



# STRIP PIECING

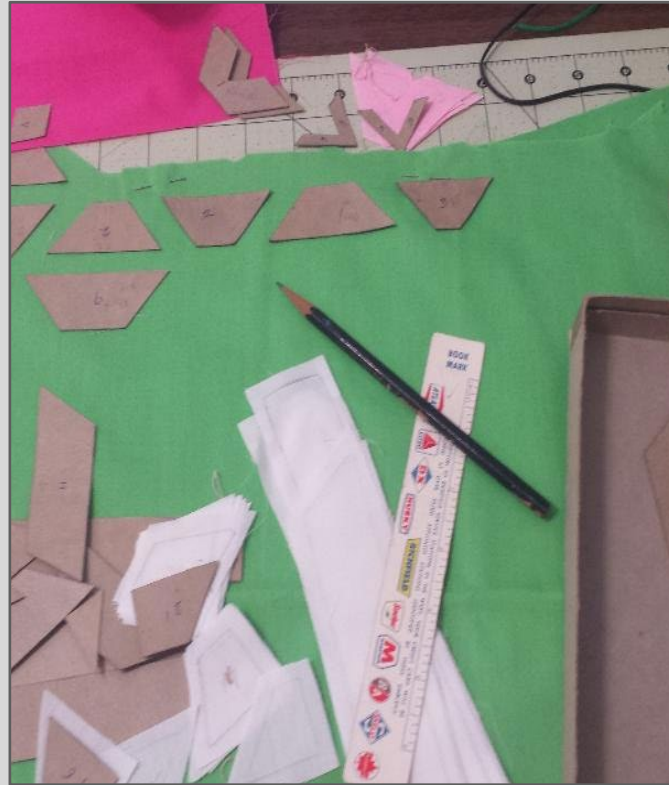
A Fast Piecing Technique

Patti Voyles

# Remember When?

01

We used  
templates to  
make our quilts



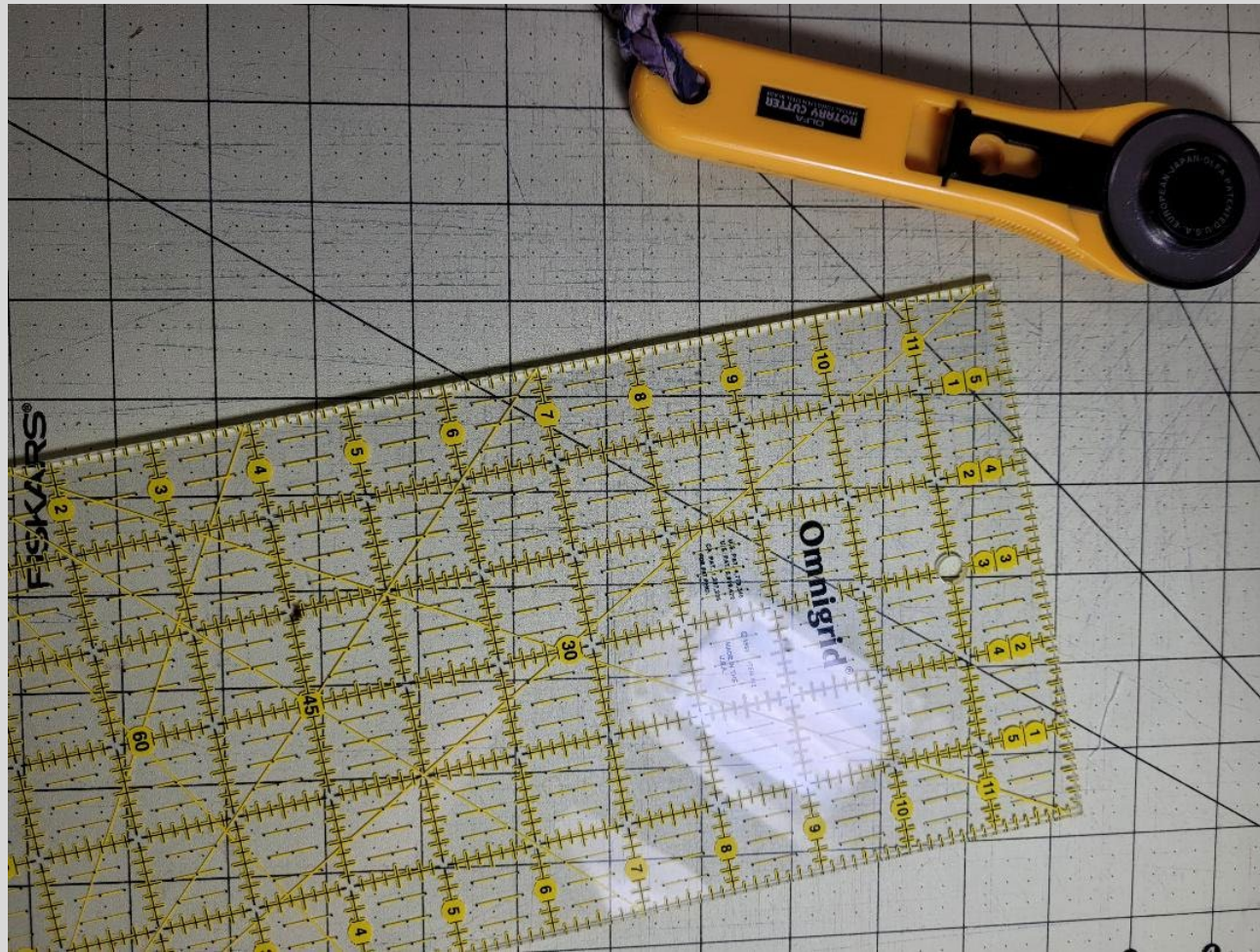
# Remember When?

