we'll be ready to quilt Pockets Full of Blessings wall quilt.

Press the backing fabrics with lots of steam and, if necessary, an ironing product like *Dylon Easy Iron*. It helps get wrinkles out and tackles tough creases, without adding any residue.

A smooth backing will ensure there are no puckers or pulls when machine quilting.

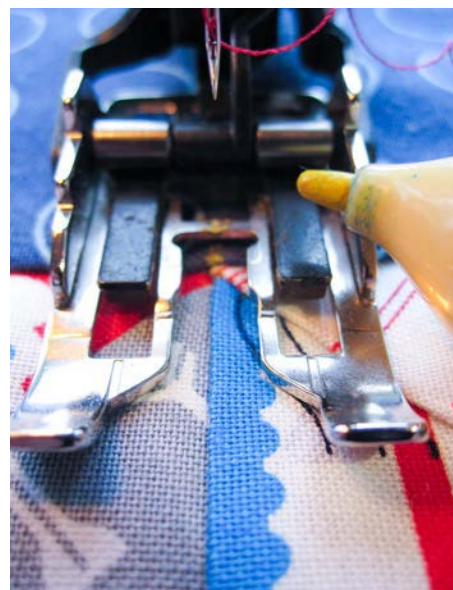
Lay the pressed backing fabric with the wrong side facing up.

Smooth out the quilt batting onto the backing fabric. Use your hand to smooth out the batting as much as possible. There should be a bit extra batting, so it's okay if the batting isn't even with the backing. You'll be trimming it even later in the process.

Place the quilt top right side up and even with the backing and the batting.

At this point, I steam the sandwich a bit, and smooth it out to make sure the batting is as even as I can make it. Once it cools, I spray a bit of 505 Fabric Adhesive to keep the sandwich layers together. I like doing this more than basting, especially on smaller machine quilting projects. I also pin the quilt corners together using *safety pins*, just to prevent any shifting during the machine quilting process.

Set your machine up for quilting, installing the quilting foot according to the manual's instructions. The quilting foot ensures the top, middle, and bottom go through the machine feed dogs evenly, eliminating worries about shifting and bunching.



Mark the center point of the quilting foot with a chalk marker to keep the foot centered in the ditch.

Change the needle to machine embroidery, thread the machine with machine embroidery thread. The needle is very strong and very sharp with a reinforced eye to stand up to the strong rayon threads.

Designed to go through fabric multiple times in close quarters, machine embroidery needles take the frustration out of working with the specialty and decorative threads that add interest and shimmer to projects. Consider using them beyond machine embroidery designs.

To use these specialty threads for quilting, loosing the top tension slightly when you're threading the machine.

I selected a wavy zigzag stitch to create quilting lines between each pocket unit on the quilt -- a fancy way to stitch in the ditch. It wasn't easy to stay within the lines, but I made peace with the imperfections, deciding they add handcrafted charm.

I found it very helpful to mark the center point groove in my machine's quilting foot with yellow marking chalk. It kept me focused on keeping the center of the foot within the center of the seam between the pockets.

Again, you'll be going through any layers of fabric as you quilt. Go slowly, and be careful that the foot doesn't get stuck in the pockets as you quilt. The only way to make sure this doesn't happen is to take it slow and enjoy watching the embroidery stitches form.

I also quilted the borders at the edge of the quilt, using the same stitch.

Trim the quilt.

Now, remember those two squares reserved from the charm packs? Fold them corner to corner as you did to create the pockets. Press carefully and sew the open side to the top edges, (see photo below). These are the hanging pockets.

