

Quilt Block Club #4: Churn Dash Block

Terms used in these instructions:

Block: The basic unit of design for a quilt. A single quilt will be made up of many blocks, which may be identical or use a variety of patterns. Blocks are generally, though not always, square.

Half square triangle (HST): A fabric square made up of two identical triangles, usually in contrasting colors.

RST Right Sides together (RST): Placing two pieces of fabric together so that the printed ("right") sides face one another

Sampler quilt: A quilt in which each block is different from all the others.

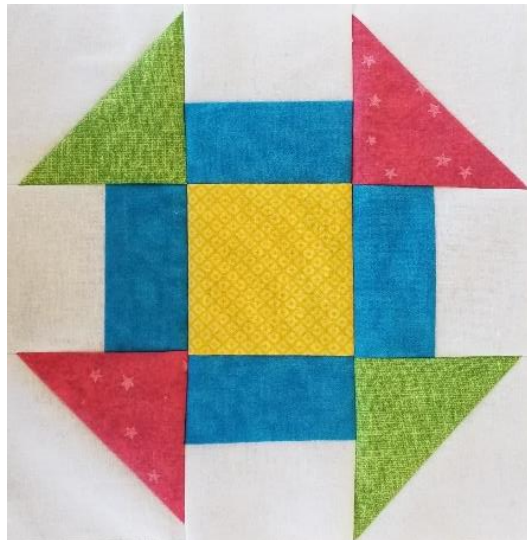
Seam allowance: The area between the fabric edge and the stitching line on two pieces of fabric being sewn together

Tools:

Sewing machine
Thread and bobbin
Scissors
Pins
Marking pen or tailors chalk
Ruler or straight edge
Seam ripper
Iron
Ironing board
Rotary cutter
Cut mat

Supplies:

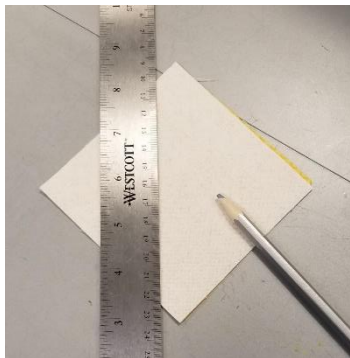
Yellow fabric: 1 square $3\frac{1}{2}$ "
Red fabric: 1 square $3\frac{7}{8}$ "
Green fabric: 1 square $3\frac{7}{8}$ "
Blue fabric: 1 strip 2 x 14"
White fabric: 1 strip 2 x 14"



Instructions

Make 4 half square triangles (HSTs)

1. Place one $3\frac{7}{8}$ " white square on top of your green square, right sides together (RST).
2. Using a ruler and marking pen, draw a straight line from one corner of the square to the opposite corner.



3. Sew two seams, one on either side of this line, $\frac{1}{4}$ " away.



4. Cut along the marked line.



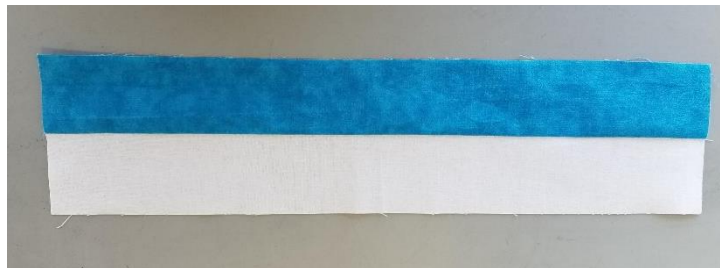
5. Using a hot iron, press seams flat to set them, then press toward the darker fabric.

6. Repeat steps 1-5 using red square and $3\frac{7}{8}$ " white square. You now have 4 HSTs! You can cut off any extra material to create a neater HST.