02

The sewing machine came along?



# Remember When?



03

Someone created the rotary cutter, rulers and mats?

# Remember when...

- Sewing was a valued skill
- Quilts filled a need as well as being an artistic expression
- Demands on our time increased and the value of hand sewing was going into the past because of mass production and cheaper costs
- Home made anything was looked down on (1960-70's)
- Introduction of fabrics that were man made and marketed as better than cotton
- Women entered the work force.

# Strip Piecing Quilt Examples

This is a “Rail Fence” quilt.  
The use of long strips to  
make the 3-5 rows for the  
blocks is an easy example of  
this “quick” method.



# Strip Piecing Quilt Examples

Supersonic Jet Trail - In this sample, the quilt is made using a quarter circle and “L shape” templates as for a “Drunkards Path”. However the fabric used is strip pieced from a series of fabrics using a single strip of each color.

This quilt was created in a teacher training workshop class with Louisa L. Smith. Her book Strips ‘n Curves has many examples of ways to design from your “strata” or strip set.



# Strip Piecing Quilt Examples

Portions of a quilt can be created more quickly using strip sets to form blocks or portions of blocks for shapes such as nine patch (shown here), four patch, rectangles with two or more fabrics. This quilt is the “King’s Highway” from the Quilts from the Quiltmaker’s Gift book by Joanne Larsen Line.





# Strip Piecing Quilt Examples

Water Lily - This quilt is much easier to make than it appears. The strip sets for each petal are made from a series of different combinations of widths of the various colors. Two sets of each combination are made to allow for the mirror imaging. This quilt requires the use of a 9 degree ruler to cut out the shapes from the strip set. Designer: J Michelle Watts - Book: Round About Quilts



Speedy and more consistent ways to create what we had done by hand with a machine

- Strip Piecing - Sewing of fabrics together in long lengths then cutting to make blocks or portions of blocks
- Quick Flying Geese, half square triangles, quarter square triangles.
- Specialty rulers, templates

# When to use – patterns

- Patterns using this technique usually provide width of fabric and expected units for each set
- Measure your fabric to determine if it will meet this and adjust if needed.
- Check sewn/pressed strips for correct width
- If information is not in the pattern – length of shortest strip in set divided by unfinished size equals number of units.
- Accuracy is determined by
  - Cutting
  - Pinning
  - Sewing
  - How it is ironed

