

Before fiber art for me there were star quilts, the first quilt I ever made was a star - I think because my grandmother told me it was toooooo hard and I couldn't do it, that was back in 1976. Star quilts are unique among quilts because they cross ethnic borders. A star quilt seems to be the only one adopted and adapted by the Plains Indians, which I have written about in my book *Montana Star Quilts*. Now to really get this blog rolling I am doing a step by step how to make a Fast Star - A Fast Star is exactly that fast.

The fast star is a uniquely Native American design, I think it was adapted from the Flying Swallows, since all the pieces are the same in a different arrangement. The size if the star before borders are added is about 5 feet square.

Fabric requirements

A- 1/2 yard

B- 1/2 yard

C- 1 yard

D- 2 yards

a rotary cutter, ruler, seam ripper and 1/4" presser foot



Choose your 3 colors of fabric and iron them.
You only need 48 diamond of 2 colors.
5 rows 2 1/2" each.



You are using 2 colors of fabric for the diamonds. Trim the top edge. I use a Nancy Crow ruler because of the great 45° angles.



Now cut 5 2 1/2" strips of your two diamond colors.



Strips



Trim off the edge at a 45° angle.



Move the ruler over 2 1/2" and cut. Please be careful the accuracy of the diamonds is important.



keep cutting



almost done



Ready to sew.

Put your 1/4" foot on the machine if you have one. If not put your needle in the down position, measure 1/4" and put a piece of tape to mark the 1/4" spot to use as a guide. Leave the needle in the down position to help you line the edges of the diamonds.



The diamonds when lined up properly will overlap 1/4".
The fabric edges will line up with the edge of the foot or your tape.
Once you have the top lined up with the needle drop the foot and sew away.



Sewing



Now do all sets of diamonds exactly the same 48 total pieces like this.



I sew one long continuous strip.



Press all seams in one direction.
You will have 48 pieces that look like this.



Now decide how you want your little point to look.
You only have two choices - this is easy.
Inevitably at this point someone will make a mistake and sew the diamonds together with the wrong on
at the point.
This is a mistake and it is just fine, feel free to make 7 more just like it.



I like the black in the point.



Now you are repeating the same step as sewing the diamonds together.
With your needle in the down position line up the your points, begin to sew , but look at the next picture first.



When you get to where the X of the two point come together you can use your seam ripper to hold the exact X in place or you can pin. Try the seam ripper trick it works like a dream.



The seam ripper is marking the X. This is a two handed job, being preformed with one for this pic.



Now you have a finished point.



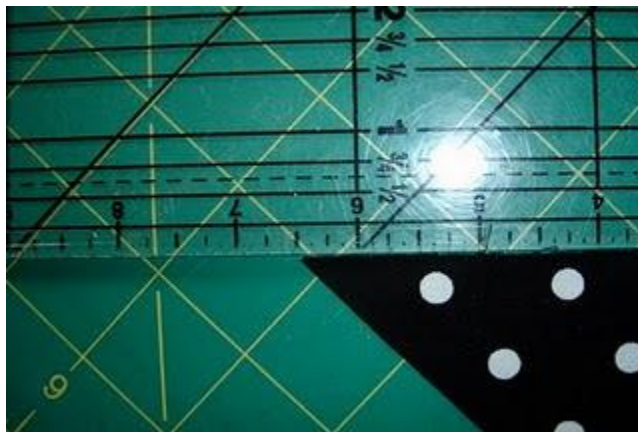
Pressed and ready to go.
You will be making 24 of these.



This is a perfect example of a mistake. I meant to have all of the black at the points, since I sewed one wrong, I made 7 more mistakes just like it. I now have 16 small points with black in the point and 8 with pink. It still works. It alters the way the quilt looks a bit, which is just fine!



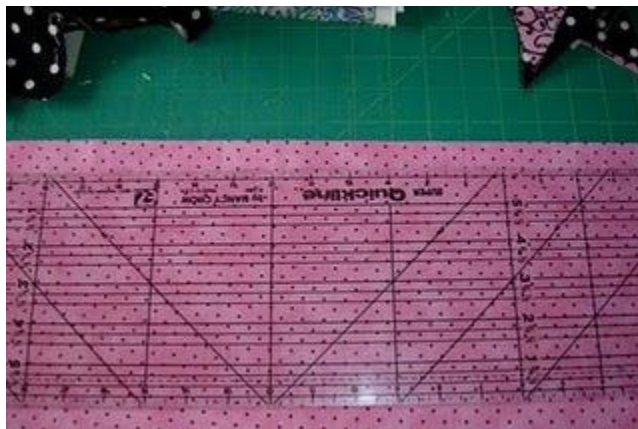
Measure two sides of the finished diamond. These are 6 1/2"



Now add 1 1/2" to your measurement. ***THIS IS CRITICAL.***
You need an 8" square!

