



Piece by Piece

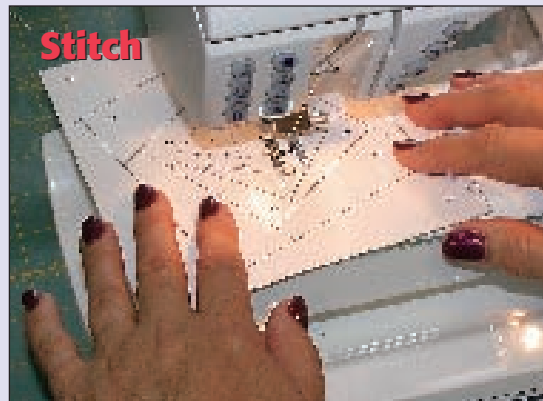
A Foundation Piecing Primer

Brenda Groelz continues her series to introduce beginners to the fun world of foundation piecing. Also known as paper piecing, this is a great method for piecing accurate points, odd angles and tiny pieces. Part 1 (McCall's Quick Quilts, November, 2003) covered the basics, trimming tips, and Brenda's favorite tools. Each article in this series will review the basics (for those just joining us) and will introduce a new topic.

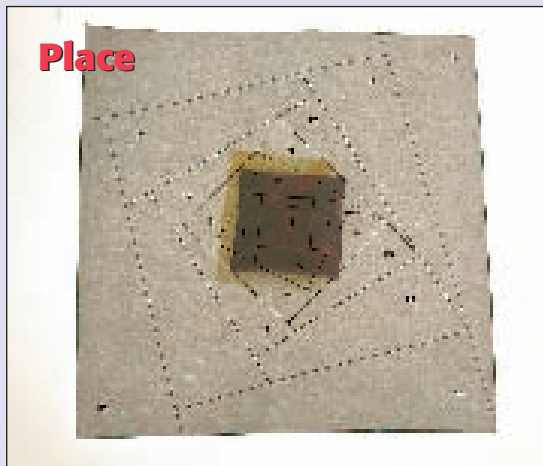
Once again, we explore the simplest form of foundation piecing, working with pre-cut, straight of grain strips of fabric, pieced on paper foundations. Read through the following steps and tips, then try your hand at assembly line piecing with Log Cabin Swirl, an exciting new wall quilt design, on the following pages.



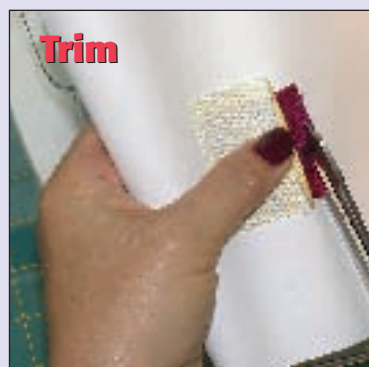
A Because foundations are printed the reverse of the final design, you can get confused about what fabric goes where. Using markers or colored pencils to color code each foundation keeps you straight. Or make just one guide by taping scraps of fabric in the proper position, and post it in your work area.



C Turn foundation over and stitch along the printed line between #1 and #2, through paper and fabrics, using a small stitch (15-18 stitches per inch), and starting and stopping 3-4 stitches beyond the printed seamline. Clip all threads front and back.



