Getting Better Points

Tips for achieving crisper points in Traditional Piecing



Melissa Nilsen



Early Quilts

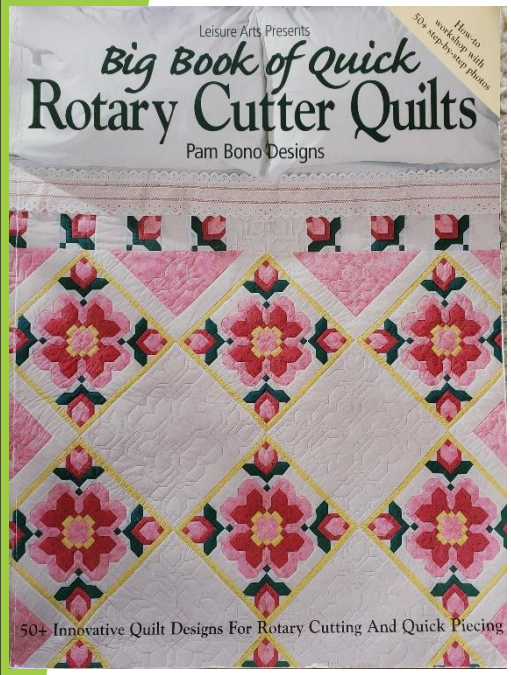






My sister appliqued the TKD figures for me

Growing My Piecing Skills













Getting Better Points

Tips for achieving crisper points in Traditional Piecing



Tip 1: Choose Quality Quilter's Cotton



If you can!

Thread count should be at least a minimum of 60 x 60, or 120

Higher thread count cotton will have a more silken hand feel and will be smoother than low-quality cotton

This medium-weight structure holds crisp seams

High-quality quilter's cotton is less likely to bleed and has minimal shrinkage

Avoid thinner weight cotton (low thread count and a loose weave). You can see the difference! When you hold it up to the light, you can easily see through it.

Avoid fabric with a lot of stretch

Avoid 50/50 polyester blends which pill over time

Tip 2: Prepare Your Fabric

Wash fabric with color catchers to remove excess dye, and dry to pre-shrink



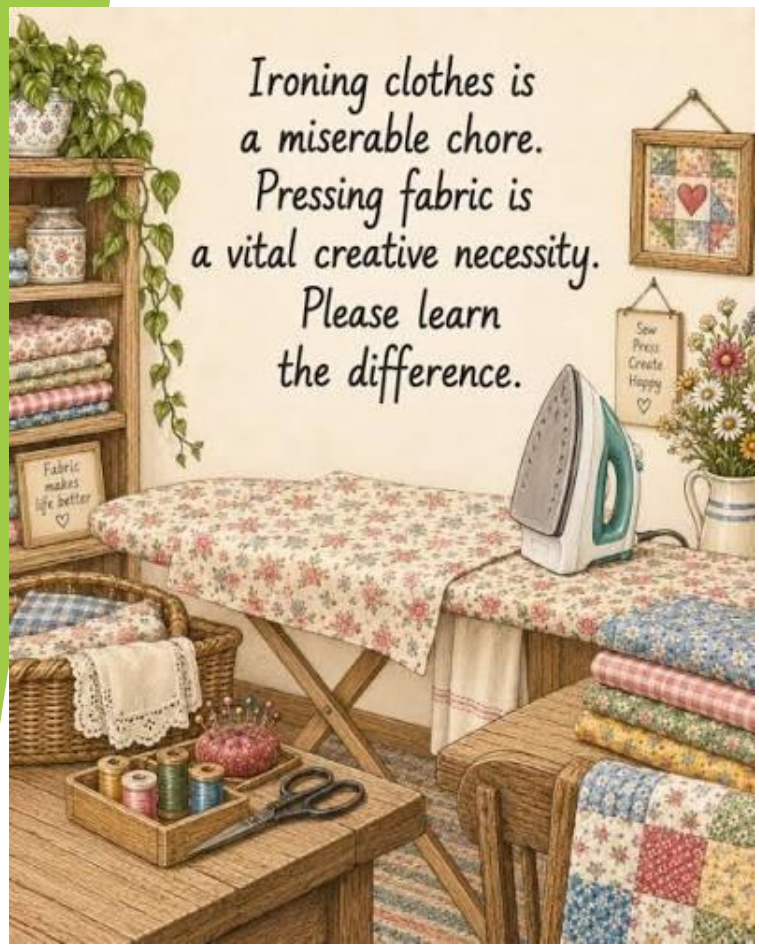




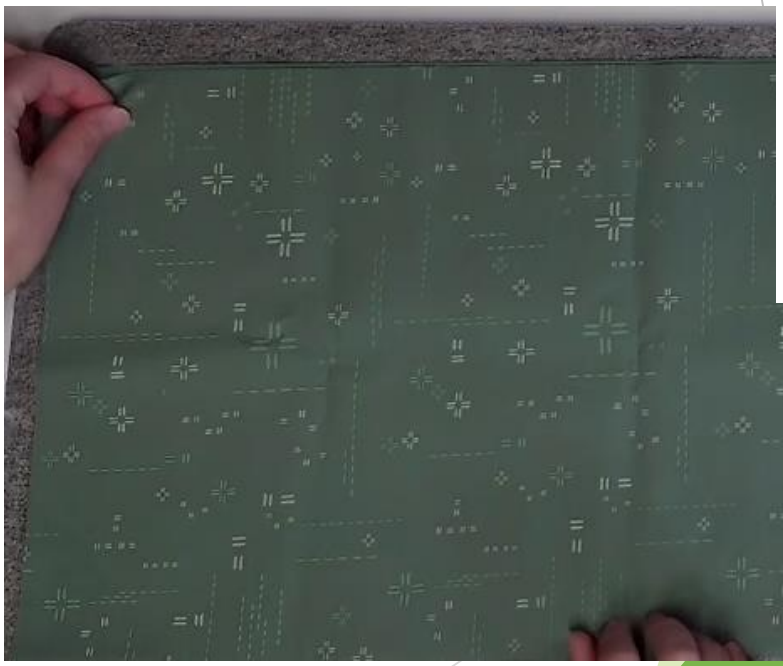
DO NOT wash pre-cuts!

