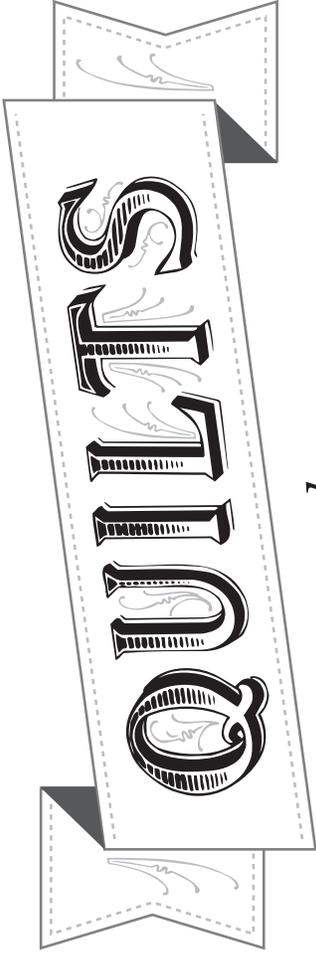


LEARN

~ to make ~



by

HANND

THIS GUIDE IS FREE

Please
PRINT AND DISTRIBUTE
AS YOU WISH

Pass on the tradition of
MAKING QUILTS
by HAND

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YOUR GETTING ~ STARTED GUIDE

to

FUN & FUNCTIONALITY

NOTES & INSTRUCTIONS

written by

ELIZABETH R. WHELAN

REVISED FALL 2013

- 100% cotton fabric for piecing quilt top
 - backing fabric
 - binding fabric
 - batting (filling)
- needles
 - pins
- brass or quilting safety pins
 - sewing line templates
 - thimble
- sewing thread
 - quilting thread
- scissors
- pencil for marking fabric

NICE TO HAVE

- quilting hoop
- needle threader
- ziploc bags for dividing up block fabric pieces
- rotary cutter and cutting mat
- metal ruler
- sandpaper mounted on board
 - pin cushion
 - seam ripper
- ironing board & iron



- Better Homes and Gardens
 - Complete Guide to Quilting*
 Meredith Corp., 2003.
- Beyer, Jinny.
 - Quilting by Hand: Simple Stitches, Exquisite Quilts*
 Breckling Press, 2004.
- Beyer, Jinny.
 - The Quilter's Album of Patchwork Patterns: 4050 Pieced Blocks for Quilters.*
 Breckling Press, 2009.
- Beyer, Jinny.
 - The Quilter's Album of Blocks and Borders : More than 750 Geometric Designs Illustrated and Categorized for Easy Identification and Drafting*
 Howell Press, 1986.

[out of print, used copies are on Amazon]
- Fons, Marianne; Porter, Liz.
 - Quilter's Complete Guide*
 Leisure Arts, 2001.
- Hooworth, Judy; Rolfe, Margaret.
 - Spectacular Scraps: A Simple Approach to Stunning Quilts.*
 Sally Milner Publishing, 2006.

MAGAZINES:

- Fons and Porter's Love of Quilting
 - www.fonsandporter.com
- American Patchwork & Quilting
 - www.allpeoplequilt.com
- Quilters Newsletter Magazine
 - www.quiltersnewsletter.com
- Quiltmaker
 - www.quiltmaker.com
- McCalls Quilting
 - www.mccallsquilting.com

There are also hundreds of great websites, tutorials, videos, etc. that other quilters have put online. Have fun exploring the variety of designs and methods!

A quilt should be washed as infrequently as possible, always using the coolest water and mildest soap possible. Hang a quilt on a line to dry or for more delicate quilts, lay it flat on towels in a partially shady location. Quilts made with 100% cotton and polyester fill can be dried on a cool setting in a dryer if they cannot be placed outside, but a dryer will add wear to a quilt.

Antique quilts need special care, and it would be wise to investigate recommendations before washing a vintage quilt.

It is best to keep quilts away from direct sunlight as fabrics are affected by sun.

Many quilters recommend folding a quilt for storage so that the backing fabric is on the outside, and also not folding a quilt the same way every time.

QUILTER'S PLEDGE

A semi-serious pledge aimed at reducing new quilter stress

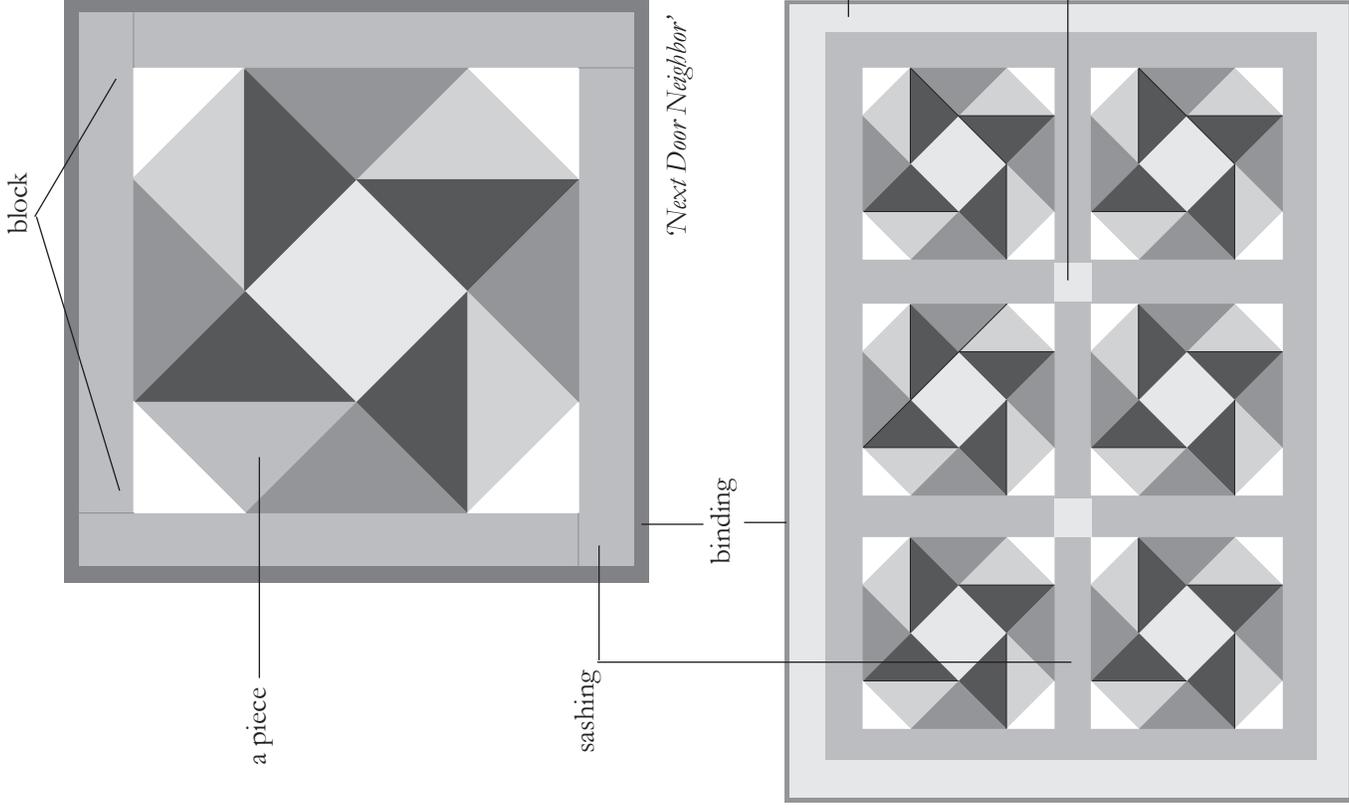
I, [your name here],
 pledge that I will make the quilts I please,
 and when a quilt is finished I may or may not give it away.