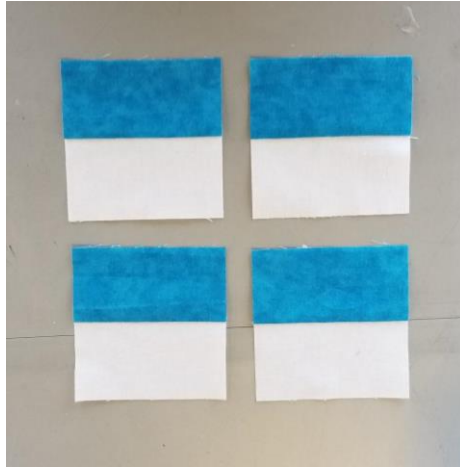


Sew and Cut Your Strips

1. Place your blue strip on top of your white strip, RST.
2. Sew strips together on the long side, leaving a $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowance.
3. Using a hot iron, press seams flat to set them, then press toward the blue fabric.



- Using a rotary cutter and cut mat, cut your strip into 4 equal 3.5" pieces



Create 3 Rows of 3

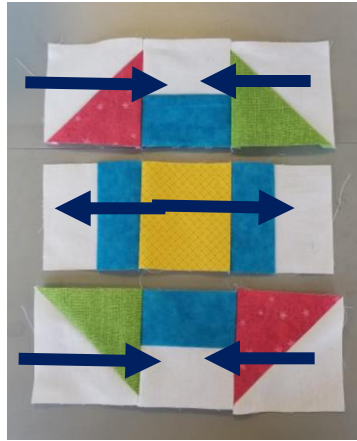
- Lay out your nine squares of fabric in three rows to create a churn dash pattern.



- Stitch the squares of each row together to create three rows of three squares each. Remember to sew with RST and leave a 1/4" seam allowance. Use pins or fabric clips if needed.

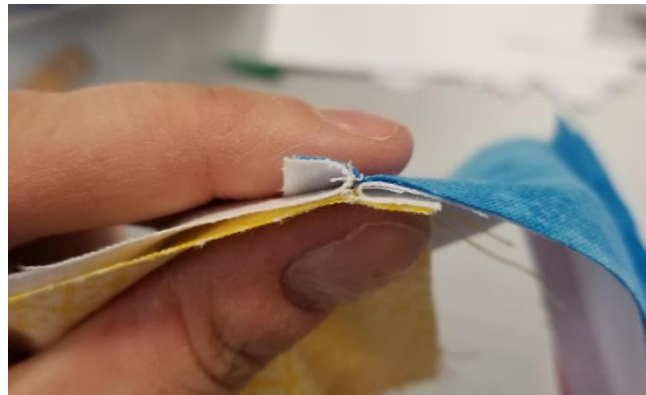


- Using a hot iron, press seams flat to set them, then press in the direction shown below. This will make it easier to match the strips up neatly later.



Join rows together

- Line up your top two rows, RST. Match up the vertical seams as precisely as possible. Since the seams have been pressed in opposite directions, they should “nest,” helping you to match them.



- Stitch the two rows together. Remember to sew with RST and leave a $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowance. Use pins or fabric clips if needed.
- Using a hot iron, press seams flat to set them, then press toward the darker fabric.

- Repeat steps 1-3 using the middle and bottom rows. You have finished your Churn Dash Block!



Notes

Why “churn dash”? Back when butter was churned by hand, the “dash” referred to the part of the butter churn that was pumped up and down. The dash usually consisted of a long pole with a wooden X attached to the end (see image at right). Some quilters felt that the X pattern made by the triangles in the quilt block resembled a churn dash...but the same block has also been called by many other names, including Monkey Wrench, Quail’s Nest, and Hole in the Barn Door.

Churn Dash is a 9-patch block, just like the Shoo Fly and Friendship Star blocks we made earlier this year. It originated in the first half of the 19th century, meaning quilters have been making churn dash blocks for at least 170 years! The block is often made in two colors: a white background and central square, and the blue, red and green parts of today’s block all made with the same fabric color.