Tip 2: Prepare Your Fabric

Folds in fabric make for inaccurate cutting



Light starch helps fabric retain its shape when trimming & pressing

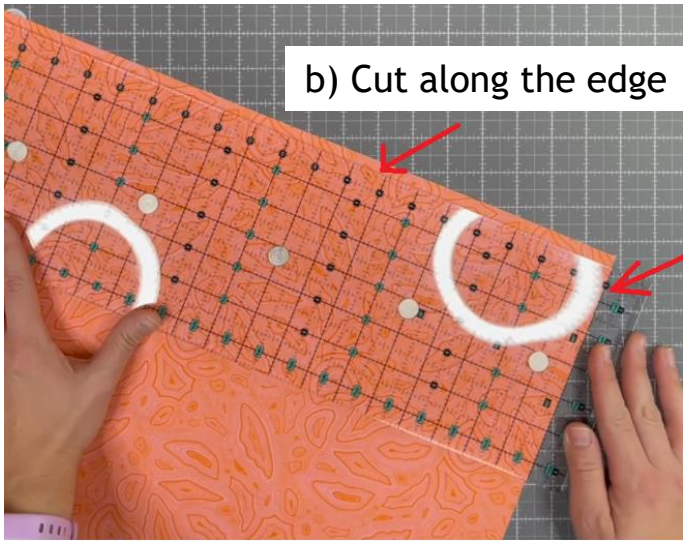




Tip 3: Accurate cutting

Even a 1/16" error can make a difference

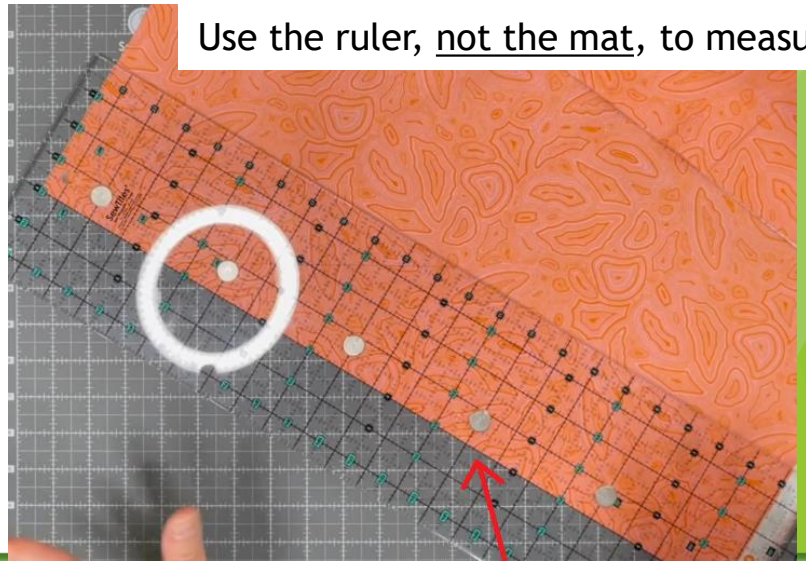
1) Square up your fabric:



a) Line up your ruler on the <u>fold</u>

2) Turn the fabric so the cut edge is now on the left.

Use the ruler, <u>not the mat</u>, to measure.



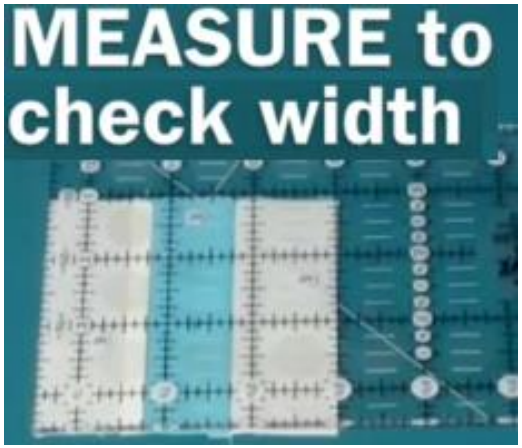
Note, these instructions are for <u>RIGHT-Handed</u> cutting

Tip 4: Accurate 1/4” Seam

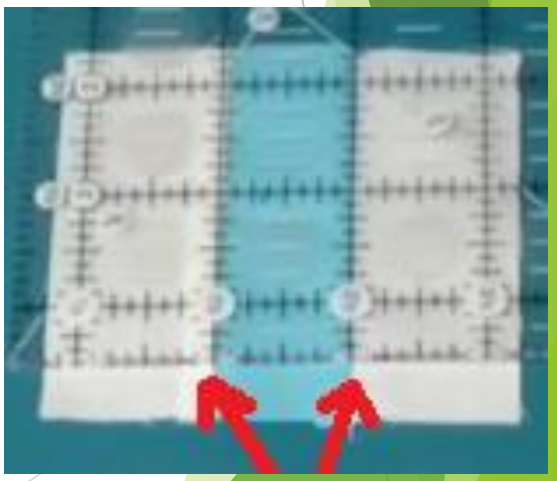
Make a sample to test your ¼” seam

Cut 3 scraps of fabric 1.5” x 3.5”,
sew all 3 together on the long edge





It should measure 3” x 3”