Quilting will be a relaxing hobby
 to be done at my own pace.

When someone asks me to make them a quilt,
 I might decide to teach that person how to make their *own* quilt,
 passing on the tradition of quilting.

TEACH SOMEONE TO QUILT

Please feel free to use this booklet to help you teach someone else the basics of quilting. Make as many copies as you would like. You can pass on the skills you have learned, no matter what your experience level. That's part of the fun of quilting!



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to quilting, a wonderful pastime rooted in history and now a form of individual expression for quilters around the world.

Please use this guide to help you start making quilts by hand. These instructions go over the basics of quilt construction, and provide information which you can build on to make your own quilts using hand sewing skills, no sewing machine required.

There are also many wonderful books, magazines, videos and websites available to give you even more information. In the meantime, read through these instructions to get a feel for the requirements of quilting.

FABRIC

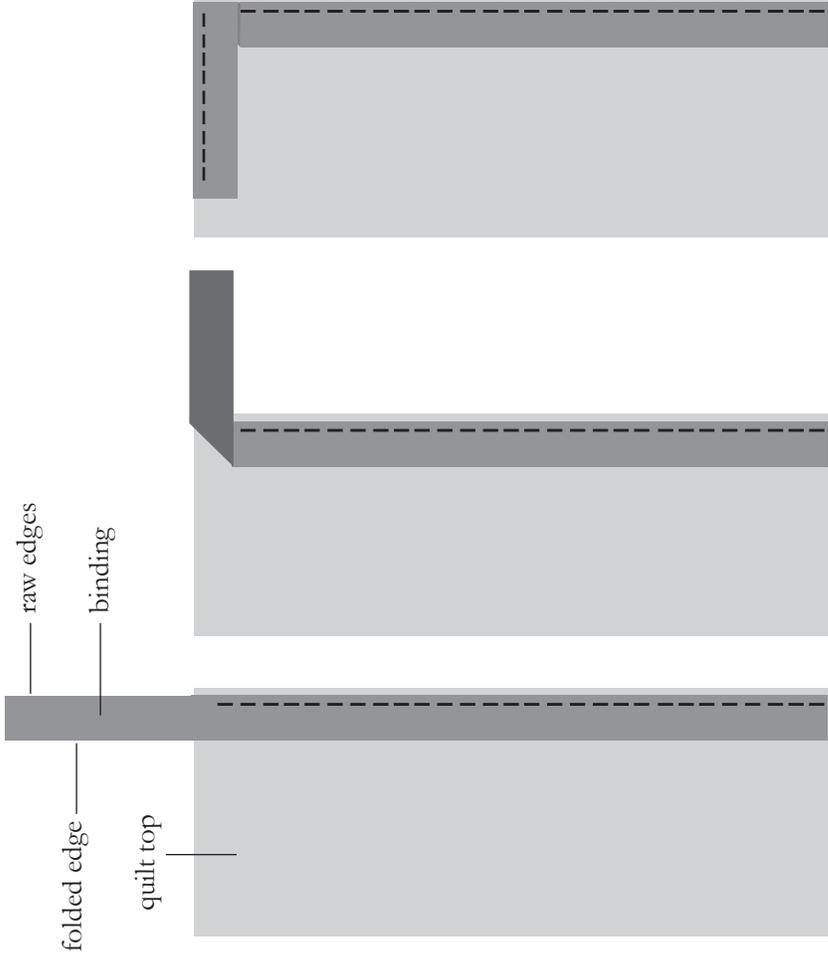
You will have the best luck with good 100% cotton fabrics. Although quilts can be made out of just about everything, some fabrics such as silks and velvets are harder to sew and their dyes can be less stable. Also, different quality and weights of fabric can cause uneven wear and aging as time goes by.

Cheaper fabric can be used for wallhangings, but get better quality fabric for quilts, especially for quilts expecting heavy use. (The same goes for thread and batting.)

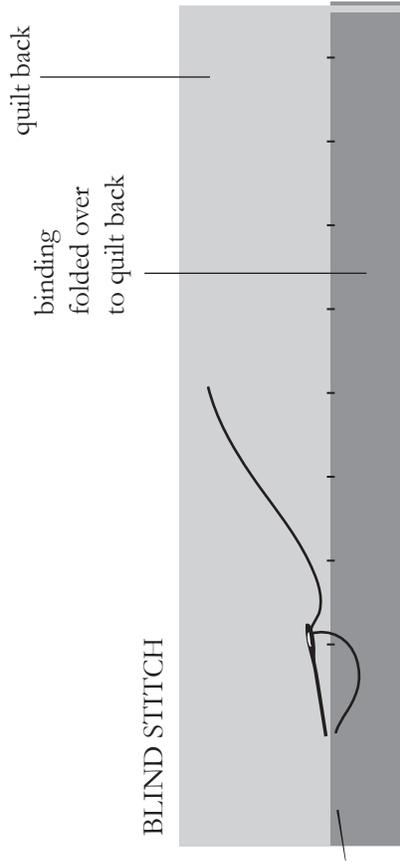
Wash fabric in cold water right after you buy it, which helps prevent bleeding and shrinking after quilt/wallhanging has been assembled. By washing it right away, you will always know that all your fabric stash is available for immediate use. Do not use hot water, it will fade the fabrics unnecessarily.