16 8" squares total.

Measuring the sides of your diamond is something you can do for any star quilt, you will not need to add the extra inch and a half.



Trim edge even.



I use two rulers to measure for my 8" squares.
You will need 16 8" squares.



Using the two rulers again for the 8" squares.
Some of you may have the 8" templates, feel free to use them.



32 half square triangles cut from the 8" squares.



Now you are going to add triangles to 16 points.
Line up the diamond on top of the triangle. You can see the 1/4" at the top.



A close up.



This will be the finished piece from this step.



Where your two pieces form the X is where you start sewing. Leave the needle in the down position.



Now sew.



The piece on the left is what it looks like while you are sewing.
The piece on the right is your finished product.
Now on to the next step.



Now you are sewing the rest of the triangles to the other side of your small points.



This is what you want the next piece to look like.



Line up your piece as shown.



Leave the needle in the down position - the little X should be lined up at the needle.



The piece will look like this when finished.



Just a visual for you.



Right sides together you want to pin 1/4" in on the diamond to the exact point of the bottom diamond.



The pin should be at the exact tip!



The top edge will be lined up evenly. The pin is in place.



When you reach the pin place the needle exactly in the pin hole. I turn the needle by hand to get it to fit right smack dab in the pin hole.



Lift the pressure foot, while leaving the needle in place!
Needle stays down!



Clip in along the seam of the two triangles to the 1/4" edge of your diamonds.



Rotate the half square triangles.



The needle is still up. Now rotate the diamonds. I use the scissors to help me turn and get all the pieces flat. Finish sewing to the edge.



Done!



Trim the excess carefully.
Do not cut into you triangle!



Trimmed.



Folded out!



Pressed!



Now you are adding the opposite side.
This is easy, you are repeating the same thing you just did.



Lay out your piece like this. Place the pin in 1/4" on the cross diamond and in the exact top of the underneath point.
You have already done this- you can do it again- easy as pie!



Stop at the pin and make sure the needle is in exactly the pin hole.



O

Once it is in the pin hole you can rotate the fabric and remove the pin leaving the **NEEDLE DOWN!**



Snip in to the top of the point.



Rotate



I do use my small scissors to help rotate the pieces. Make sure they are flat.



Finish sewing!



Trim excess carefully.
Pay attention to the triangles when trimming.



Trimming



Done



The finished point. Congratulations!



Measure two sides of the point. I add 1" to the measurement. These points need 16" squares.
You will need 6 - 16" squares.
Skip this step until after you add the zinger strip if you are adding a zinger strip.



Measure this side as well before cutting your squares.
This will be done after the zinger strip if you add one.



With fabric folded cut 4 1" zinger strips of each color.



I have used the triangle background fabric for one side.



Start sewing from the inside edge. I never pin this part but you can.
I leave a bit overlapping on both ends.



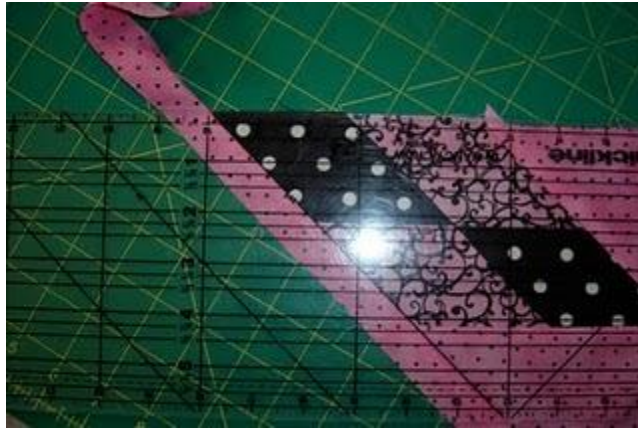
The extra will be trimmed at a 45° angel after you press.



Before trimming.



Trim at 45° angel.



Trim the top at a 45° angle.



Cut the zinger strips of your second color.
Zinger strips may be one or two colors. I like the way two colors add a bit of swirl to the finished quilt.



Trim off edges.



Leave excess at the top so you have enough when you trim to 45°.



Sew the strip.



Done



Trim at 45°. This will be even with you point edge.



