

## Flying Geese – Four Methods

**Extracted from** “How to sew flying geese – 4 techniques posted by Jenny Wilding Cardon on August 2, 2012, in quilting & sewing, patchwork, quilting tutorials, traditional quilts”

Flying-geese blocks and units are amazingly versatile. When used here and there in a design, they’re easily adaptable. When lined up in rows of flying flocks, they’re simply stunning. Barbara Brackman’s *Encyclopedia of Pieced Quilt Patterns* dates the first flying-geese patterns ever published back to 1894, when the *Ohio Farmer* featured them on their “woman’s pages.” Flash-forward almost 120 years later—these simple little units are used in all kinds of quilts, from traditional to modern.

Today there are several schools of thought on how to sew flying geese, and they all have their merits. A scrap quilter might want to put every thread of fabric to good use, while a quilter with a deadline might sidestep scraps for speed. Today, we’re sharing ~~four~~ three ways to make patchwork flying geese.

1. **Traditional Technique:** for quilters who like to use it up and make it do.
2. **Flip, Flip, Finish:** for quilters who enjoy a good ol’ chain-piecing veg-out.
3. **Fast and Furious:** for quilters who like to finish *fast*—times four.
4. **Paper-Pieced Geese:** for quilters who wish to piece with the utmost precision.

The charts below each of the first three techniques give finished-unit sizes along with dimensions for the cut pieces.

### Traditional Technique: Classic Flying Geese

From Cyndi Walker, author of [Pretty Patchwork Quilts](#)

Traditional Technique: Classic Flying Geese Made from Triangles		
Finished Size of Units (excludes outer seam allowances)	Large Triangles	Small Triangles
	<i>Cut squares diagonally into quarters.</i>	<i>Cut squares diagonally in half.</i>
1" x 2"	1 square, 3¼" x 3¼" (3 leftovers)	1 square, 1 7/8" x 1 7/8"
1½" x 3"	1 square, 4¼" x 4¼" (3 leftovers)	1 square, 2 3/8" x 2 3/8"
2" x 4"	1 square, 5¼" x 5¼" (3 leftovers)	1 square, 2 7/8" x 2 7/8"
2½" x 5"	1 square, 6¼" x 6¼" (3 leftovers)	1 square, 3 3/8" x 3 3/8"
3" x 6"	1 square, 7¼" x 7¼" (3 leftovers)	1 square, 3 7/8" x 3 7/8"
3½" x 7"	1 square, 8¼" x 8¼" (3 leftovers)	1 square, 4 3/8" x 4 3/8"
4" x 8"	1 square, 9¼" x 9¼" (3 leftovers)	1 square, 4 7/8" x 4 7/8"

*Note: instructions will yield 2" x 4" flying-geese units (finished).*

To make one flying-geese unit: Cut a  $2\frac{7}{8}$ " square of fabric in half diagonally to yield two small triangles. Cut a  $5\frac{1}{4}$ " square of a contrasting fabric twice on the diagonal to yield four large triangles, reserving three for another use. Sew one small triangle to one diagonal edge of the large triangle; press toward the small triangle. Sew the second small triangle to the other diagonal edge of the large triangle to make a flying-geese unit; press toward the small triangle.



### Flip, Flip, Finish: Flippy Corners Flying Geese

From Cathy Wierzbicki, author of [Twosey-Foursey Quilts](#)

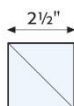
A “flippy corner” is a casual way to sew half-square triangles onto squares or rectangles without actually handling a triangle shape—cheater triangles, so to speak. This technique can be applied to a number of commonly used units and blocks. A good example is the flying-geese unit.

Flip, Flip, Finish: Folded Corners Flying Geese		
Finished Size of Units (excludes outer seam allowances)	Large Triangles	Small Triangles
1" x 2"	1 rectangle, $1\frac{1}{2}$ " x $2\frac{1}{2}$ "	2 squares, $1\frac{1}{2}$ " x $1\frac{1}{2}$ "
$1\frac{1}{2}$ " x 3"	1 rectangle, 2" x $3\frac{1}{2}$ "	2 squares, 2" x 2"
2" x 4"	1 rectangle, $2\frac{1}{2}$ " x $4\frac{1}{2}$ "	2 squares, $2\frac{1}{2}$ " x $2\frac{1}{2}$ "
$2\frac{1}{2}$ " x 5"	1 rectangle, 3" x $5\frac{1}{2}$ "	2 squares, 3" x 3"
3" x 6"	1 rectangle, $3\frac{1}{2}$ " x $6\frac{1}{2}$ "	2 squares, $3\frac{1}{2}$ " x $3\frac{1}{2}$ "
$3\frac{1}{2}$ " x 7"	1 rectangle, 4" x $7\frac{1}{2}$ "	2 squares, 4" x 4"
4" x 8"	1 rectangle, $4\frac{1}{2}$ " x $8\frac{1}{2}$ "	2 squares, $4\frac{1}{2}$ " x $4\frac{1}{2}$ "

*Note: instructions will yield 2" x 4" flying-geese units (finished).*

Traditionally, a flying-geese unit calls for one quarter-square triangle and two half-square triangles. If you prefer, however, you can make flying-geese units using the flippy-corner technique. To make finished-size 2" x 4" units, substitute a  $2\frac{1}{2}$ " x  $4\frac{1}{2}$ " rectangle for the quarter-square triangle and two  $2\frac{1}{2}$ " squares for the two half-square triangles. Make the unit as shown in the following steps.