Use colors and fabrics that you really like! This is all the more important as your fabric collection starts to grow. You will find that your natural color preferences will be colors that coordinate, giving you a larger color palette to draw from in the future.

Using slight patterns for your 'solid' pieces can help hide dirt and damage. They will appear solid from a distance. Likewise, if your backing fabric has a slight pattern it can look more festive and hide less-than-perfect quilting stitches if that side will be seen often, as in a lap quilt.



Sew through both layers of binding, and all 3 layers of quilt. Sew from the front of the quilt, then neatly fold the binding over, and use a blind stitch to sew down the binding to the quilt back.



After the quilting is complete, the backing fabric and batting can be trimmed back to the edge of the quilt top.

French bindings, which uses a double layer of cloth, is the most durable way to bind a quilt. Cut fabric strips from 2 1/4" to no more than 3" wide. Sew the strips together forming a length a few inches longer than the edge of your quilt. Sew edges at an angle, to reduce bulk when sewing the binding onto the quilt.

Fold in half; iron for easier handling.

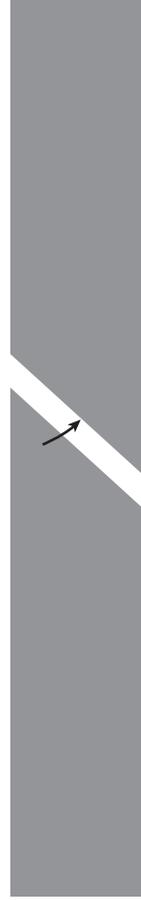
Sew the raw edge of the binding strip (both layers) to the edge of the quilt top, sewing through all layers. Follow the diagram to the right when you approach the corner.

Sew up to the corner, 1/4" from the next edge you will sew along.

Fold the fabric away from the direction you will be sewing in, then fold back so that there is a neat tuck in the binding, but your next stitches will be right next to the ones on the previous edge. Continue to sew as before.

When you have completely sewn the binding on to the front, fold the fabric over to the back of the quilt, and fold the corners neatly around also.

Then use a blind stitch (see diagram) to sew the binding to the back of the quilt.



Sew strips of fabric together.



Fold and iron to make long strip for binding.

It's often easiest to start by finding a fabric with an assortment of colors, and then pick other shades and textures which complement your first selection.

Often contrast is helpful to show a quilt design to best advantage. Having a block reference book (see book list on page 23) can be useful to help you decide where the darkest and lightest colors will look best. Plan what you need in terms of lights, darks, solids, small patterns, large patterns.

It works best to make your blocks, then pick out the sashing and border fabric, if at all possible. The sashing color can easily change the whole look of the quilt, and often the full effect of the blocks isn't obvious until you have made a few. Don't be afraid to audition the fabrics in the store by rolling out some of the bolt and placing your blocks on it.

If you particularly like a fabric, buy a yard or more depending on its versatility as many times, once the bolt of fabric has been sold, that same fabric will not be re-ordered.

Try to figure in advance how much of each fabric you'll need by looking at the total square inches of a color needed for each block, and multiplying by the overall number of blocks. If fussy cuttings, count the repeating pattern to make sure you'll have enough of the image you want.

If you're winging it, buy fat quarters of any fabric to keep a small amount on hand which might be used in creative ways in your quilting, and at least 1/2 yard of a fabric which has limited use in each block (such as the middle square on *Next Door Neighbor*). Buy a yard or more of any fabric which will be dominant in the blocks (such as the dark color in *Next Door Neighbor*). And buy two or more yards of any fabric which you might want to use in many quilts over time such as neutrals like cream and beige.

Traditional blocks often use 4-6 colors in a block. After you start quilting and purchasing fabric, you will generally find that if you buy 4 coordinating fabrics you are likely to have fabric in your stash to complete most block patterns, even if every block does not end up being identical.

Following complete quilt patterns in books and magazines is a good way to start, as they usually tell you the exact yardage to buy.

USING TEMPLATES

Templates can be made of anything from an old paper bag or piece of cardboard to plastic template material that you will find in both a plain version and with a grid printed on it.

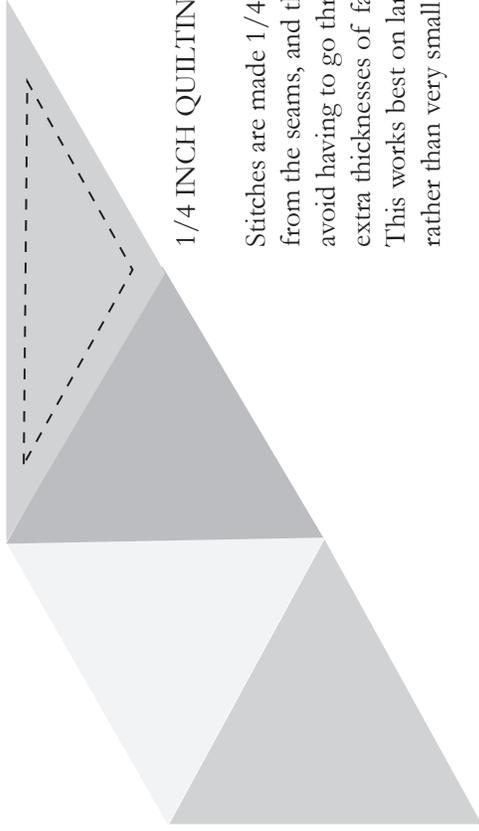
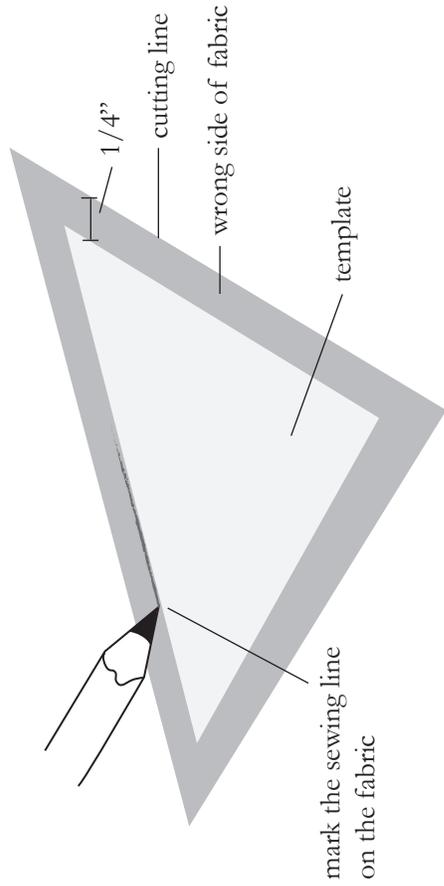
For quilting by hand, the template represents the sewing line, and you will want to cut out your pieces giving them a 1/4" allowance around all sides of the sewing line template. The cutting line does not have to be exact.

