

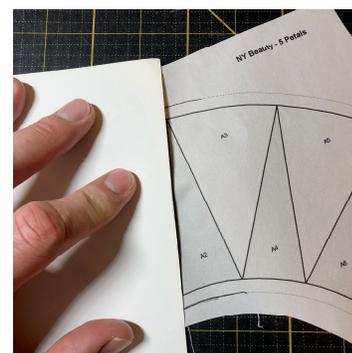
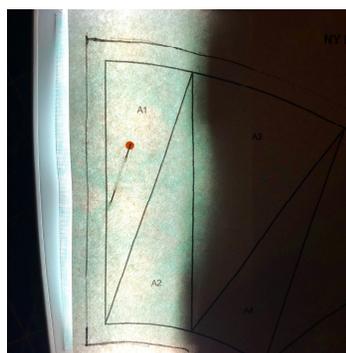


## Foundation Paper Piecing: A Quick NBQ Tutorial

### The New York Beauty Block.

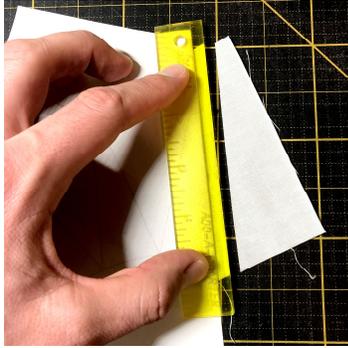
Intimidating at first, but once you get the hang of it, you will love foundation paper piecing for its accuracy! I have provided an example below for piecing a generic NY Beauty Block. Specific fabric cutting references for the Meadow Valley pattern when piecing the fabrics for all FPP blocks (accounting for  $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowances) are provided in that pattern. I find this very handy, as there is less guessing. It does waste a small amount of fabric but saves a lot of time. Not all patterns will do this. When in doubt Pin the fabric in Place on the opposite side of the printed foundation pieced pattern, and hold it up to a light. Ensure that your piece of fabric has enough allowance for piecing and  $\frac{1}{4}$ " seams in all directions.

To begin, take your first background piece of fabric (light thistle fabric in example below) and place behind the paper foundation A1 in this generic FPP example, ensuring you completely cover A1 and  $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowance in all directions. Once your fabric has been placed properly, pin it in place. Now take a piece of cardstock (Half of a Greeting Card works great), or your 6x6 ruler and place on the first line of the NY Beauty,

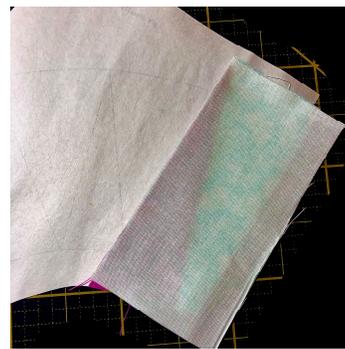


Fold the paper over towards you, place the Add a Quarter Ruler and then Cut using your rotary cutter.

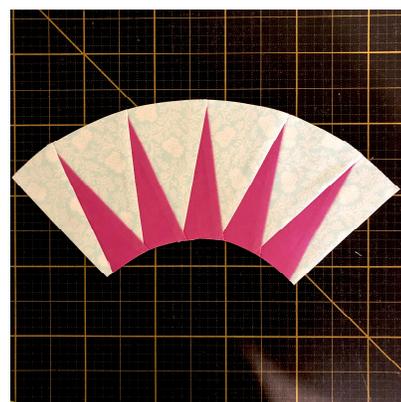
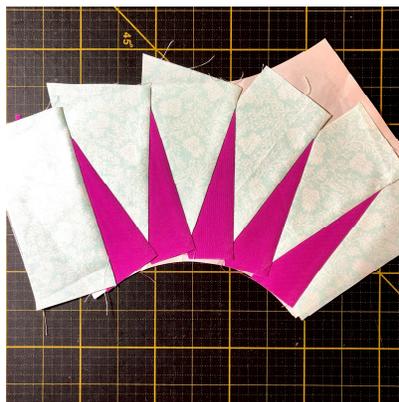
You have now prepared that piece for sewing on your first point. Next take your second fabric ('the spike' – coloured fabric in example), and place it Right Sides Together with your pinned pieced. Carefully holding transfer this to your sewing machine. With a reduced stitch length sew straight along the guide line, ensuring you start and end in your seam allowance.



Once complete turn paper over, and press seam with iron. Turn Over so Right side of fabric is down on the cutting mat and NY Beauty Paper Foundation is facing you. Now go to the second sewing line, and repeat the first step, placing cardstock on the next guide line, folding paper over, Place your Add a Quarter Ruler, then cut using your rotary cutter.



