

How to...

FREE
information

Patchwork and Quilt

Introduction

Patchwork and Quilting are two distinct crafts but are often combined. Everyone can make a pillow, a wall-hanging or a full size bed quilt. It can be done by hand or on a sewing machine. This leaflet will give you an introduction to these popular styles of needlecraft and explain how easy it is to get started.

Equipment needed

Fabric

Plain and patterned fabrics are used to create the 'top layer' of patchwork. These include co-ordinating and themed designs together with different colourways of the same patterns. Backing fabric, usually light or medium weight cotton or calico, is used to back a quilt whether or not it is quilted.

Threads

Where various coloured fabrics are used either use different coloured threads in different sections or select a colour of thread to match the colour of the predominant fabric in the project. For a more contemporary project, or where the stitching is to form part of the design itself, use a contrasting thread. Specialist quilting thread will give more impact and greater durability than ordinary sewing thread.

Needles and pins

Pinning fabric together accurately is an important aspect of patchwork. Pins should be fine and rust free. Coloured headed pins show up well on large projects. Traditional patchwork needles have very sharp points and are shorter than ordinary hand-sewing needles. Choose the size of needle that will go comfortably through the fabric.

Scissors and cutting equipment

A rotary cutter, wide quilter's rule and a self-healing cutting mat can be used to cut fabric or templates for a variety of designs. Alternatively, individual pieces may be cut with dressmaking scissors.



Additional supplies

Wadding

Patchwork templates

Fabric markers – used for drawing around templates.

Quilter's Rule – draws a 1/4" seam

Hoops – used for holding fabric taut while quilting.

Frames – used for more complex patchwork techniques such as appliqué.

Sewing machine

Thimble

Freezer Paper

Patchwork and Quilting terms

Patchwork

This is the process of cutting shapes from different fabrics and sewing them together into a geometric design. You can use prints and / or plain fabrics, a number of colours or just two. The look may be traditional, contemporary, artistic or whimsical. Your personal choice of colour and pattern will make your quilt unique.

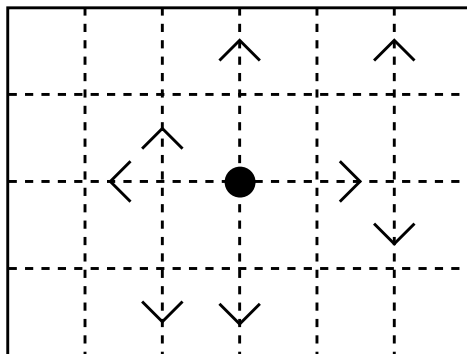
There are a number of traditional forms and designs of patchwork such as Log Cabin, Nine Patch Blocks, Star Quilts and Mariner's Compass. Create your own design or follow the instructions in one of the Patchwork or Quilt design books.

Most patchworkers now use a rotary cutter, plastic rulers and cutting mats to quickly and accurately cut many pieces at once. Alternatively you can trace and cut out individual pieces.

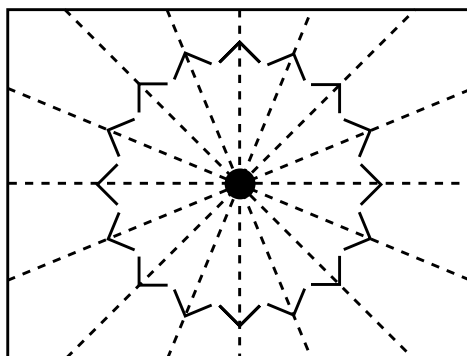
These pieces are then sewn together by hand or on the machine using a 1/4" seam allowance. You will be surprised how quickly your patchwork takes form!

Tacking techniques

Grid system



Radial system



Quilting

This is the process of securing together the quilt top, a filler (called wadding) and a backing fabric with a simple running stitch. Quilting permanently keeps the layers from separating and also adds the additional design element of texture. This can be done on the sewing machine or by hand.

The quilting stitch can be as simple or impressive, as you like. Straight lines over the surface will do the trick or you can add intertwining cables, vines or flower patterns. Again there are many books providing these patterns so you will never be held back by a lack of drawing skills!

Tacking (or basting)

There are several ways of holding the layers in place while quilting. Tacking stabilises the fabrics while sewing and prevents them from shifting or puckering. Traditionally, tacking consists of long hand-sewn stitches. Alternatively, you may want to try curved basting pins or a basting gun and tacks to make quick work of tacking the quilt together. See examples on previous page.

Wadding

Wadding is available in cotton, polyester and a blend of both. To begin with it is best to choose fairly thin wadding. For hand quilting you will get smaller, more even stitches and if you are machine quilting it will be much easier to manoeuvre the quilt under your needle.

Wholecloth quilts

These quilts that have no patchwork at all. They are made of two pieces of plain fabric, with wadding between them, that is completely covered in quilting designs. It is the thread and the stitching that gives the quilt its pattern.

Templates

Metal or plastic geometric shaped templates can be used to cut patterns. These normally include a seam allowance. They can also be used for the designs on wholecloth quilts.

Freezer paper

Freezer paper is a fairly heavy white paper i.e. dull paper on one side with a plastic coating (originally wax) on the other side, originally intended for the wrapping of meat for the freezer. However, the shiny side will stick to fabric when pressed with a hot iron. It will not harm the fabric nor leave a residue when it is easily peeled off. It is used by quilters for many things such as appliqué patterns and templates or for piecing blocks with odd angles and small sections. It provides both accuracy in piecing and stability to fabric which has been cut along the bias.



Appliqué

This is used to add realistic designs to your work. Animals, flowers, landscapes, words or imaginary shapes are cut and applied... appliquéd... onto your quilt. Again this can be done by hand or on the sewing machine.

Plan a simple animal design for a child or a bunch of flowers for an elegant heirloom quilt. Templates are a great way to create attractive designs if you are not too artistic.

Traditionally appliqué involves turning under the edges of the design and hand stitching it to the background using a blind stitch but today you also have the choice of using a bonding web to appliqué. Press the bonding web onto the reverse side of the fabric, draw and cut out the design finished size and simply iron it in place! Adding a satin stitch (a tight zig zag stitch) will further define the design and add to its longevity.

Panels

For a fast introduction to quilting you can purchase pre-printed panels in a variety of designs. Simply make a “sandwich” of a backing fabric, some wadding and the panel. Tack in place. You now have a ready to quilt project. Normally the quilting is used to accentuate the main elements of the print, very often an animal figure. When the quilting is finished you can add a pretty ruffle, sew on the cushion back and insert a pre-made pillow form.

Hints & tips

- Wash all the fabric you intend to use for your project before you start to cut or stitch it. This will ensure that the project will not distort and will remove any dressing in the fabric, making it easier to sew. Different fabrics shrink at different rates.
- Experiment first on some spare fabric before starting on your main project.
- Finish each piece of work by bringing all pieces of thread through to the back of the fabric, ensuring a neat finish on the front.

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www.hobbycraft.co.uk

for more ideas, information
and top tips