(For machine quilting, the cutting line DOES have to be exact, as that edge will guide the stitching, using the sewing machine foot to determine 1/4" rather than marking the fabric.)

Although it is tempting, avoid using a ball point pen to mark your fabric as it will bleed on washing. Some of the washable inks can have disastrous results as well, so test your fabric first and wash it, before using washable inks on your quilt pieces. In general I recommend that you stick to graphite pencils, or light colored marking and colored pencils.

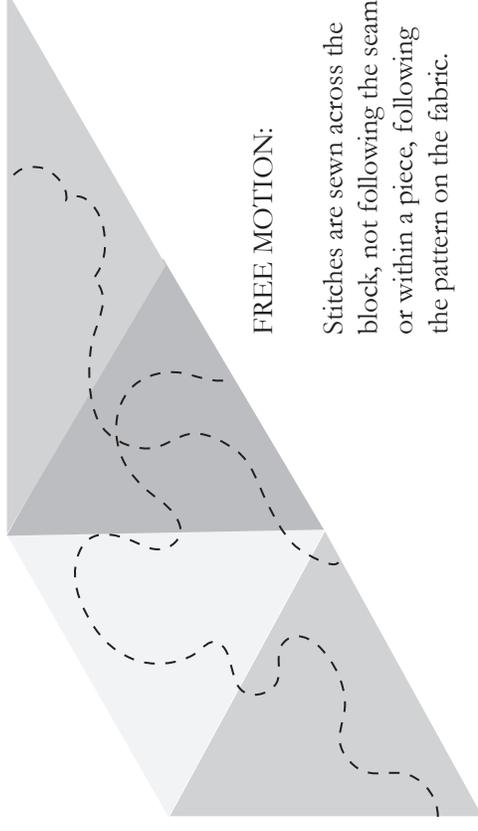
Accuracy is very important both when marking your pieces, and making the templates. To have all the points and pieces join up as they should, be very careful marking the corners. Use a piece of sandpaper, or a flat tablecloth on a table, to hold the fabric piece in place as you mark it. It will save a lot of headaches later!

As you get into quilting, you may find a rotary cutter and cutting board to be useful for cutting out lots of pieces of fabric.



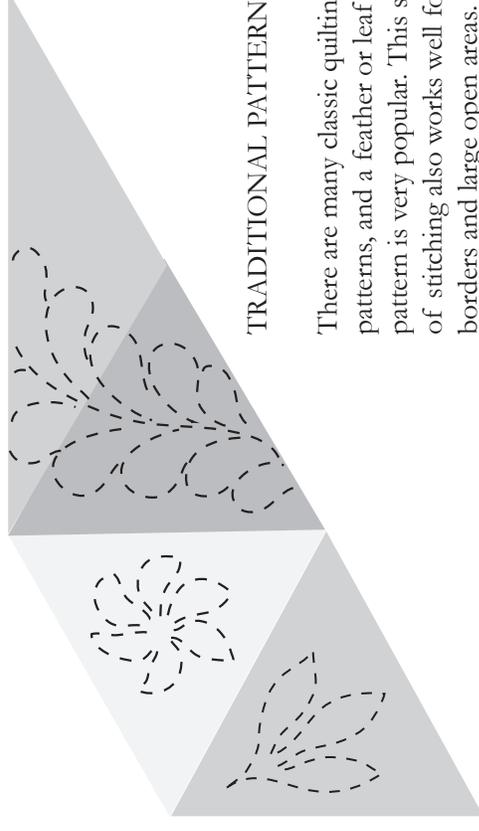
1/4 INCH QUILTING:

Stitches are made 1/4 inch from the seams, and thereby avoid having to go through extra thicknesses of fabric. This works best on larger rather than very small areas.



FREE MOTION:

Stitches are sewn across the block, not following the seams, or within a piece, following the pattern on the fabric.



TRADITIONAL PATTERN:

There are many classic quilting patterns, and a feather or leaf pattern is very popular. This sort of stitching also works well for borders and large open areas.

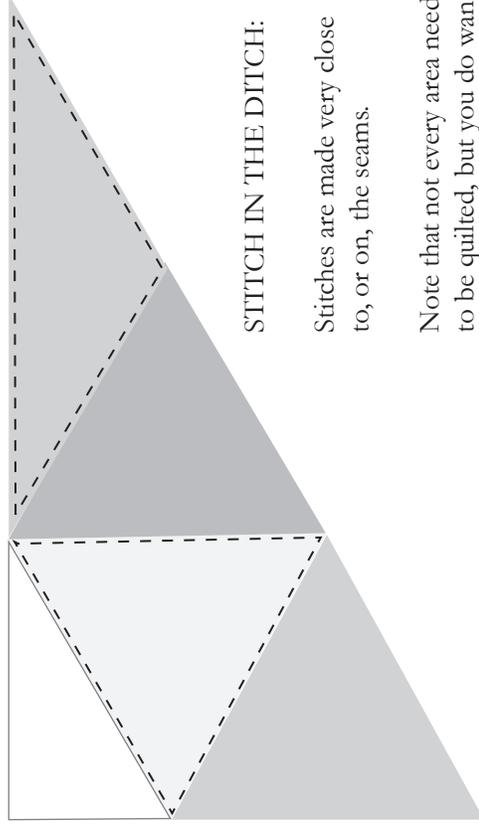
You will be most successful with your quilting if you can hold the layers relatively flat as you quilt. On small pieces you can do this by hand, but for larger quilts you will want to consider using a hoop or a quilt frame.

A hoop is useful in that it is portable. You do have to move the hoop to quilt the next section, and you will have to check the back of the quilt to make sure both sides are flat before you begin quilting.

A quilt frame is less work in that regard, as you can quilt large areas at a time. However a quilt frame is a large piece of furniture and it can be hard to maneuver when it has a quilt on it. Consider where you want to be able to do your quilting, and choose your method accordingly.

TYPES OF QUILT STITCHES

Here are some of the popular quilt stitches:



STITCH IN THE DITCH:

Stitches are made very close to, or on, the seams.

Note that not every area needs to be quilted, but you do want quilting of some sort every 5-6 inches.