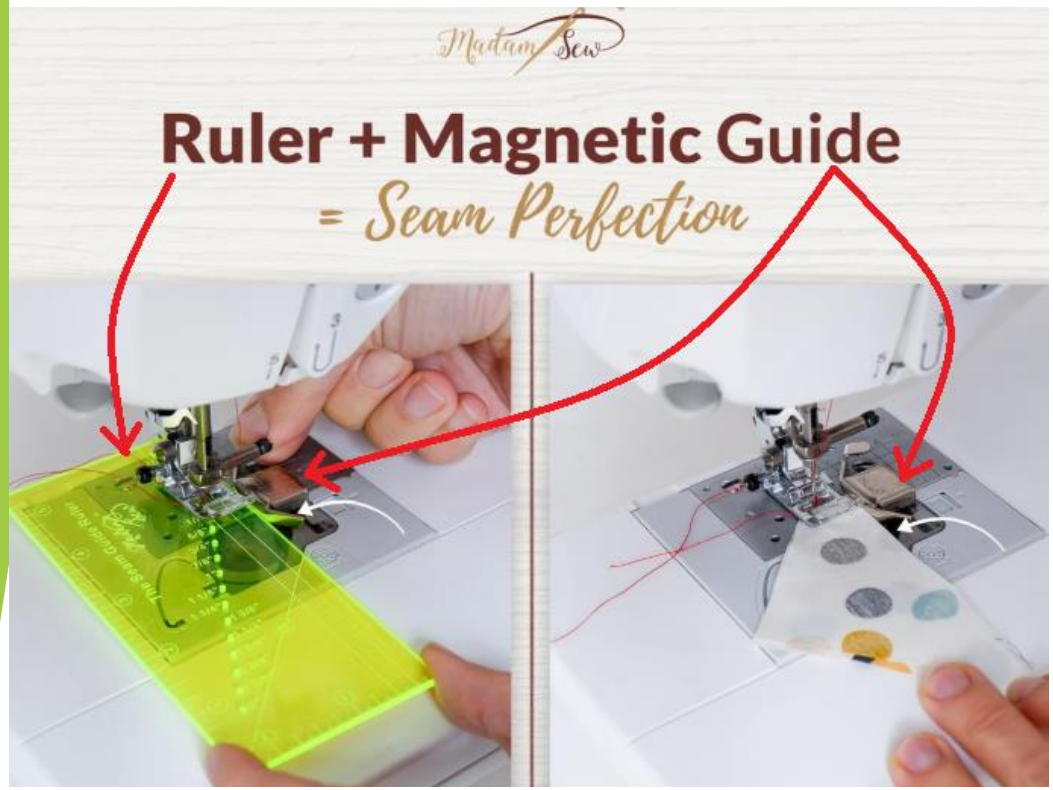


The center strip should be exactly 1” wide

Tip 4: Accurate 1/4“ Seam

Tools to help with sewing accuracy

Madam Sew Seam Allowance Ruler and Magnetic Guide



Drop your needle in the 1/4” hole, then place the magnetic seam guide to the right of the Seam Allowance Ruler

HoneySew
Diagonal Seam Tape





Tip 5: Press Each Piece

Set Your Seams





Press to one side:

- Press from the front to avoid tucks
- Finger press first
- Use the tip of the iron to gently press into the seam

Press Open

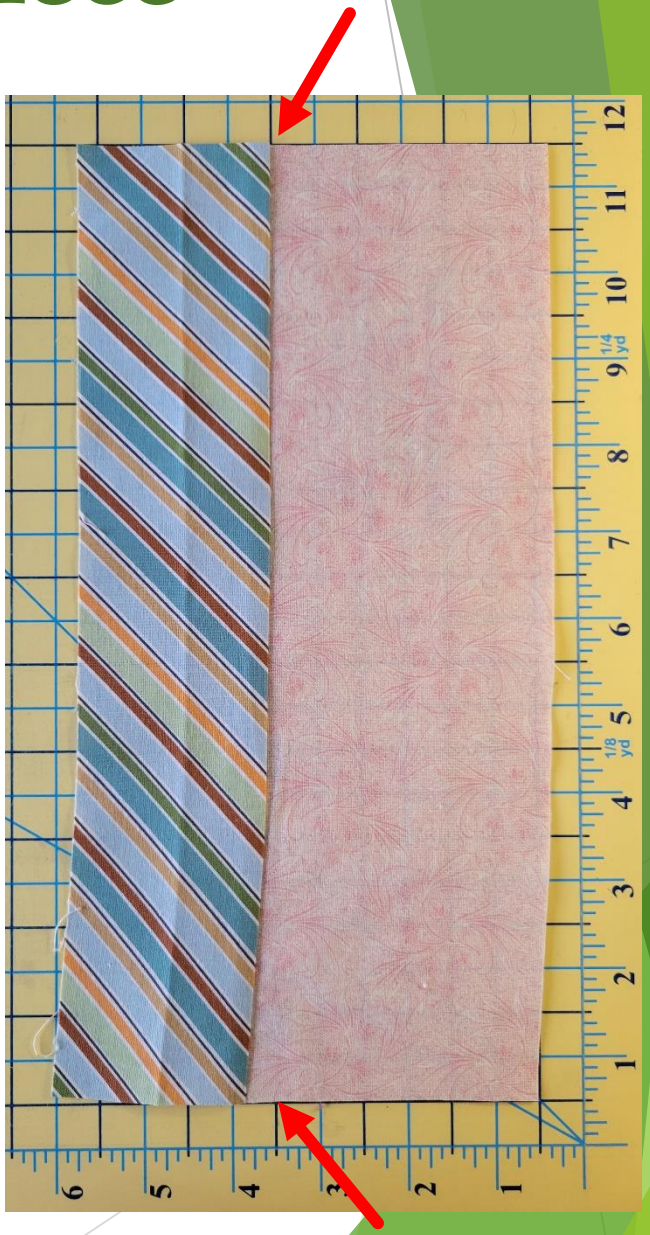
- Face down
- Finger press seam open
- Use the tip of the iron to gently nudge the seam open



Tip 5: Press Each Piece

Beware of curving seams

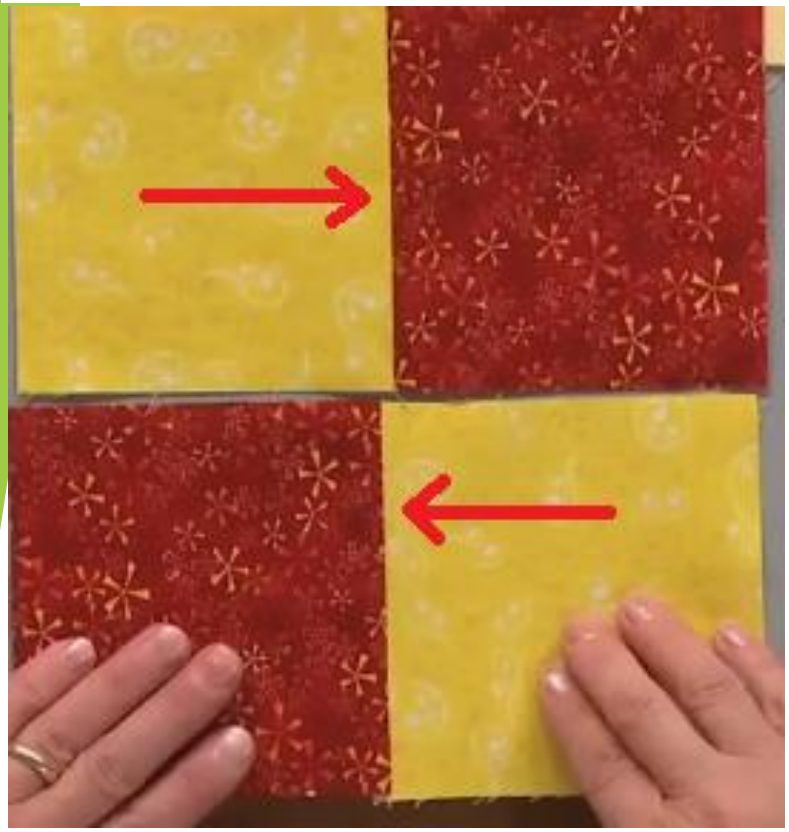
- Finger press seams open
- Run fingernails along the seam to pull out fabric (if you have short fingernails)
- Press iron down, and don't move the iron across the fabric to ensure the seam stays straight.