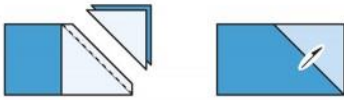
1. Draw a diagonal line on the back of each  $2\frac{1}{2}$ " square.



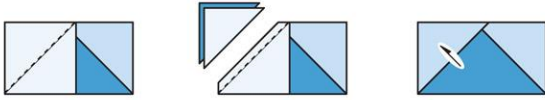
2. With right sides together, align one marked square with one edge of the  $2\frac{1}{2}$ " x  $4\frac{1}{2}$ " rectangle as shown. Stitch one thread width to the outside of the diagonal line.



3. Cut 1/4" beyond the stitching line as shown. Press the resulting triangle open and the seam allowance toward the triangle.



4. Repeat steps 2 and 3 on the other edge of the rectangle to complete the unit.



### Fast and Furious: Four-at-a-Time Flying Geese

From Carrie Nelson, author of [Another Bite of Schnibbles](#)

Fast and Furious: Four-at-a-Time Flying Geese		
Finished Size of Units (excludes outer seam allowances)	Large Triangles	Small Triangles
1" x 2"	1 square, 3/4" x 3/4"	4 squares, 1 7/8" x 1 7/8"
1 1/2" x 3"	1 square, 4 1/4" x 4 1/4"	4 squares, 2 3/8" x 2 3/8"
2" x 4"	1 square, 5 1/4" x 5 1/4"	4 squares, 2 7/8" x 2 7/8"
2 1/2" x 5"	1 square, 6 1/4" x 6 1/4"	4 squares, 3 3/8" x 3 3/8"
3" x 6"	1 square, 7 1/4" x 7 1/4"	4 squares, 3 7/8" x 3 7/8"
3 1/2" x 7"	1 square, 8 1/4" x 8 1/4"	4 squares, 4 3/8" x 4 3/8"
4" x 8"	1 square, 9 1/4" x 9 1/4"	4 squares, 4 7/8" x 4 7/8"

*Note: instructions will yield 2" x 3 1/2" flying-geese units (finished).*

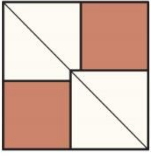
Here are the steps for my favorite, no-special-ruler-required method of making flying-geese units. For each set of four matching flying-geese units, you'll need one large square and four matching small squares. The large square will become the large triangle in each unit and the four small squares will become the small side triangles in each unit.

Let's use a 4 1/4" large square and four 2 3/8" small squares to try this technique.

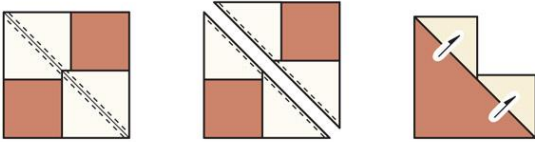
1. On the wrong side of each of the four small squares, draw a diagonal line from corner to corner using a permanent pen, pencil, or chalk marker.



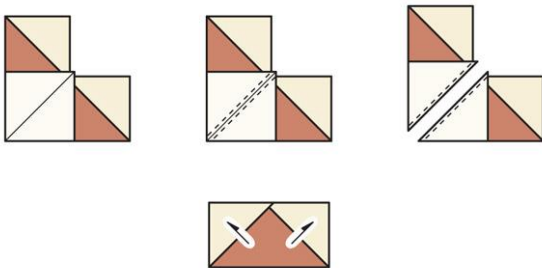
2. With right sides together, place two marked squares on opposite corners of the large square. The points of the small squares will overlap just a little bit and the drawn line should extend across the large square from corner to corner as shown.



3. Stitch a scant  $1/4$ " seam allowance on both sides of the drawn lines. Cut the squares apart on the drawn lines. Press the seam allowances toward the small triangles.



4. With right sides together, place one of the remaining marked squares on the corner of each piece. The drawn line should extend from the point of the corner to the point between the two small triangles. Stitch a scant  $1/4$ " seam allowance on both sides of the drawn line. Cut the pieces apart on the drawn line. Press the seam allowances toward the small triangles. You'll have four flying-geese units. The units will measure  $2$ " x  $3 \frac{1}{2}$ ".



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**Paper-Pieced Geese:** for quilters who wish to piece with the utmost precision.

There are many sources for paper pieced templates on the internet.

This link can print templates for sizes of finished Flying Geese ( $3/4$ " x  $1 \frac{1}{2}$ ";  $1$ " x  $2$ ";  $1 \frac{1}{4}$ " x  $2 \frac{1}{2}$ ";  $1 \frac{1}{2}$ " x  $3$ ";  $2$ " x  $4$ ")

<https://www.generations-quilt-patterns.com/flying-geese.html>

This link prints  $2 \frac{1}{2}$ " x  $5$ " finished Flying geese

[http://quiltbooksandbeyond.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/paper\\_pieced\\_flying\\_geese\\_2half\\_by\\_5.pdf](http://quiltbooksandbeyond.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/paper_pieced_flying_geese_2half_by_5.pdf)

When you print foundations from the web, you need to make sure that your printer is set to print "Actual Size".