In general use whatever needle is easiest for you to sew with as you assemble the quilt. The rule of thumb is that the longer needles are used for piecing, and the smaller, shorter ones such as #11 or #10 needles are for quilting as you sew the three layers together. The shorter needles for quilting will help you make smaller stitches.

However, it will be easier to use larger needles while you are learning how to make quilts. Gradually try smaller needles as you get more comfortable, particularly with the actual quilting of the three layers.

Cut your thread off the spool at a slight angle and wet it slightly for ease of threading, or use a needle threader for the smaller needle eyes.

Also, thread the needle with the end that you hold as you unwind the thread, not the end that you cut. This will help prevent the thread from tangling as you sew.

If the thread does start to wind around itself while you are sewing, let go of the needle, hold the loose end of the thread, and pull the needle down towards the fabric. Let go of the loose end, and pull the needle back along the thread to where it needs to be for you to continue sewing, and the thread should behave itself a bit better!

A 100% cotton thread is often recommended for piecing, as it resembles the fabric threads, and a 50% cotton/50% polyester will work as well. A good quality thread will have less of a tendency to break both during sewing and also after the quilt is complete.

Quilting thread is usually heavier, sometimes waxed, and is used only for the quilting stitches as the three layers are sewn together.

In either case you can use traditional white or cream thread for sewing and quilting, or you can use colored threads that blend with or coordinate with the fabrics you are using and the color of the backing fabric.

Traditionally it is recommended to cut an 18" piece of thread at a time, however a 24" piece is just as manageable. Longer than that and there is a tendency for the thread to break, fuzz, or tangle as you sew.

PINNING

First take the two pieces of fabric you are going to stitch together, and place them so that the right side of each piece of fabric is facing each other.

Carefully pin the pieces together along the sewing line. Put a pin directly through the corner mark on both pieces, then pin exactly along the sewing line. Check the pair of pieces to make sure the pin lines up on both sewing lines.

The same process is then repeated for the end of the sewing line, being sure that the pin comes out on both pieces exactly where the sewing line ends. Use your fingers to control the fabric and move it where you need it to be.

SEWING, OR PIECING

Hand piecing involves a straight running stitch with a couple of back stitches to get the row started, and a couple more to complete the row. The back stitches should be small enough to hold the fabric firmly together, but not so many to cause the fabric fibers to split.

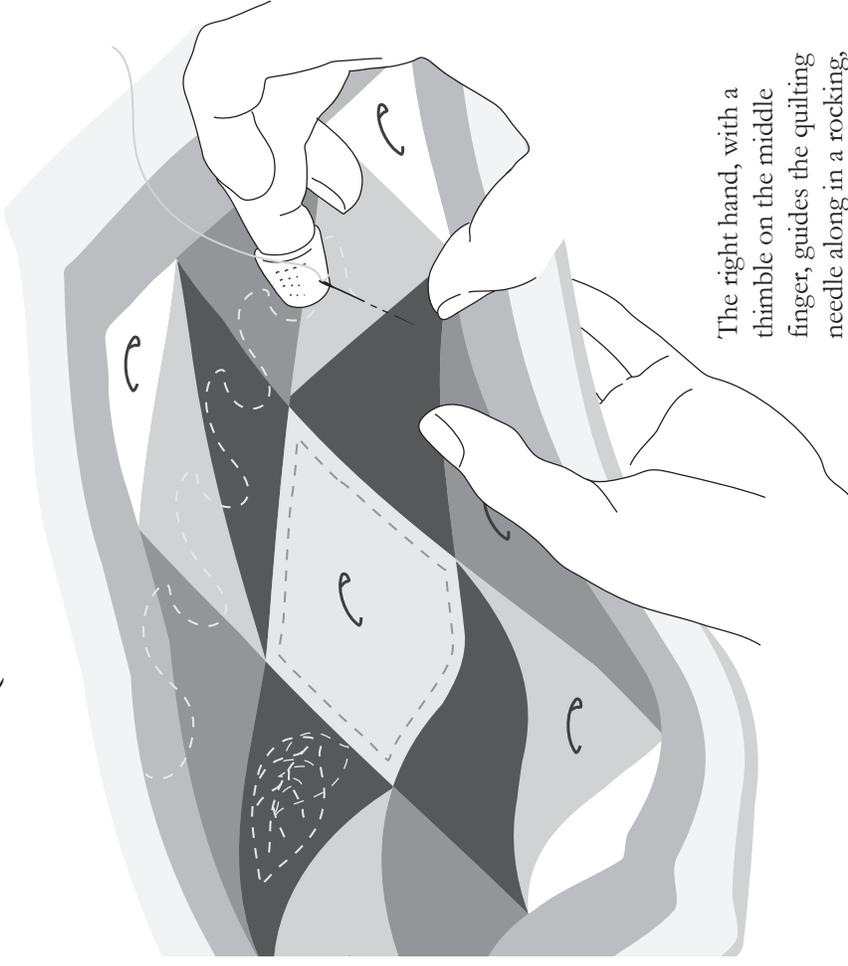
You can start and end the row of stitches with a small knot, see instructions on page 9.

Although there are many ways to go about sewing two pieces of fabric together, I use a method that involves holding the fabric and needle so your thumbs are closest to you on top of the fabric and needle, and the hand holding the fabric helps move the fabric up and down and onto the needle. I put as many stitches as I can on a needle at one time, as that helps the sewing go faster and keeps the line straighter.

And speaking of keeping the line straight, don't forget to check the back of the pieces as you sew to make sure you are sewing down both lines, not just the front one! Don't be afraid to back out a few stitches and do it again.

STOP YOUR ROW OF STITCHES WHERE YOUR MARKED SEWING LINE ENDS; DON'T GO TO THE EDGE OF THE FABRIC.

MAKING THE QUILTING STITCHES



The right hand, with a thimble on the middle finger, guides the quilting needle along in a rocking, up and down motion, while the thumb presses down on the quilt right in front of the needle. This makes it easier for the needle to go through the layers of the quilt and make small stitches.

The left hand is under the quilt, and the middle or first finger feels the tip of the needle come through the quilt, and helps guide it immediately back to the surface. The goal is to catch a little of the back fabric but not make a large stitch.

This can make a finger sore after a while, so sometimes a spoon or a second thimble is used to deflect the needle.

QUILTING

You can match your quilting thread to your backing fabric when making a quilt, or you can match the colors of the blocks, or you can use a contrasting thread color that stands out. It's entirely your preference.

Pin the quilt top, batting and backing fabric together temporarily with safety pins to stop the parts from shifting as you quilt.