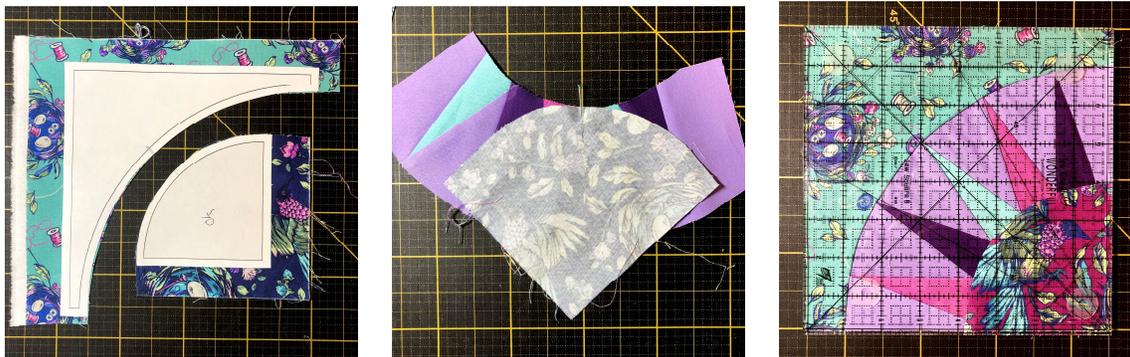
Now add your 3<sup>rd</sup> piece of fabric (which will be the light thistle “background” fabric in the example), following the previous steps ensuring you are alternating between fabrics for high contrast. Repeat these steps until your Arc Template is completely covered and complete.



Carefully trim the curved piecing lines to the  $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowance. You can trim both straight edges; however, I have found I leave them till the end to trim in case my block is shy for the intended measured size. **DO NOT REMOVE THE PAPER** (do this prior to piecing, as it helps maintain structural integrity).

## Sewing a Curve

Begin by taking your pre-prepared freezer paper curved templates. Iron them onto the fabric you want to use. You can fussy-cut by placing them over specific focals in your fabric if you like. Cut out the template, ensuring you cut exactly along the curved edge. You can extend past the template as shown (I found this extremely useful when I was a beginner and sewing curves), this allows you to trim down the blocks, **as long as you consistently trim the blocks**. If you are more confident with curved piecing, you may trim cut your fabric from the freezer paper template exactly.



I leave the two straight edge sides larger than intended as aforementioned. Before removing the freezer paper fold the curve in half and mark this point with a pin or pencil mark on the wrong side of your fabric. These points mark the centre points. Now take your paper pieced spiked block and mark the midpoint with a pin as well. Align the pins on the pieced spike block and the outer arc, ensuring the fabric is Right Sides Together. Pin around the edge of the curve, ensuring there are no bubbles.

With a regular stitch length on your sewing machine (slow the speed down), sew with a  $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam on the curve on this block, noting where petal points are and ensuring they are not sewn into. Follow that seam as long as your fabrics are accurately lined up (remember right sides together). You may need to stop periodically, lifting the presser foot on your sewing machine and slightly repositioning the fabric. Press away from the pieced (spiked) arc.

Now repeat this process with the Inner Arc. This arc due to its size may be fussier, just go slow, and follow the previous steps. **The curve is never "perfect" so don't stress if it's a bit wonky....it will quilt out.**

Once your Block has been pressed you can trim it to the 8.0" Square. You want to ensure you have a  $\frac{1}{4}$ " between the outer edge and first spike, so when you are piecing blocks together your "spikes" don't get cut off (See Diagram Below). A good reference when using your ruler is line the 45 degree line up with the centre spike prior to trimming.

## Tips and Tricks

- Decrease Stitch Length to 1.5" to 1.8" when sewing on paper. Reduced stitch length will depend on your sewing machine. This greatly assists when removing the paper from your blocks. I leave my foundation paper on the block until I am ready to sew my blocks together (helps maintain structural integrity).
- Use Foundation Paper. One can use regular computer paper, but it is very challenging to remove, and tends to get "cut" when sewing on it.
- Make sure when photocopying foundations, they are copied or printed at "actual size," not reduced etc.
- When sewing New York Beauty Blocks use High contrasting coloured fabrics, this way they really \*pop\*
- Freezer paper is your friend, and is great for using as a template, and focal fussy cutting if you want to feature a focal point of your fabric for a block. You can also reuse, so label your templates.
- When sewing curves...PINS PINS PINS! Don't be afraid to use a lot. Slow down your machine's speed, and take your time. For accurate curved piecing ensure you cut the template out accurately. I always add more than a ¼ " allowance for the inner and outer curves to ensure you get a 8.0" Square Block once assembled (easier to trim down to accurate size (see photo in "Sewing a Curve section)).
- When sewing curves, find the midpoint of each piece and mark with a pin, chalk or pencil, ensuring you line these two points up when you piece.

Happy Quilting,

Brett