Trim the top edge at 45°. The ruler should line up with the point as shown.



One fast star point!
Finished.
Now do the other 7.



Measure two sides of the point and add 1" to the longest measurement.



Cut 6 -16" squares.



Cut two of the 16" squares into large triangles.



Just like this.
Now you are ready to put the star together.



Right sides together start sewing from the center.
The center here is the black diamonds.



I always pin in the exact edge of where the two cross points will come together.



Sewing from the center out to the pin.
When you reach the pin be sure your needle has taken a stitch exactly in the pin hole.



If when you are sewing the bottom triangle is sticking out like this, leave it that way and continue using the top edge for your 1/4" seam allowance. The bias edges to stretch a bit and this will turn out perfectly.



Stop 1/4" in from the edge and do a back stitch.
The BACK STITCH is important here.



Back stitch!



Now you are almost 1/4 done.
Repeat this process 3 more times.



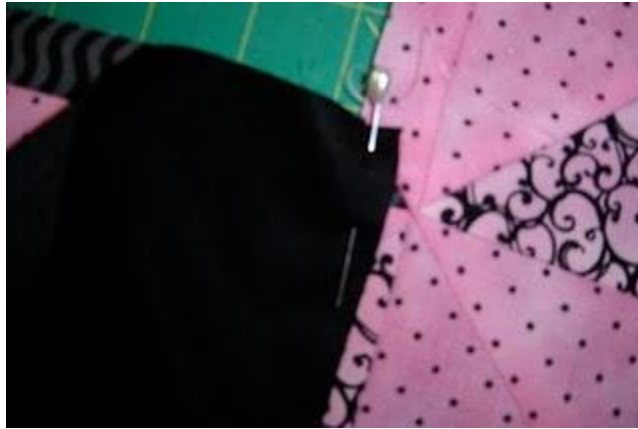
Now you ready to add the triangles.
 I always add the triangles first.
 I think it makes nicer edges.



Pin at 1/4". The pin should be 1/4" in on the triangle and match to the edge of the back stitch.



1/4" on the triangle



Pinned to match your back stitch



Now you are ready to sew.



When you get to the pin - once again place the needle in the exact pin hole.
Leave the needle in the down position and remove the pin.



Rotate the point towards you first. The needle is still down.



Smooth out the fabric



Rotate the triangle and smooth it out.
Sew to the edge.



Press!



Close up

The Final step



Line up the edges and pin at the cross points.



Pin



Sew the section, be sure stop and back stitch 1/4" from the edge.



Back stitch!



Almost 1/2 way done.



Add corner triangle.



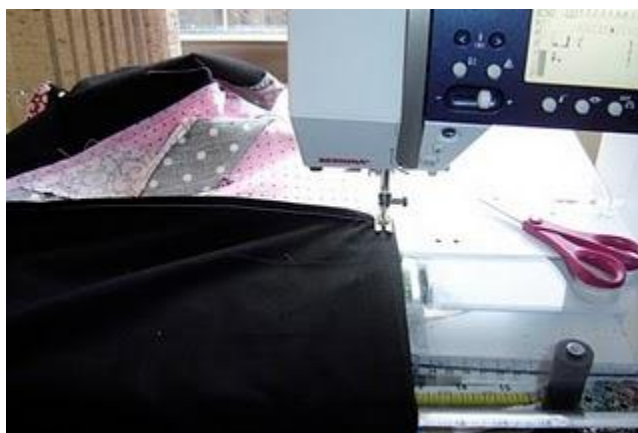
Remember you are pinning 1/4" in on the square and matching this to the backstitch edge.



Pin right at the back stitch.



Sew from the out side to the pin. Remember leave the needle in the down position while turning.



Now sew to the edge.



Clip the excess.



Excess clipped!



Press

I usually press the seams toward the background at this point.



Because all the squares were cut the same size you will need to do a bit of trimming here.
I like using background squares which are a little larger than the $\frac{1}{4}$ ".



Square off the edge, then trim.



Closer to done!
You will have two pieces like this.



Sew the two halves.



Pin the exact center and where the two cross points join.
You may pin more if you want to.



You should have pinned exactly where all the points come together.
As you can see in this picture the seam allowance is greater than $\frac{1}{4}$ "/
You want to sew exactly in the pin hole to match your points.
Gradually increase your seam from the end of the last diamond, then decrease to the edge of what is the black diamond on this picture.



You are sewing into the exact pin hole.



Perfect center.



Press seams to one side.



Add remaining background squares.
You have done this.



The Star is done!