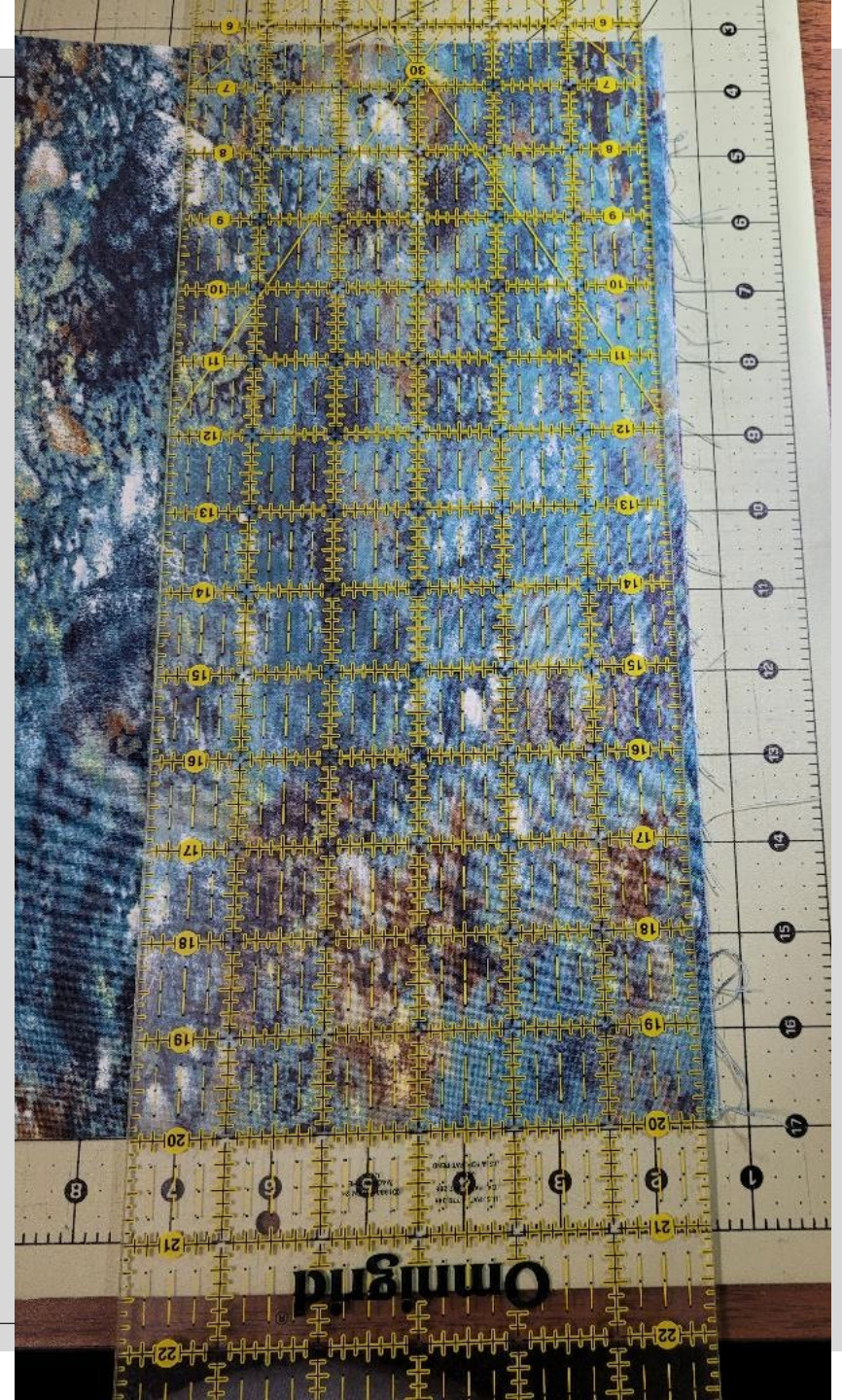
# Strip Piecing - Cutting

- IRON YOUR FABRIC! - Get the wrinkles out, they cause hiccups in the cutting and can throw the blocks out of shape
- Measure all fabric widths - shortest is the length you will be able to use in determining how many blocks/units can be cut
- Check your pattern for the number of blocks you will be creating - unfinished size divided into the actual width of fabric
- Be sure your rotary cutter blade is sharp. As it dulls, it can mangle the cut edge leaving mountains and valleys along the edge, distorting the cut piece and possibly affecting the sewing.