Tip 5: Press Each Piece

Nesting Your Seams

Press in opposite directions

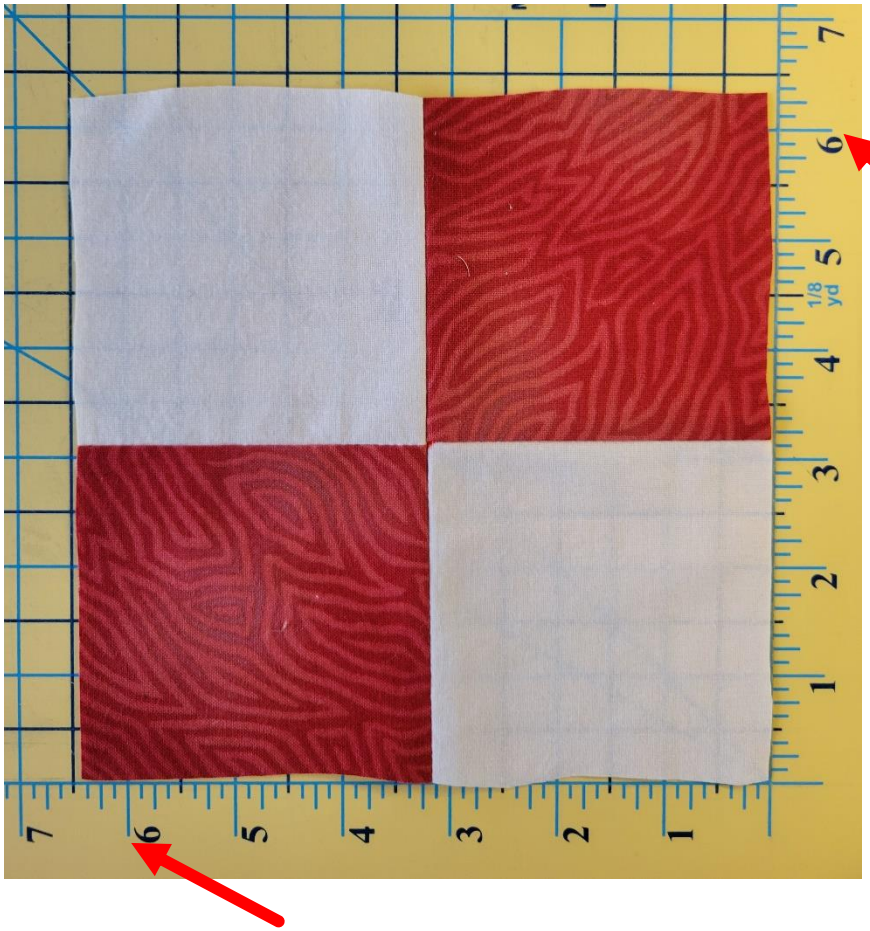


Seams will interlock



Tip 6: Measure Each Unit After Pressing

It's much easier to correct a mistake in an individual unit before it's sewn into a block.

