

Helpful Hint for July 2012

Top Ten Pressing Tips

1. PRESS, DON'T IRON

Are you confused about the difference? Ironing involves moving the iron while it is in contact with the fabric, which can stretch and distort fabrics and seams. Pressing means picking the iron up off the surface of the fabric and putting it back down in another location.

2. SET YOUR SEAMS

Before pressing a seam open or to one side, first just press the seam as it was sewn, without opening up the fabric pieces. Doing so helps meld or sink the stitches into the fabric, leaving you with a less bulky seam allowance after you press it open or to one side.

3. LET THEM COOL

Once fabric pieces have been pressed, let them cool in place. This prevents distortion of bias edges.

4. FINGER-PRESS FIRST

Finger pressing isn't a substitute for using an iron, but it does temporarily press a seam in one direction or another. It's a good method to use if you're unsure which way a seam eventually will need to be pressed.

5. AVOID SEEING SEAM SHADOWS

Generally speaking, press seams toward the darker fabric to avoid creating a shadow on the lighter fabric. If pressing toward the lighter fabric is a must, trim the darker fabric seam allowance by 1/16" after the seam is sewn to prevent any shadows.

6. BEGIN AGAIN

If a seam allowance has been pressed the wrong way, return it to its original unpressed state and press the unit flat to remove the crease. Allow the fabric to cool, then press the seam in the desired direction.

7. KEEP YOUR OPTIONS OPEN

When multiple seams come together in one area, press them open. This helps distribute the fabric bulk evenly eliminating lumps and making the seams easier to quilt through.

8. AVOID CRUSHING RESULTS

To prevent flattening your appliques, turn an appliquéd block facedown on a terry-cloth towel or a couple layers of batting for pressing.

9. KEEP IT STRAIGHT

Straight seams should be pressed from the right side of the fabric with the iron parallel to the straight of grain. This helps avoid pressing tucks and pleats into the seam.

10. FOLLOW THE GRAIN

A bias seam should be pressed with the iron at a 45-degree angle to the seam and along the straight of grain to prevent distortion.

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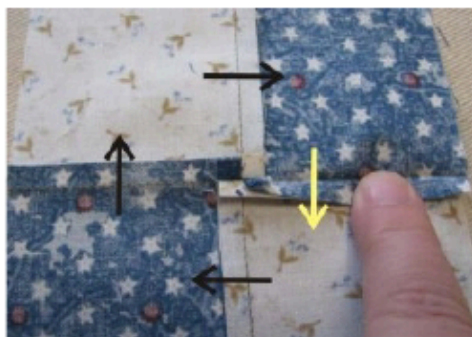
Spinning those seams

A quick tip here on how to spin the seams in a four patch block. This will work with pinwheels and will also work with nine patch blocks. Why would you want to spin your seams? It helps reduce bulk where all four seams come together... take a peek:



Three seams rotate in the same direction, one goes against the flow!

Most Four Patch blocks are pressed with the two-patch units going to the same fabric, in this case, they are pressed to the dark. The long seam is usually pressed to one side. See Above.



Flip the seam back, the one that is going "against the flow". The stitches should pop apart allowing the center to lay flat.

If the stitches in the seam don't want to pop, help them along a bit with your seam ripper. See Above.



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