



## Cottage Quilt Designs Tutorials

### Basic Tips About Making A Quilt

#### To Remove Wash Out Marker Lines from Quilting Designs

- After the quilt is quilted and the binding is on you can completely remove the marks by soaking the quilt in a cold water bath in the washer. You may also agitate the quilt for a short time. Run the washer through the spin dry cycle. Check the quilt to make sure all the marks are gone. Dry the quilt in the dryer under delicate heat.

#### Squaring Your Blocks

- This is an important step to do if you want your quilt top to be square and flat when the borders are added. Make a sample block. Check the measurement of the block to see if it is the size required for your quilt. If it's not then find out the reason why. Are the corner triangles not full enough? Then maybe you can increase the size of the triangle by an 1/8" so that it fills up the corner. Maybe the size of the triangle is right but you haven't centered it when you added it to the block. The seam allowances should be 1/4" all around the block. If they are wider than 1/4" then you can trim the excess away. Sometimes half square triangles will iron out of shape and need to be trimmed. You can get away with a seam allowance that is between 1/8" and a 1/4". If it's less than 1/8" then you need to fix the problem now or your seams will pull apart during quilting or after when the quilt is used or washed.

#### Washing Your Fabric

- To decide whether to wash your fabric or not can be a struggle for quilters. Dark colors can run when wet and it ruins the look of your quilt if that happens. I have found that solids or tonals have that problem more than prints. I like to rub a wet cu-tip on

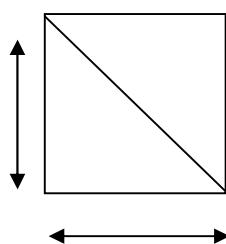
the fabric. If fabric dye is going to run when wet then the white cu-tip will pick up the dye. If it runs then you can wash your fabrics separately in a dye stablizer in the washer before any cutting is done. You can also stablize fat quarters or charm pieces by soaking them in a bowl. I personally like the antique look of a quilt when the fabric is not washed before sewing and then washed after the binding is on. The fabric shrinks slightly around the quilting lines. But I only do that if I am sure that the fabric dye won't run or bleed. Some quilters don't want to take any chances with their quilts and always wash the fabric. The choice is up to you!

### Seam Allowances

- Using a  $\frac{1}{4}$ ' seam allowance in quilting is standard in all patterns. A quilter new to the craft can find that difficult when using her sewing machine and trying to follow the engraved marks beside the needle and foot. I have found the best solution is to purchase a  $\frac{1}{4}$ " foot from the maker of my sewing machine and use that for all my quilting seams. It takes away all the frustration of keeping your seam width even as you feed the edge of the seam allowance along the side of the foot.

### Setting Triangles

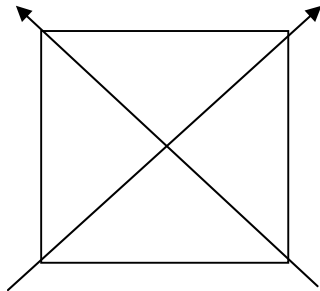
- It is very important to keep the grain of the fabric correct when you cut out the setting triangles for your quilt. Just remember that you need to cut out four triangles at a time instead of two for setting triangles. I'll show you why:



The arrows show the direction of the grain in the fabric weave in a square. When the square is cut in half down the middle to make two triangles the grain becomes different along the new edge.

The new cut is called a bias cut because a square cut down the middle has a  $45^\circ$  angle to the cut. Bias cuts are stretchy and will cause the problem of waving when borders are added. The borders will not lay flat but will have hills and valleys. The only solution is to recut your triangles.

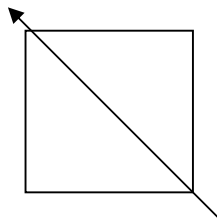
Here is how setting triangles should be cut for your quilt:



Because the bias cuts are inside the square the outside long edge of the triangle keeps the straight of the grain and won't wave when the borders are added. The squares are usually cut oversized so when the triangles are added to the quilt you can trim the edges evenly all around the quilt.

So how do you figure out how big to cut the squares? The pattern you are following will give you that information. But if you are creating your own pattern then just take your block measurement and add 3" to the number. Cut your square and make the two bias cuts and add the setting triangles to your quilt.

Corner triangles need the bias along the long edge so just cut the oversized square down the center.



The long bias edge is sew to the end of the block row to make the corner. When all the rows are sewn together then you can trim the outside edges to a  $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowance.

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