# Strip Piecing - Cutting

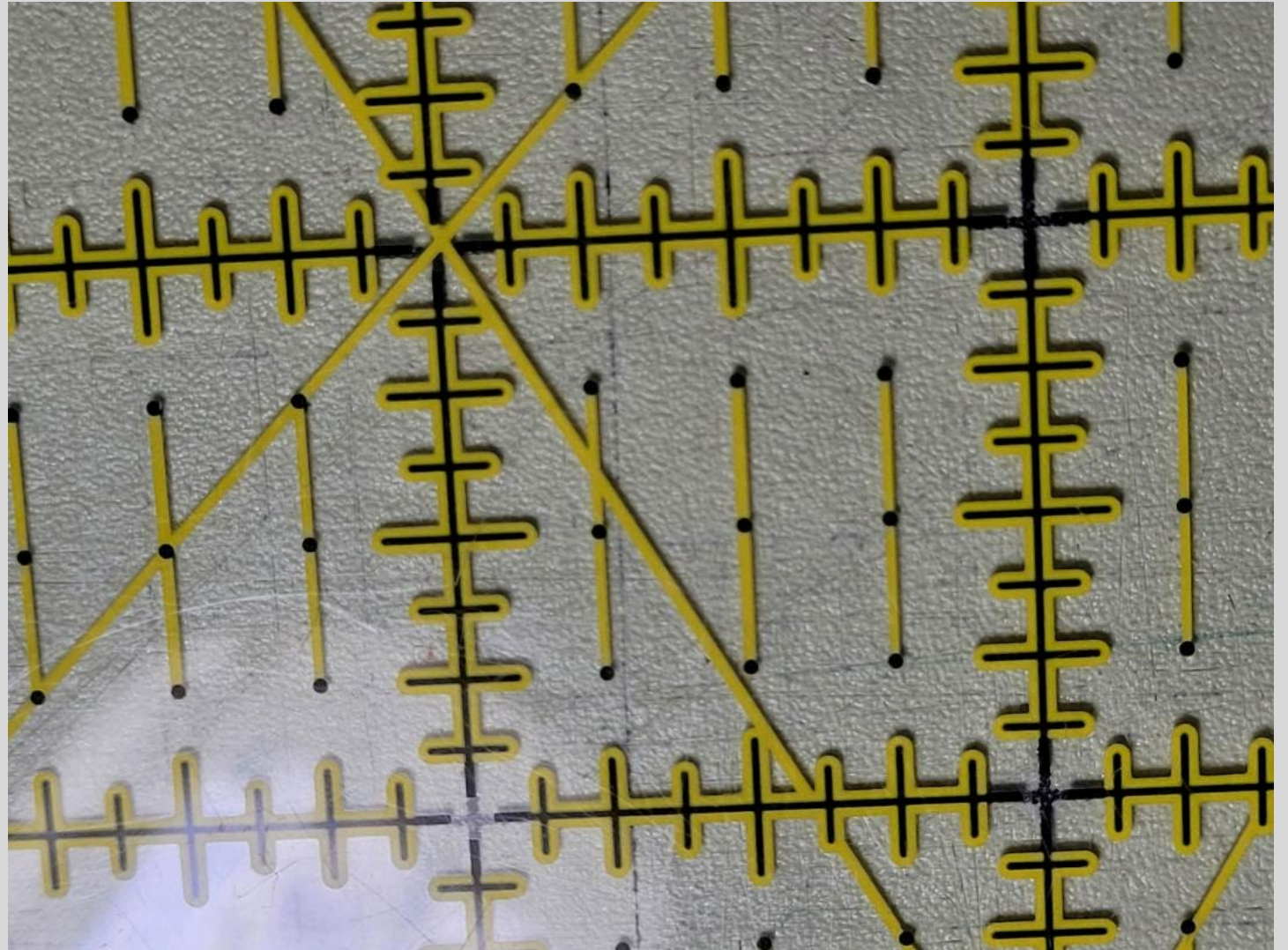


- Even the fold to lay flat and square up the raw edge. Selvages are aligned and moved horizontally. - To minimize bias in strip edges
- Measure from the fold with line on the ruler - to prevent “v” shaped strips
- Check to be sure that cuts are still squared anytime you move fabric
- If cutting many units from the strip set - consider using a wider ruler and cutting a larger number, then cutting that into smaller strips - it provides for better stability and straighter cuts