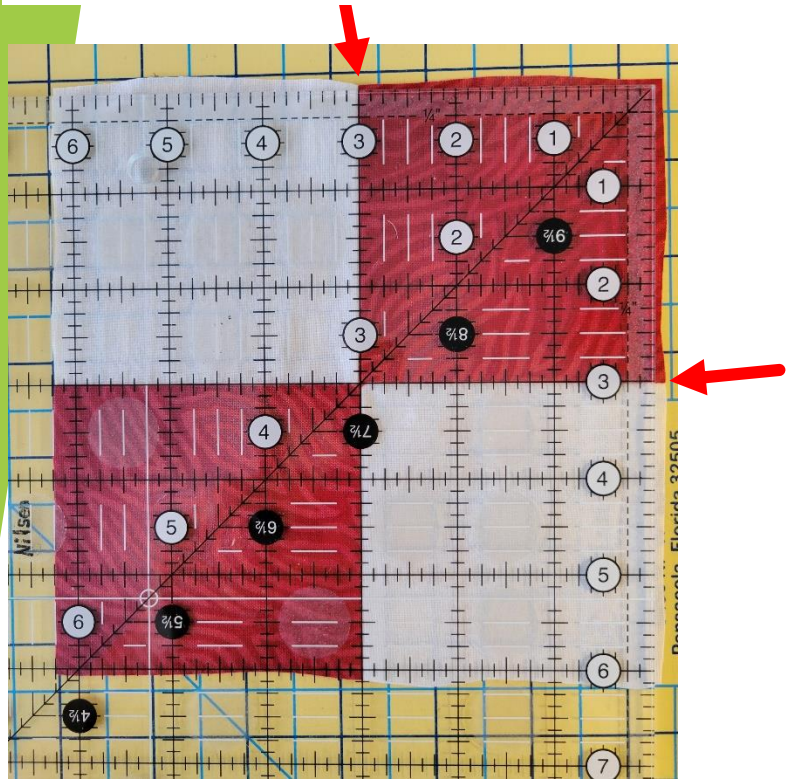


This unit is supposed to be 6" square

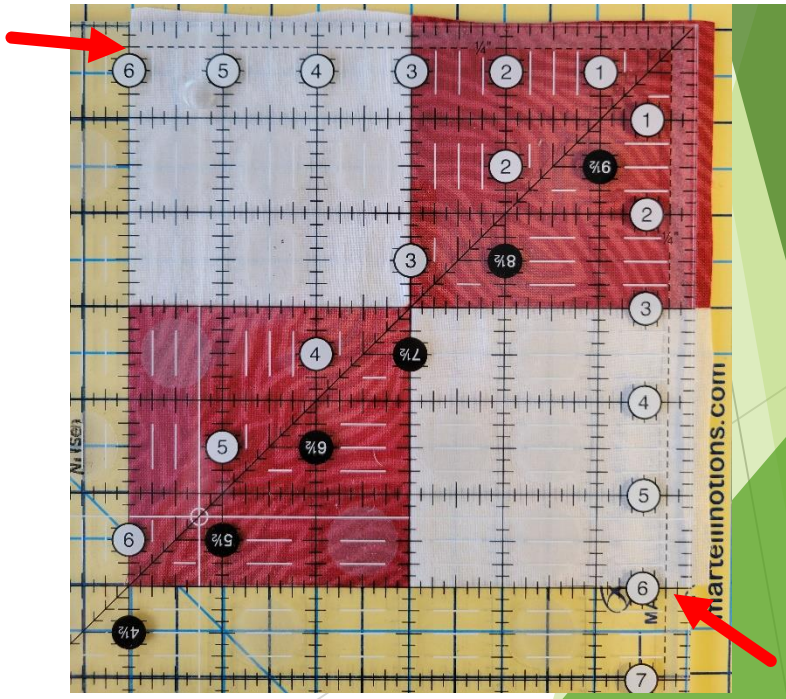
Tip 7: Trim sub-units to correct size

Don't just trim two sides to make it the correct overall size. Be aware of keeping seams within the unit in the correct location.

For a 6" square, the seams should be at 3"



After trimming, rotate to cut the other two sides. The left and bottom should now align at the 6" ruler marks, and the seams are still at 3".



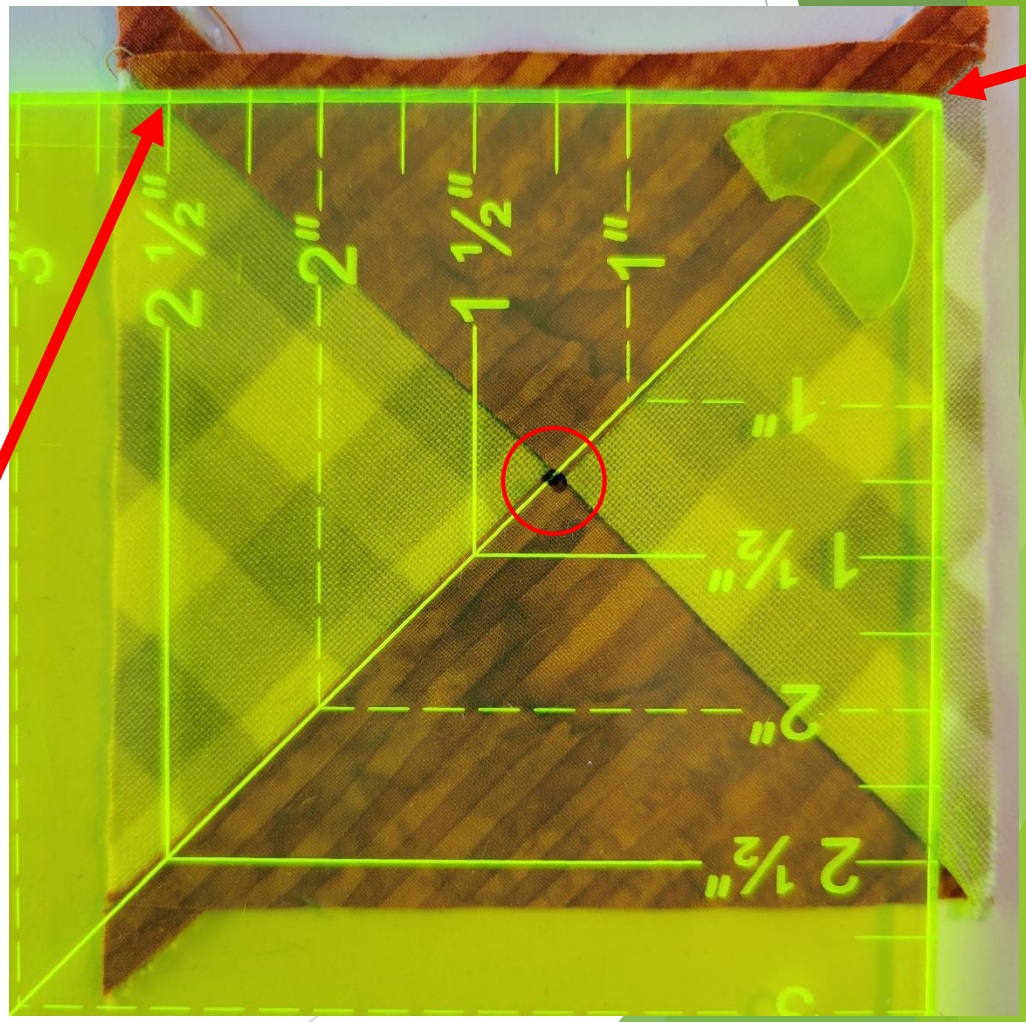
Tip 7: Trim sub-units to correct size

Be mindful with units that have diagonal seams.

Need 1/4” from tip to fabric edge.



Seams must align with the corners of the unit.



