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Piece by Piece

Created by Susan Beck

Learn the basics of patchwork piecing and look at tools, tips, and tricks to make piecing fast and fun. Explore tube piecing, wallpaper piecing and other techniques that go beyond the basics of sewing two patches together.



1. Traditional Quarter Inch Piecing

2. Tube Quilting

3. Wallpaper Piecing

4. Mosaic Piecing

5. Ribbon Piecing

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Traditional Quarter Inch Piecing

Most patchwork patterns use quarter inch seam allowances. It is important to be consistent with the seams so the patches will align correctly to form the pattern. If you are 1-2 threads off in each seam, it adds up and by the time you have sewn 40 seams, your seams will not align.

Some quilters use a “scant” quarter inch seam allowance that is 1-2 threads narrower than an exact quarter inch. They feel that this allows for the “turn of the cloth” and ends up using the exact quarter inch for each seam. Experiment with both methods to see what works best for you.

Machine Settings:

- Straight Stitch with a length of 2mm-2.5mm
- Needle Stop Down
- Patchwork Foot #37 or Patchwork Foot with Guide #57



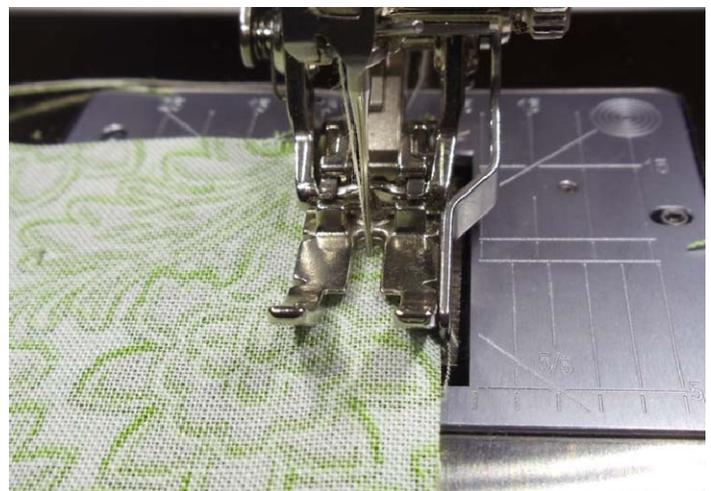
Note: These presser feet use straight stitch only.

Notches on each side of the foot indicate the needle line and ¼” distances in front of and behind the needle. These markings facilitate the turning of corners while stitching a seam allowance along each edge. These markings also aid in stitching inset patches that are a part of some traditional quilt patterns.



Patchwork Foot #37

Align the edges of the fabric pieces with the edge of the presser foot. This places the needle (in center needle position) ¼” from the edge.



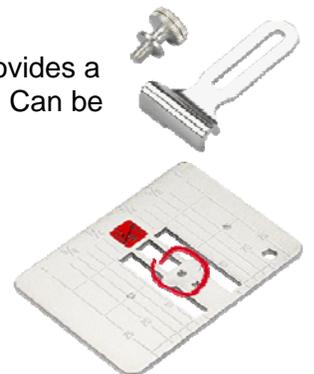
Patchwork Foot with Guide #57

For a ¼” seam, align the edges of the fabric pieces with the guide along the right edge of the foot. The guide gives a stronger visual cue for the fabric placement and makes it easier to piece at a faster rate of speed.

Additional Tools

Patchwork Seam Guide—provides a “wall” to guide fabric against. Can be adjusted for various seam widths.

Straight Stitch Plate—The single hole in the Straight Stitch Plate offers more support around the needle opening, resulting in better stitches.



Tube Quilting

A variation of strip piecing, tube quilting lets you make complex looking blocks with a few straight seams. Quarter inch seams used throughout,



Open each triangle to see a block. Each "tube" makes two distinct blocks:



Cut four strips 2½" wide across the fabric.

Sew 2 together to form 2 sets.



Place sets right sides together and stitch along each long edge to form a tube.



Block 1 (5½")



Block 2 (5½")

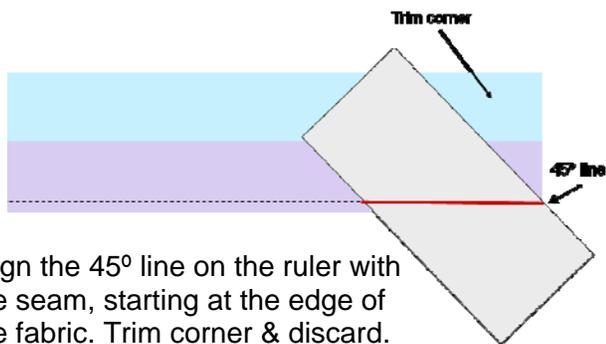
One "tube" will make a wide variety of patterns; below are two variations, each using four of one block:



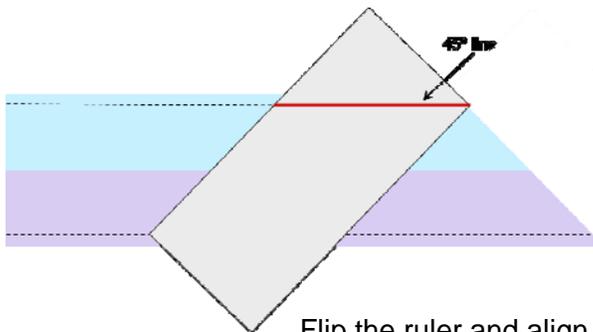
4 of Block 1 (10" finished)



4 of Block 2 (10" finished)



Align the 45° line on the ruler with the seam, starting at the edge of the fabric. Trim corner & discard.