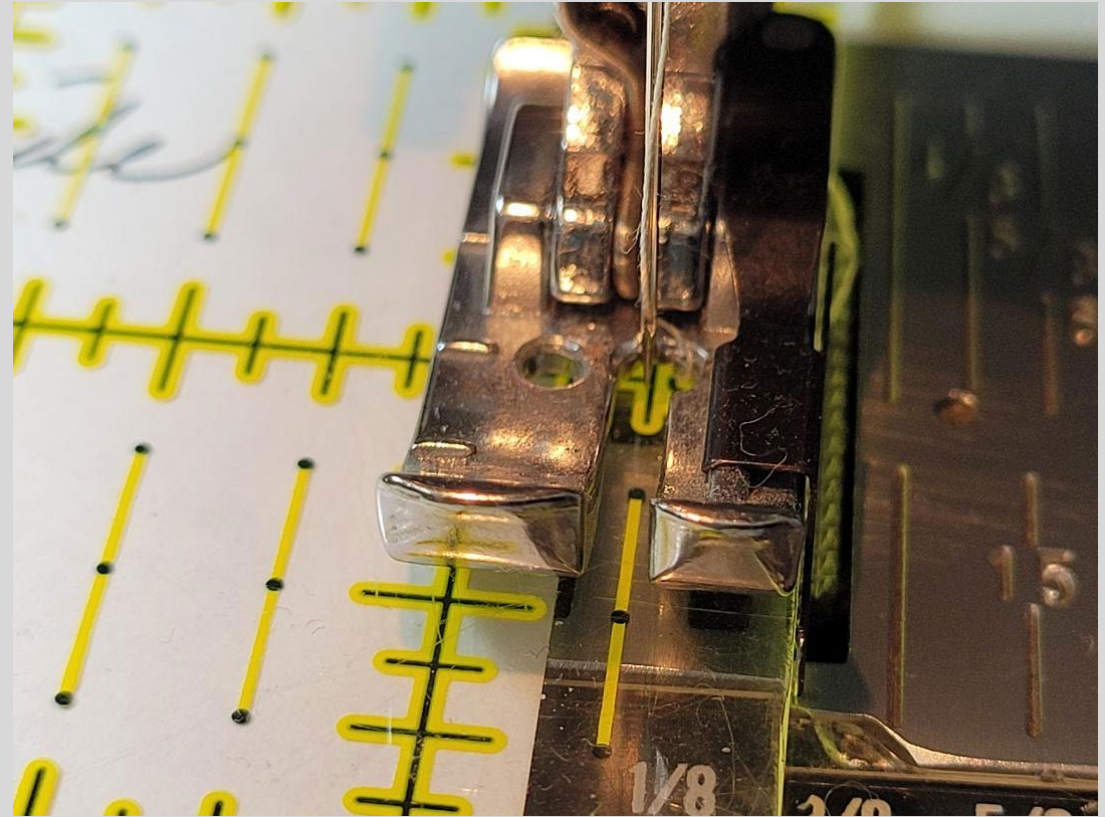
# Strip Piecing – Cutting

Are you measuring with the ruler or the cutting mat? Lines on cutting mats can distort for reasons such as width, heat/cool temperatures affecting the material it is made from, age and wear. Rulers are made from plexiglass, using fine lines that are checked for accuracy. If it needs to be accurate, use the ruler. If you are using the mat, check it against the ruler first for any distortion. This mat is close to accurate.