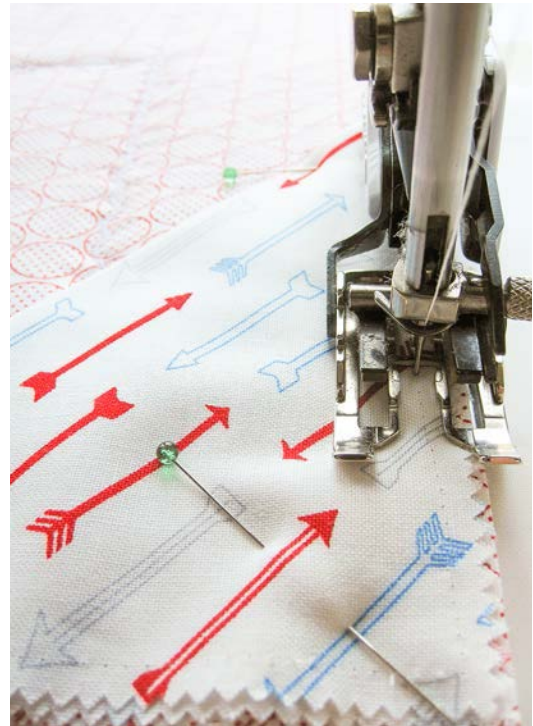
Cut three binding strips to create continuous binding.

Bind the quilt using QUILTSocial.com contributor Elaine Theriault's [excellent method](#).

I like to finish the binding by hand sewing it to the back, using [small Clever Clips](#) to secure the folded binding.



Trim the quilt edges even.



Fold two of the charm squares to create hanging corners, and sew to the top corners of the quilt.



I prefer to sew the binding onto the back of the quilt by hand.

Exciting, right?
Now you've got a
cute and clever
pockets full of blessings
wall quilt.

A buttoned up finish on the

Pockets full of blessings wall quilt



Stamping tags, and attaching buttons to the pockets on our pocket-filled wall hanging.



Place two or three small stitches at the pocket intersections prior to sewing a button onto the same spot.

As I mentioned at the beginning, this wall quilt is very versatile. Here are the instructions for finishing it up as an Advent Calendar.

In order to make the pockets more stable, and give it some sassy style, sew some buttons onto the intersection of each pocket. I used a variety of buttons from my vast collection of vintage buttons in red. Don't worry, there's a few hundred more where they came from. These buttons will also serve as the hangers for the number tags when the wall hanging is being used as an Advent Calendar.

Cut 24, 6" lengths of bakers' twine or pearl cotton. Use a lark's head knot to attach the twine to the tags.

Stamp numbers 1 to 24 on the tags. You can go with just numbers, or numbers and tiny graphics. I opted for a series of both.



Place two or three small stitches at the pocket intersections prior to sewing a button onto the same spot.



Place two or three small stitches at the pocket intersections prior to sewing a button onto the same spot.

HeatnBond Feather Lite makes short work of attaching the label/tag pocket to the back of the Pockets Full of Blessings wall quilt. The applique mat makes sure your iron is protected from any residue.



Install a ½" diameter wooden dowel between the folded corner hanging pockets.

Create a label for the quilt using your favorite method. I used a permanent marker to sign my Pockets Full of Blessings wall quilt. I used a zigzag stitch to edge the charm square and then placed strips of *HeatnBond Feather Lite* on three sides to adhere the quilt label to the bottom of the quilt. The top side remains open.

Now the quilt label is also a storage pocket for the tags, once they are removed during the countdown process.

Cut a ½" in diameter wooden dowel to fit between the hanging pockets on the back of the wall quilt. Sand the dowel until it's smooth, using fine sandpaper. Slip the dowel into the hanging pockets. Hang the quilt.

Fill with the pockets with treats – candy, fun-size chocolate bars, small toys, gift cards, lip balm, hand lotion – whatever you wish. As each day of Advent passes, remove the tag and the treats. Store the tags in the label pocket on the back. I placed my tags in sequential order, but mixing them up creates a bit of an I Spy Game of the daily treat search.

This quilt can be adapted for Hanukkah by creating eight pockets, perhaps bordering a themed wall hanging.

It can also be used to help organize a sewing room, office or dorm room. It's all about the pockets.

I hope you enjoyed creating this Pockets Full of Blessings wall quilt. There are many blessings out there, and I wish you the joy of discovering them.

Until the next issue, remember to make a mess and create some fun!



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