Tip 8: Pinning Your Points

Use Fine Pins (.4mm or .45 mm)

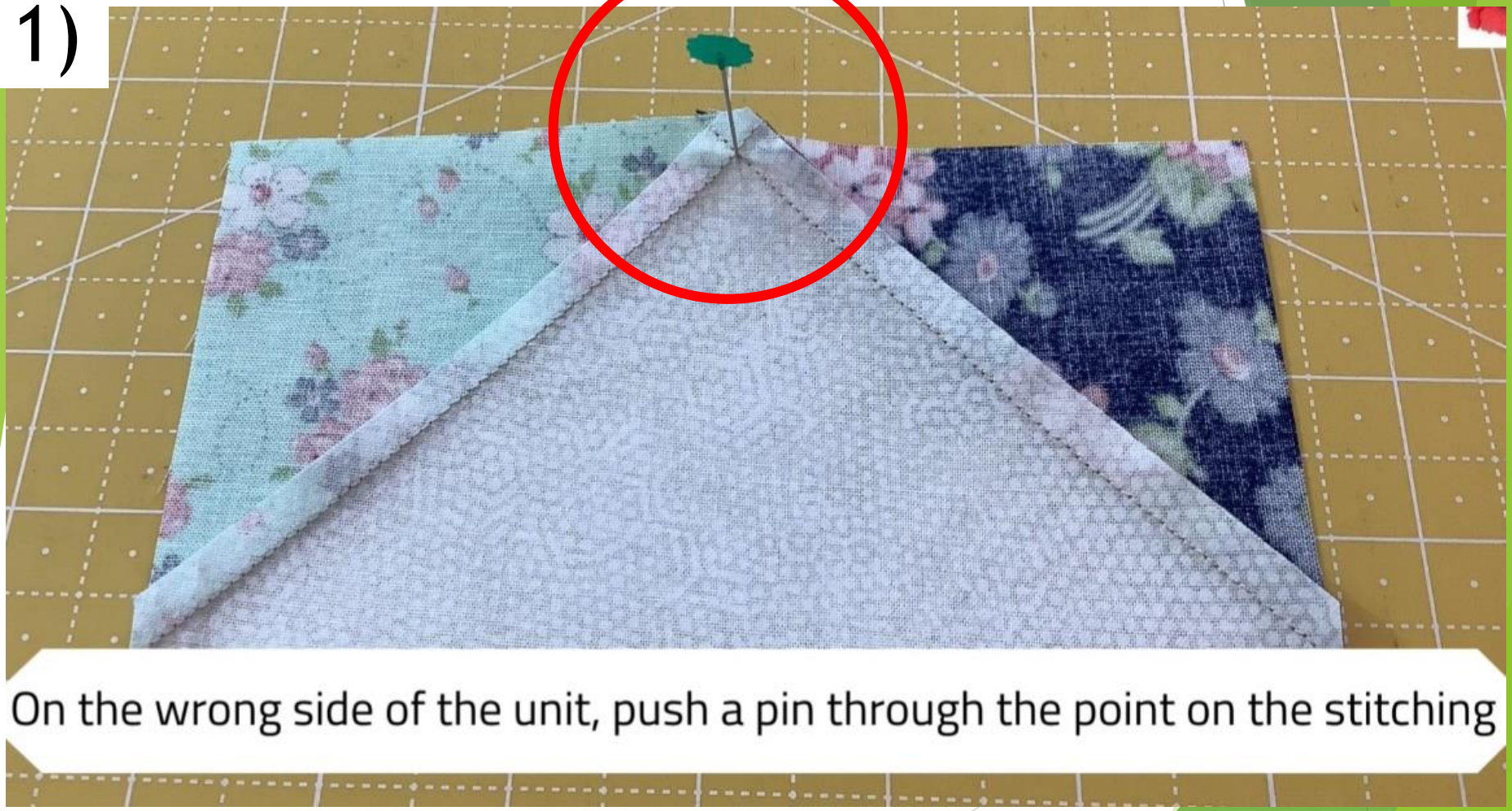




Tip 8: Pinning Your Points

Pinning to Align Points

1)