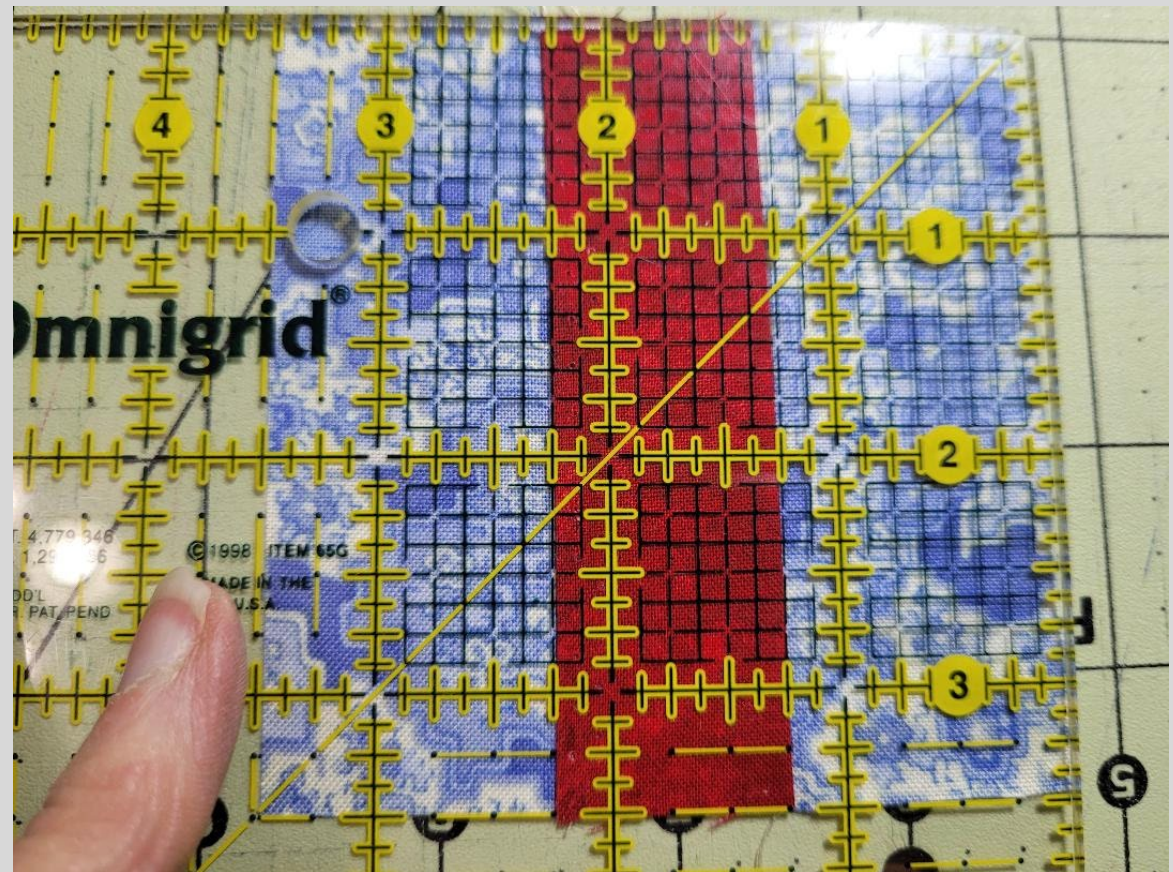
# Strip Piecing - Sewing

- Find out if you have a scant quarter inch foot or guide. Use ruler to be sure the fabric can lay flat to the guide and the needle will be going in next to the  $\frac{1}{4}$  mark towards the raw edge (yellow area). Prevents shrinkage of blocks/tops.
- Be sure your machine is sewing at 12 to inch. If you have a metric (1-4) the setting is 2.54 or 2.4 to 2.6
- Use a sharp needle for cotton fabric and thread that is 50 weight. Heavier thread will also cause the finished width to shorten across the quilt.



# Strip Piecing - Sewing

- Testing - make 3 strips of 3.5" by 1.5" fabrics. Sew them together. Press. Finished block is 3.5x3.5. This technique is good for group projects where blocks will be shared between quilters, or checking how you are sewing!