If you are quilting a large quilt, roll up the edges and pin them also. This will help stop your quilt edges and batting from fraying as you work. On a large quilt, a hoop or a frame may become useful to easily access to the center of the quilt.

Use low tack masking tape to mark long lines of quilting stitches if it is hard to keep an even spacing of lines. A light colored (white or yellow) pencil may also be helpful.

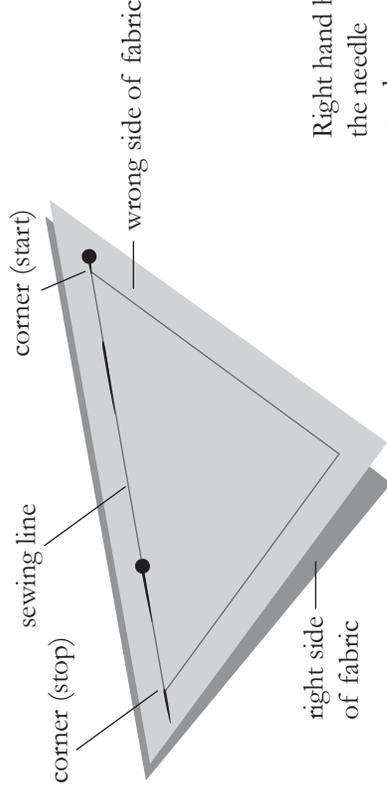
Most quilting is started by making one small knot in the end of the thread, then putting the needle into the quilt about an inch from where you wish to start quilting. Bring the needle up where you want the stitches to start, and gently pull the knot through the back of the quilt so that the knot is hidden in the batting. The loose end is then cut flush with the fabric, and the tail will disappear into the quilt.

Quilting stitches do not have to be tiny, but even stitches are best.

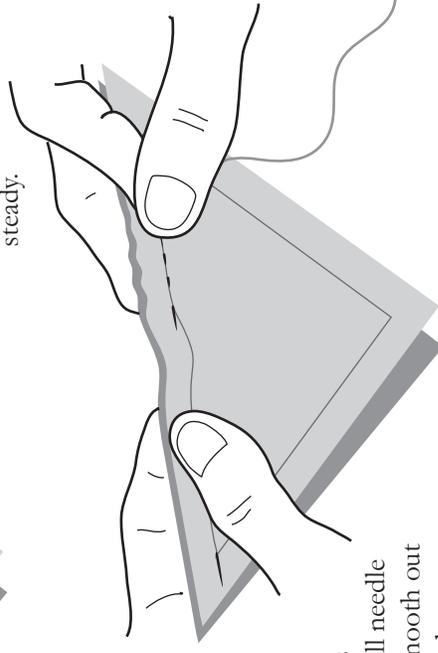
When ending a row of stitches, make a small knot on the front or back of the quilt by bringing your needle halfway through the layer of fabric right beside the hole you just made with your needle, wrap the thread twice around your needle, and then pull the needle and thread all the way through, holding the loop of thread to the fabric with your thumbnail.

This will create a tiny knot which you can then take down the same hole your needle just came up and, traveling about an inch away in the batting, you can bring the needle up again away from your stitching and cut the thread. This hides the knot and tail of the thread in the quilt.

DO NOT TRIM THE EDGES OF BATTING AND BACKING FABRIC UNTIL EVERY LITTLE BIT OF QUILTING IS COMPLETE !!!



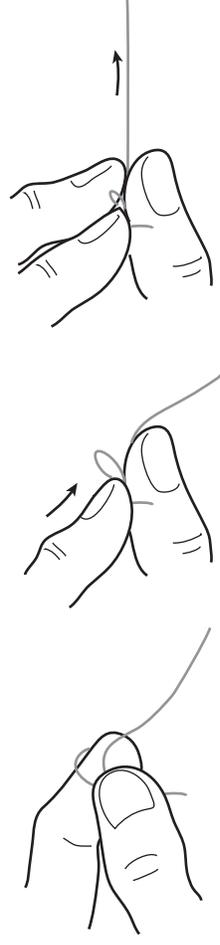
Right hand holds the needle steady.



Left hand lifts the fabric pieces up and down onto needle tip.

Gather 10-15 stitches on to needle, then pull needle through fabric and smooth out thread with your thumbs.

BEGINNING KNOT



Loop thread over finger, secure with thumb.

Roll thread off finger, bring middle finger to rest on thumb in front of thread loop, pull thread taut.

ENDING KNOT

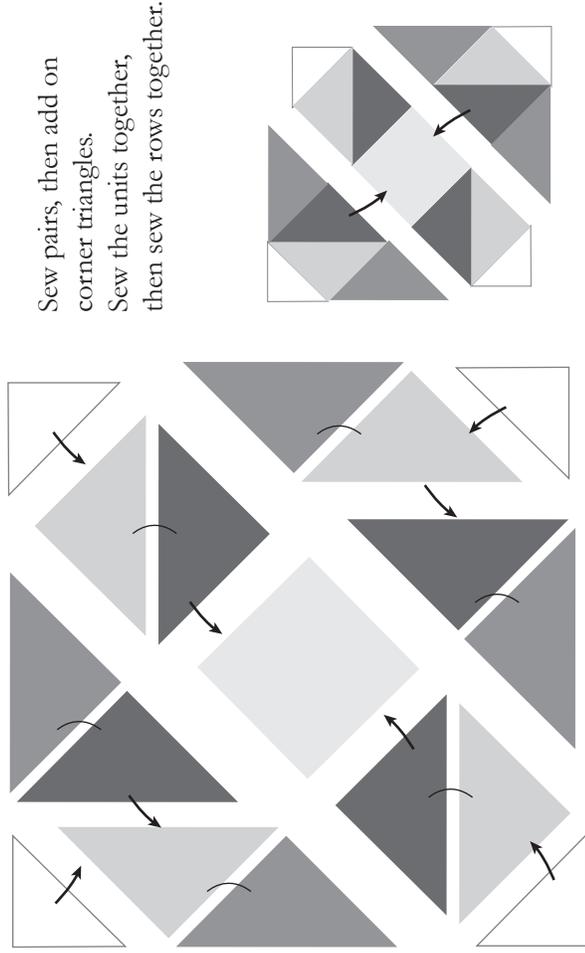
Bring needle point up through final corner, wrap thread around needle point twice, pull needle the rest of the way through, holding thread loop in place with thumbnail.

It is best to sew together pairs of pieces, then assemble a row, then sew the rows together. This prevents the block from spreading as you go -- it's very hard not to get a little stretch here, a little bow there, until the sides of the block are quite wavy. Putting the rows together allows you to ease the fabric back where it should be as you proceed so that your block is more uniform.