Tip 8: Pinning Your Points

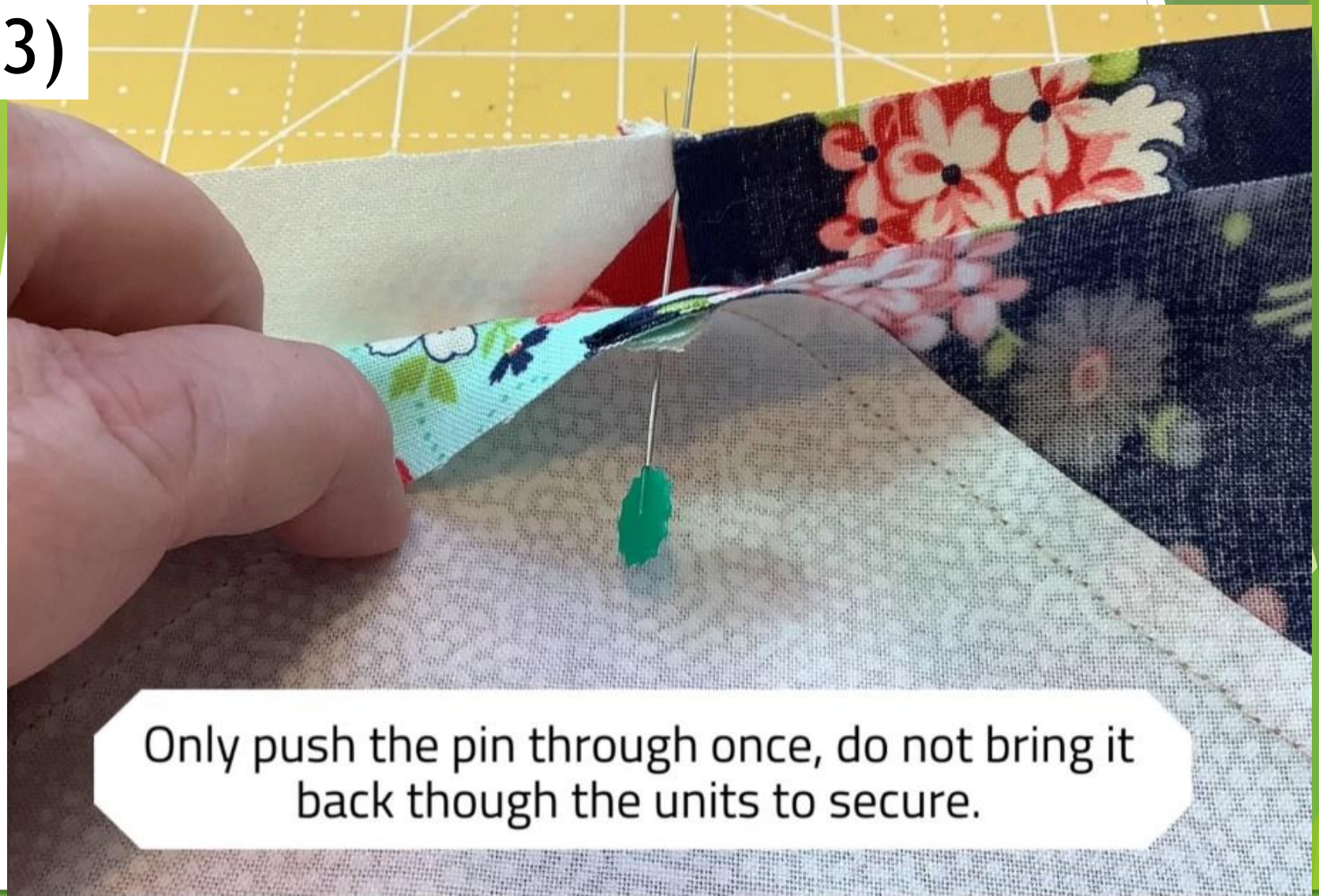
Pinning to Align Points



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Pinning to Align Points

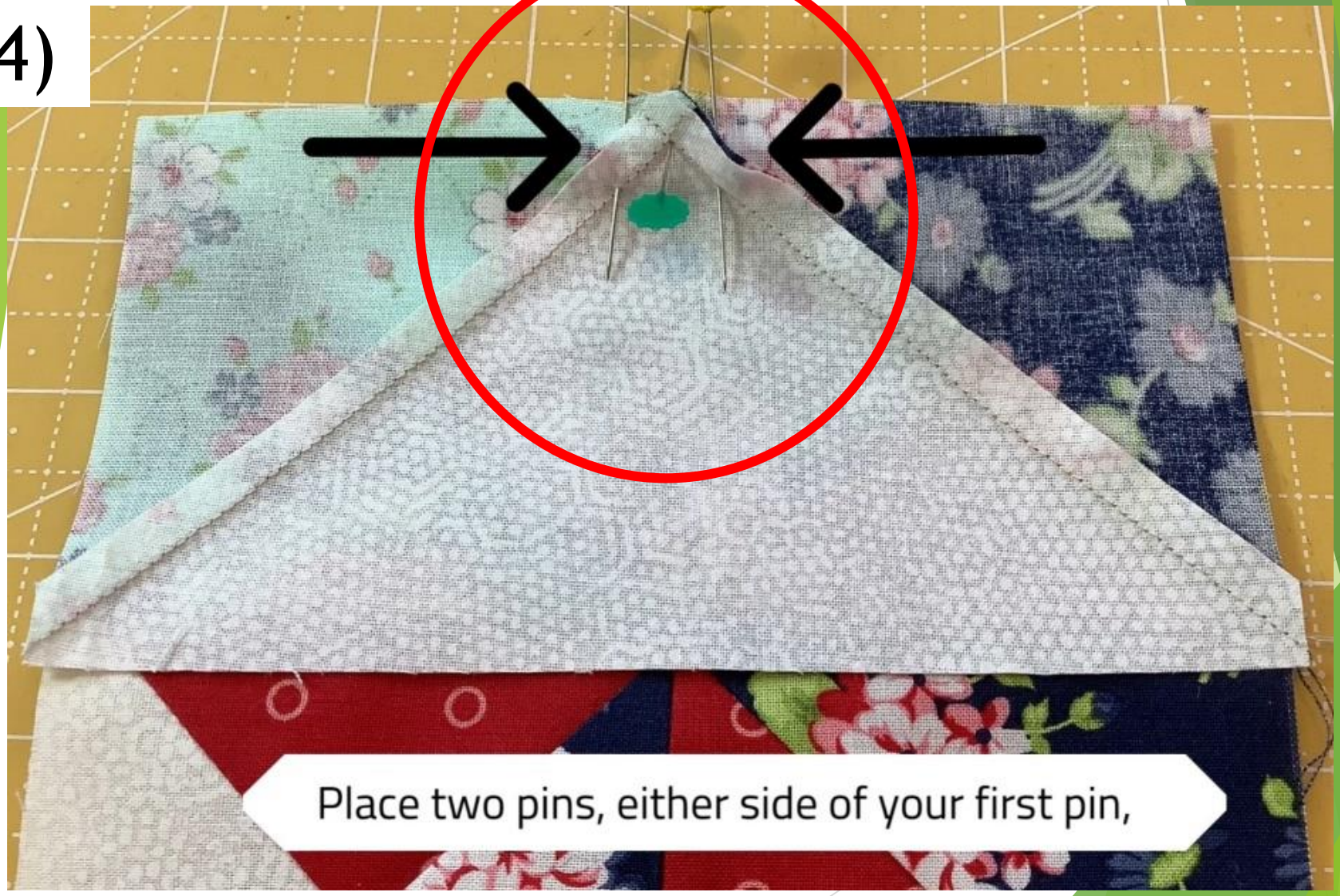
3)



Tip 8: Pinning Your Points

Pinning to Align Points

4)



Tip 8: Pinning Your Points

Pinning to Align Points

5)



Remove the first pin, and continue pinning the units together

Tip 8: Pinning Your Points

Pinning to Align Points

6)



Tip 8: Pinning Your Points

Pinning to Align Points

7)