# Strip Piecing - Sewing

- Pin the pieces, especially if you are not using a walking foot. This can make all the difference in the consistency of your blocks/top, preventing the fabric from being “gathered” on the bottom side.
- Check to be sure your sections are the correct unfinished size before going to the next step (finished size + ½ inch)
- Issues in sewing:
  - Ends swerve in/out (be sure you don’t have seams wider or narrower) – a stiletto or other object to hold fabric alignment at start or finish of a strip/block/border
  - Uneven seam – use a guide – be careful not to push fabric into the guide or pull it away
  - Improper pressing (see next slide)
  - With width of fabric (WOF) strips, consider pinning – can be up to 8” apart – to prevent feed dogs from pulling the bottom piece faster, or use a walking foot



# Strip Piecing – Ironing (Pressing)

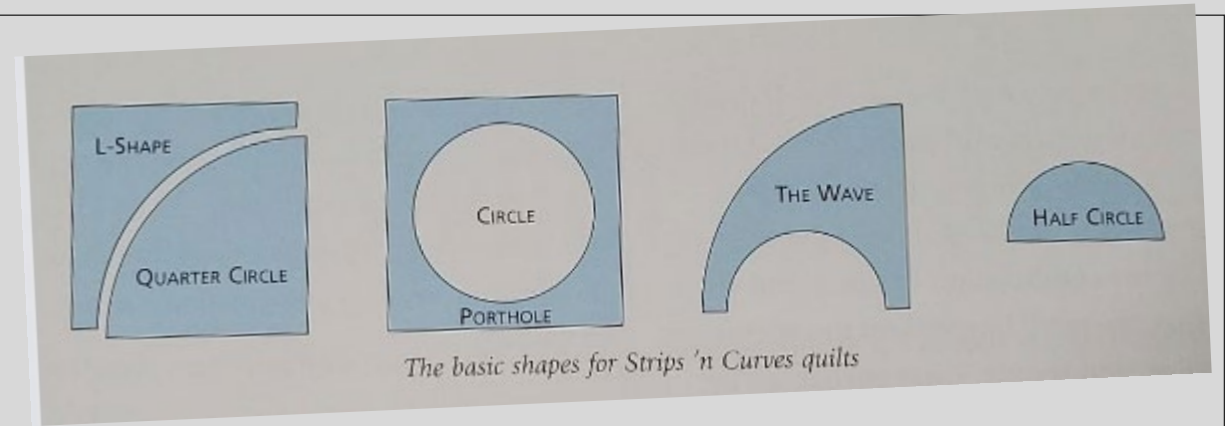
- Set your seams – press along sewn seam before opening – helps set thread into the fabric
- Use iron on single layer of fabric to make sure fabric on triple layer is flat and not overlapping the single one.
- Press, don't glide the iron which can twist fabric out of shape – greater if using steam or water spray



# Strip Piecing – Ironing (Pressing)

- If possible, use steam on whole pieces of fabric to remove wrinkles, but not on partial pieces/ portions of your blocks. It is easy to distort the material and can throw the sizing of the various parts/blocks in the quilt off.
- Check pattern for directions on seams – this normally allows them to “butt” against each other and helps next step be accurate. Also prevents having seams with 6 layers of fabric!
- Pressing both sides of the seam allowance to one side provides for a stronger finished product. Some patterns press open due to accumulation of too many layers in the quilt. Check your pattern!
- Use starch to help, especially if bias included. Remember if you are making diagonal cuts for diamonds or triangles or the types of strips in the circular quilt shown earlier, the result will have bias edges.

# Available Workshops



- Water Lily – Requires 9 degree ruler or template made from one. Book with this pattern is Round About Quilts by J. Michelle Watts. Other references for this style quilt are from Cheryl Phillips – Quilts without Corners and Wedge Works
- Supersonic Jet Trail – There are four templates used in the construction of these quilts, but Chapter 5 gives instructions for using template plastic to make your own. Strips 'n Curves by Louisa L. Smith
- King's Highway – Quilts from the Quiltmaker's Gift by Joanne Larsen Line

***Thank you! Slides will be available on the website.***