As you pin your rows of pieces together, watch those corners on each piece carefully! They should meet up exactly with the points and corners on the row of pieces you are sewing onto. Do not sew down the seam allowance. Instead, pass your needle through the seam allowance close to the sewing line.

Be sure to pull your thread firmly as you come to each new piece in the row, and do a backstitch at the beginning and end of each piece. Loose stitches at these joins are painfully obvious after quilting is complete.

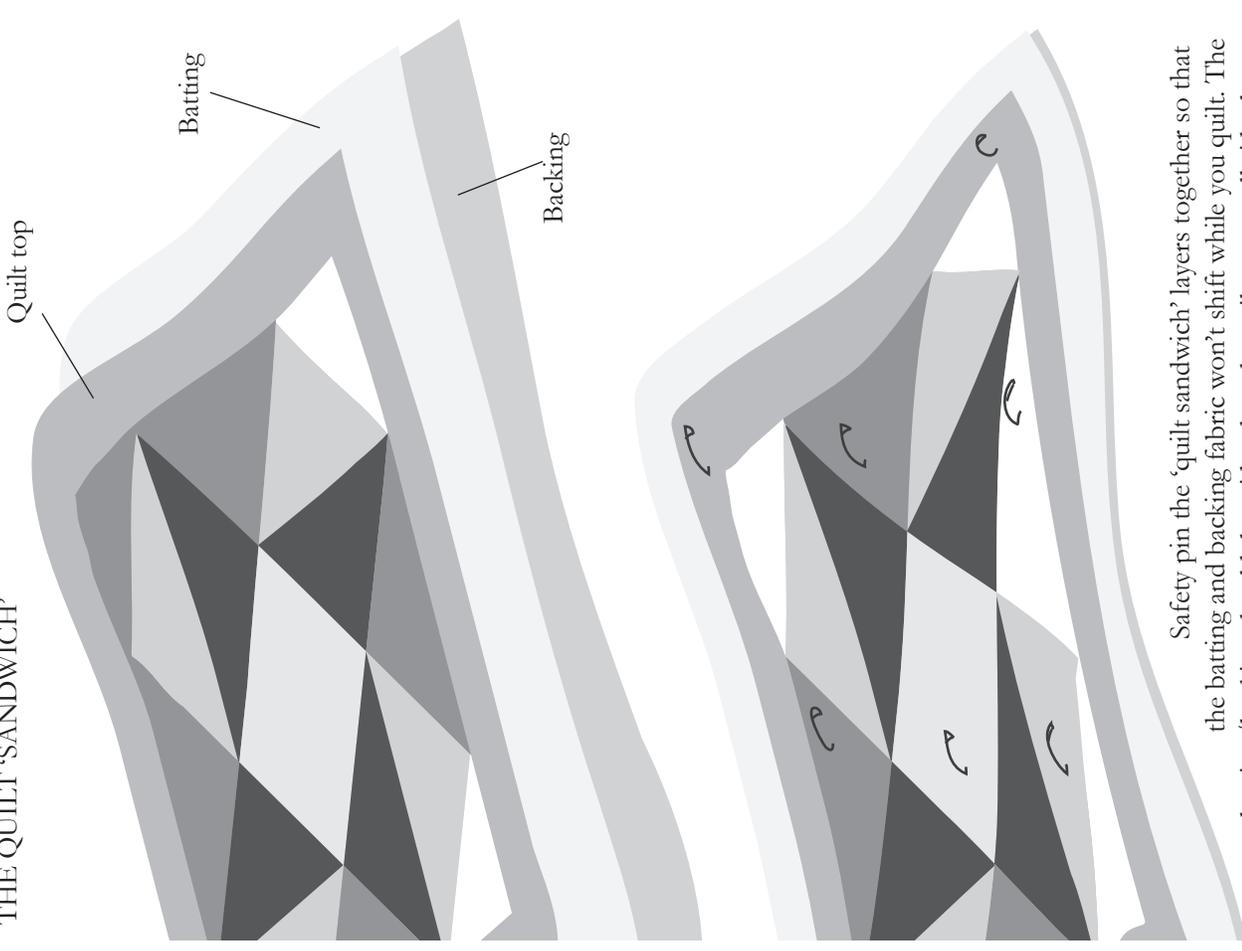
(A back stitch is simply doing another stitch over the one you just did, to secure your sewing.)



Sew pairs, then add on corner triangles.
Sew the units together, then sew the rows together.

Wait until the block is complete before pressing with an iron. Gently press the block from the back first, letting the seams fall naturally to one side or the other. Do not press the seams open. Then gently press the block front.

THE QUILT 'SANDWICH'



Safety pin the 'quilt sandwich' layers together so that the batting and backing fabric won't shift while you quilt. The batting/backing should be wider than the quilt top on all sides by at least 4 - 6". As you quilt, the batting/backing will draw inwards, becoming less flat, and therefore smaller in size, so don't trim the edges yet!

BATTING

Batting comes in all sorts of forms, from polyester to cotton to sheep batt (a very dense and warm batting), all of which require different care and have different properties when it comes to quilting with them.

POLYESTER BATTING is good for quilts that will be washed frequently, and is quite easy to quilt. Warm water can be used for washing.

COTTON BATTING is often preferred by quilters who like the slight puckered, vintage look it gives a quilt after washing as it shrinks a little, and only cold water should be used for washing.

SHEEP BATT is very warm but needs dry cleaning.

I recommend starting out with polyester or cotton batting, and using a fairly light weight batting until you are used to hand quilting.

Different thicknesses can also be used to different effect; a light summer quilt might have a very thin layer and a winter quilt might have something much more substantial.

For large quilts, you may have difficulty finding backing fabric or batting that is already as large as you need. In both cases, 2 or more pieces can be stitched together to make a large layer.

When joining pieces of batting, the pieces are sewn side by side with no overlap, using a zig zag stitch one way and then back again so that the stitches resemble tied shoelaces. This will ensure the batting does not shift later, and also prevents an unnecessary thickness in one part of the quilt.

BACKING

Traditionally a plain fabric such as a solid colored 100% cotton is used for the backing, using a few pieces of fabric joined together. However, a coordinating design of some sort, often using remainder fabric from the quilt top, can be an attractive addition.

Instead of plain fabric, a fabric with a slight design is perfect for hiding dirt and wear, particularly on quilts that will see a lot of use.