Tip 9: Joining Units



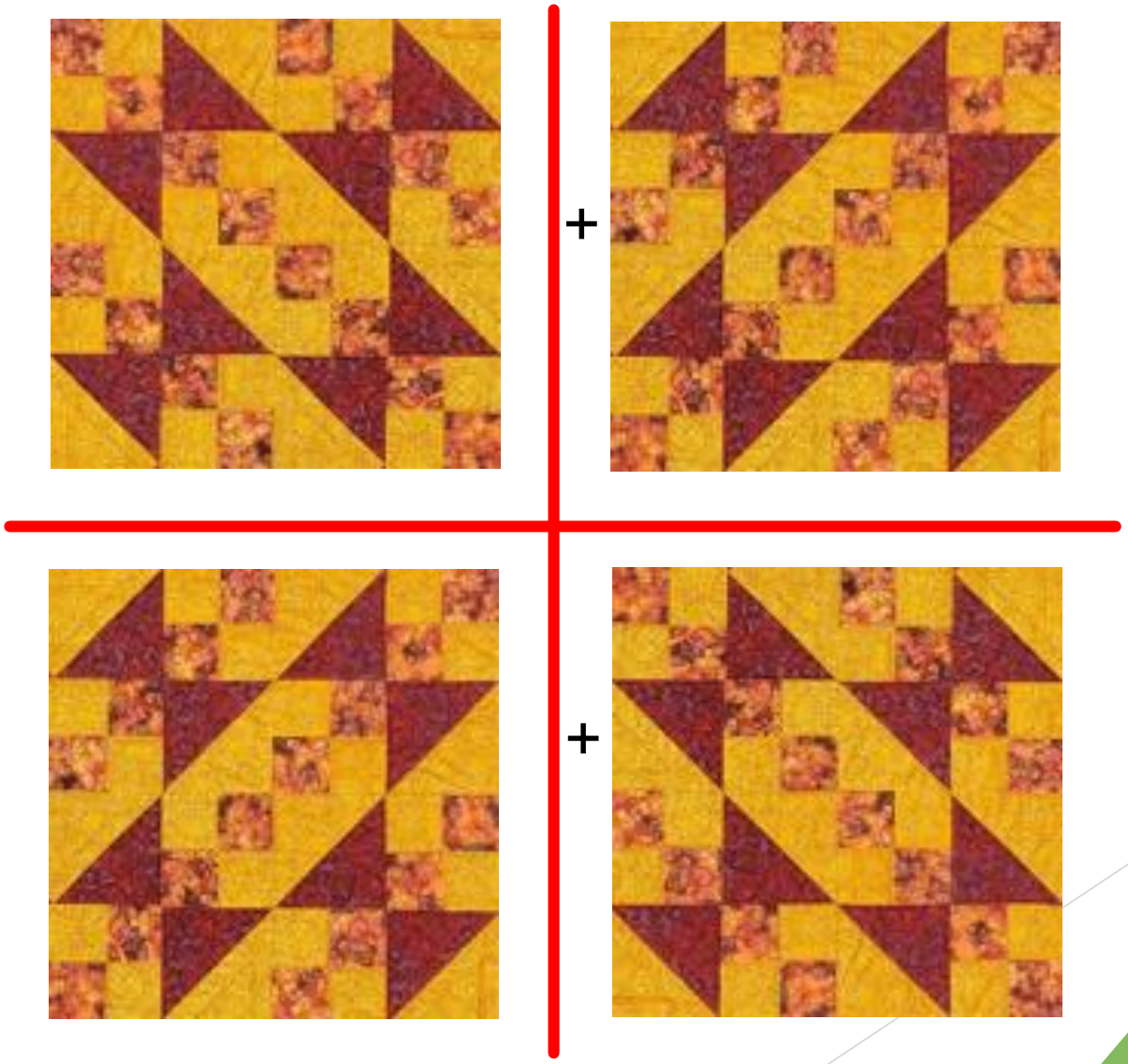
Tip 10: Assembling the Top

Align seams on all sides



Tip 10: Assembling the Top

Sew in Quadrants Rather Than Rows



Tip 10: Assembling the Top

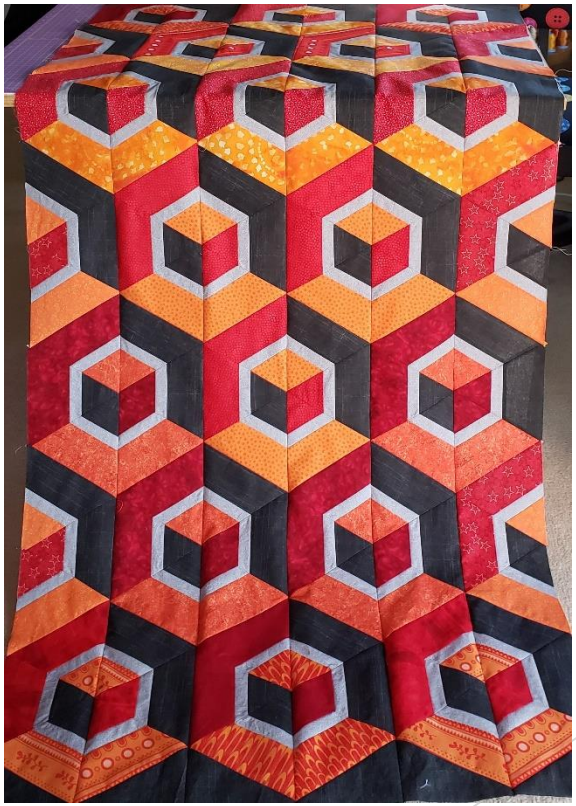
Sew in Quadrants - Works for On-Point Quilts Too!

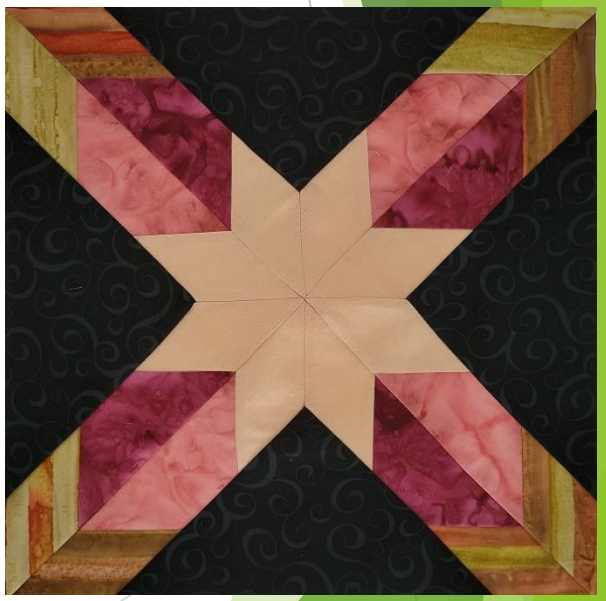












Take Your Time!

Getting perfect points does take more time. You need extra time:

- ✓ to wash and press fabric,
- ✓ to cut accurately
- ✓ to make a sample to ensure you are sewing an accurate ¼" seam,
- ✓ to plan your pressing to achieve nesting or to press seams open,
- ✓ to press every seam before sewing to the next unit
- ✓ to measure and trim subunits
- ✓ to pin each seam, and slow your sewing as you get close to pins
- ✓ to align all sides when joining blocks