Flip the ruler and align the 45° line on with the upper seam

Wallpaper Piecing

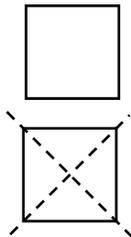


Block size:
10½"
unfinished

This quilt-as-you-go technique is made of patches that are placed edge to edge (no seam allowances). Seams are then secured with decorative stitching.

Cut the following pieces.

- Center: 3" square
- Star Points: Three 3" squares; subcut into quarter triangles
- Background: Five 3" squares; subcut one into quarter triangles
- Side Borders: Two, ¾" x 9"
- Upper & Lower Borders: Two, ¾" x 10½"
- Backing: 14" square
- Batting: 14" square



Place the batting *wrong* side up.

Spray temporary spray adhesive on one side of the batting and stack it on the wrong side of the backing.

Lightly spray the batting. Position center square approximately in center of batting.



Add a Star Point triangle to each side of the center square, butting the edges but not overlapping them.

Add two more triangles to build the first two Star Points.

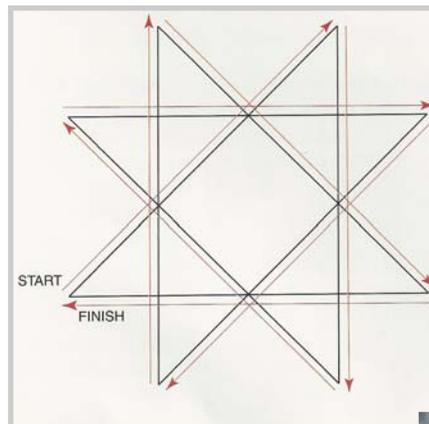


Add the remaining triangles to complete all eight Star Points.



Add corner background squares and center edge triangles.

Position the upper and lower borders, then the right and left side borders.



Select the Feather Stitch with default settings. Using Walking Foot #50 with the Center Guide sole, follow the diagram to stitch the star in place.

Stitch the borders in place. Trim the excess backing and batting, squaring up to 10½".



Note: The directions above are for one block which can be bound to use as a trivet. The Wallpaper Piecing method can be used on small projects such as wall hangings, placemats, table runners, etc.

Mosaic Piecing



Create patchwork yardage from scraps of fabric cut into squares. The squares are arranged and fused onto fleece, then finished with a decorative cord or yarn covering the raw edges.



Gather a collection of scraps and cut them into squares: 1", 1½", or 2" as desired (all squares the same size).



Note: It is important that the squares have clean cut edges and that they are consistently the same size. It is recommended that they are cut with a rotary cutter or a die cutting system such as AccuQuilt.

Cut a piece of OESD Fuse & Fleece in the desired size. Place the Fuse & Fleece fusible side up on a padded ironing surface.



Arrange squares as desired on the OESD Fuse & Fleece with edges touching but not overlapping; fuse them in place according to manufacturer's directions.



Attach Cording Foot #22 to the machine; open the black "gate" on the front of the foot. Select one or more narrow decorative cords or yarns and place one in each groove of the foot. Close the gate.

Thread the machine with a coordinating thread or with monofilament "invisible" thread. Select a zigzag stitch and adjust the width to go over the cords. Adjust the length to 3mm-4mm.

Position the fabric under the foot so the needle will stitch on the cut edges of the squares. Sew over the cords, covering all of the seams in one direction and then repeat in the remaining direction to form a grid.



Ribbon Piecing

Join ribbons edge to edge to build "fabric" for small projects such as pincushions, coasters, and cell phone cases.



Attach Edgestitch Foot #10/10C/10D to the machine. Thread the machine with monofilament thread in the needle and in the bobbin.

Select the zigzag stitch and adjust the width and length to 3mm-4mm.

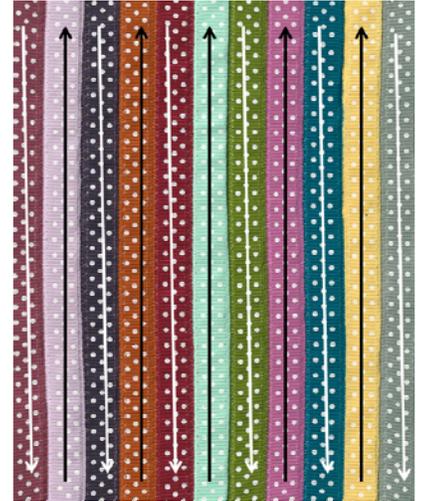
Position two pieces of ribbon under the foot, one on each side of the blade/guide in the center of the foot.

Begin sewing, lightly holding each ribbon in place without inhibiting their movement. The blade/guide keeps the ribbons separate but as they go under the needle, they are pulled together and stitched edge to edge without overlapping.



Position a third piece of ribbon along one side of the first two and stitch in place in the same manner. Continue adding ribbons until the pieced fabric is the desired size.

Note: Change the stitching direction each time you add a ribbon and sew in opposite directions to avoid distortion of the final ribbon "fabric".



Monofilament Tips



1. Loosen thread tension if the stitch is pulling too tightly.
2. Use larger needle if needed for good stitch formation.
3. Sew slower than usual to allow the thread to form the stitch.
4. When winding the bobbin, do so at a slow speed if it can be regulated.
5. There are many brands of monofilament thread. Try several to determine the one that works best for you.