SASHING & BORDERS

The fabric that goes in between blocks in a quilt is called sashing and it makes a frame for the block. I suggest finishing the blocks of a quilt before choosing the sashing, border and binding material if at all possible, as the sashing and border fabric will tend to dominate the quilt, and the effect can be difficult to anticipate when you are initially purchasing fabric.

Auditioning various fabrics behind the block at the quilt store can lead to a much better quilt and often the fabric finally decided upon is surprisingly different from what might have been chosen earlier in the process.

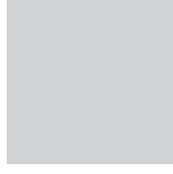
Borders can be created using a fabric that already has repeating rows on it, or a border can be created using a variety of narrow and wide fabrics that coordinate with your blocks. There are also many types of borders that can be completely pieced in a similar manner to the blocks, creating a complex and rich effect.

Quilts do not have to use sashing; interesting designs can be achieved by having the blocks sewn right next to each other.

However most quilts do have a border of some sort, as it is often a simple way to increase the size of a quilt without creating more blocks. For quilts used on beds, often the blocks only appear on the top flat part of the quilt, not on the hanging edges.

POSTS

Posts are often used where the sashing and blocks meet up on a quilt, and provide another bit of interest to the quilt. They can be made of scraps from the blocks and can help unify the quilt in this manner. They can be simple squares of a fabric, or miniature blocks in themselves.

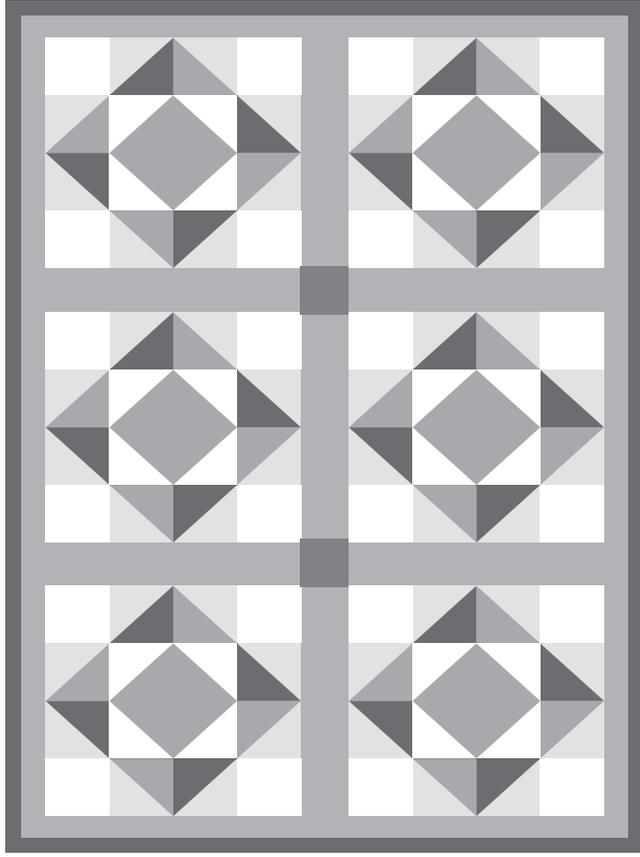


a simple post

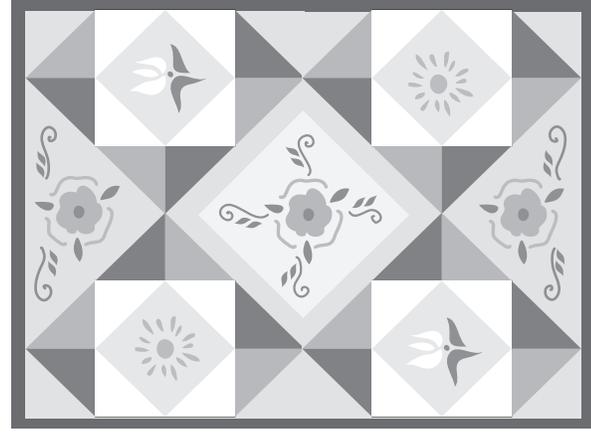


posts using fabrics from the block

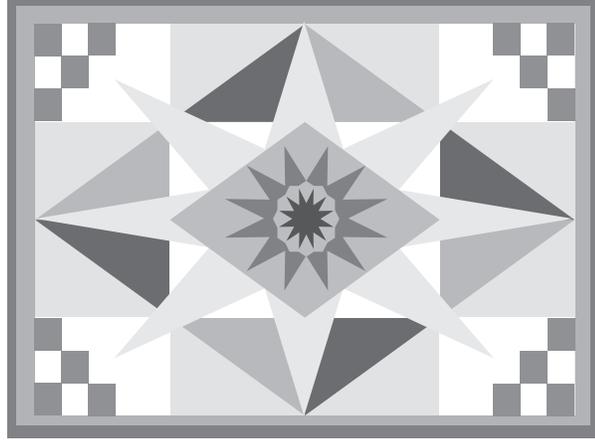




Traditional Quilt Blocks with Sashing, Posts, and Border



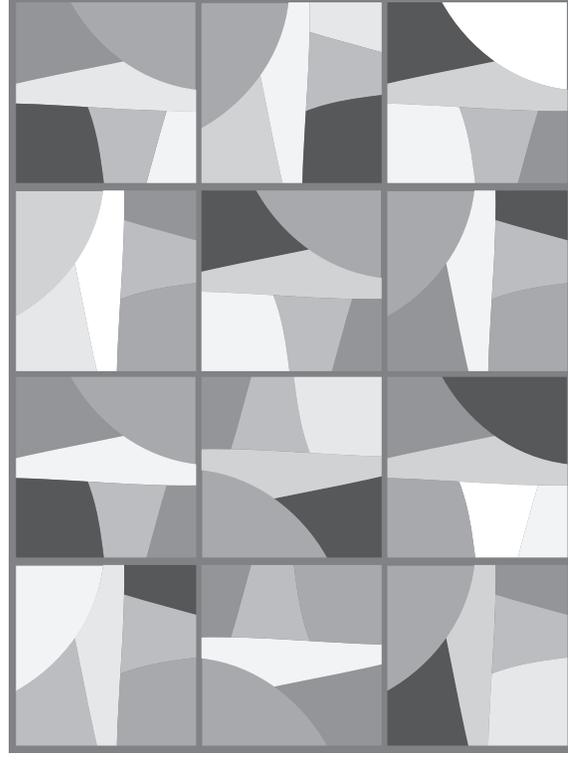
Quilt Blocks with Appliqué



Medallion Quilt



Modern Strip Quilt



Crazy Quilt