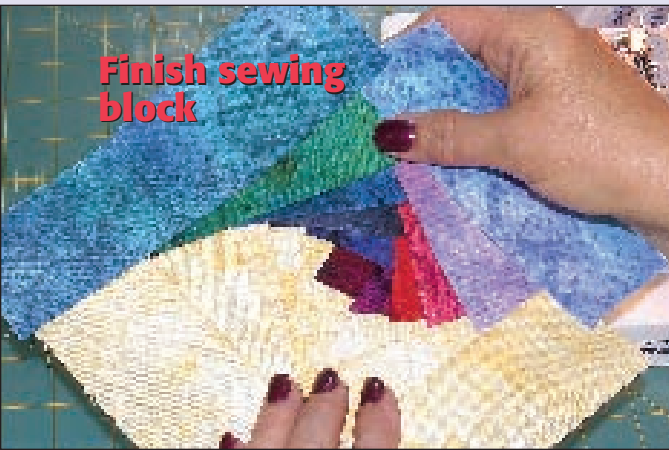
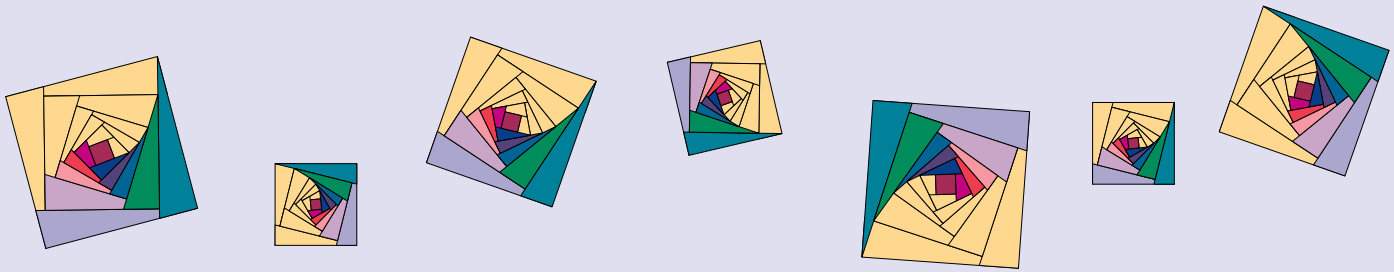
B Place #1 fabric on unprinted side of foundation, wrong side to the paper, centered behind #1 position, allowing approximately 1/4" seam allowance all around. Pin, glue or hold in place. Position #2 fabric right side to the paper, with approximately 1/4" extending into the #2 position. Hold with thumb and fingers or pin in place. (In photo, fabric #1 is burgundy and fabric #2 is gold.) **TIP:** The bulk of the new fabric should lie behind areas already covered. From now on, all pieces are added right side to the unprinted side of the paper foundation.



D Slip scissors between paper and fabric and trim seam allowance to approximately 1/4". Eyeball it, you'll be fine! To prevent show through, trim dark fabrics narrower than added light ones.

E Press seam allowance flat from fabric side, then flip fabric to cover #2 position and press again. **Note:** If you have photocopied the foundation, avoid the printed side. Toner will melt and transfer to your iron and fabrics.





Finish sewing block

F Place, stitch, trim and press remaining fabrics until you have finished piecing the entire block. Be sure to allow plenty of extra fabric beyond the edges of the paper foundation.



Trim finished block

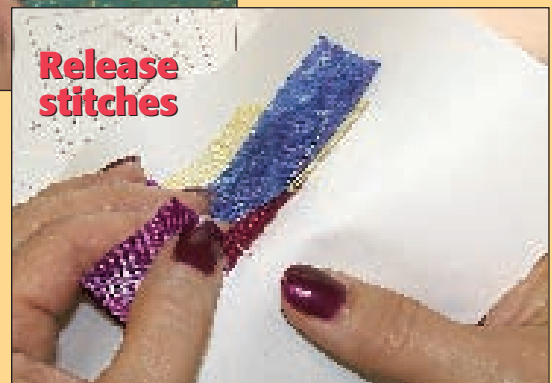
G **Note: Do not cut fabric along edge of paper!** Turn block, paper side up, and align $\frac{1}{4}$ " mark of ruler along edge of paper foundation. Rotary cut away extra fabric on all four sides, creating a perfect $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowance. Leave paper in!



Piece multiples



Clip threads



Release stitches

Assembly Line Piecing

When a quilt design calls for multiple, identical copies of a block (like you'll find in Log Cabin Swirl on page 22), it's more efficient to sew assembly-line style. Adding the same piece to each block, one after the other, makes the sewing go faster. You only have to make one fabric placement decision, and then sew it over and over again.

1 Brenda uses her sewing machine's portable acrylic table as a staging area. Place the next fabrics needed in a stack to the right of the needle area. Then they're

ready to grab as you stitch each foundation. Lift the presser foot, place the fabric, lower the presser foot, and stitch. Then lift the presser foot again, pull the stitched foundation away to the back, and place and stitch the next foundation.

2 After stitching the last one, clip the threads between each foundation by clipping at the surface of the fabric and paper. Stack foundations, trim and press each. It's much faster to do all your fabric placement, stitching, clipping, trimming, and pressing at once.

A Trimming Hint

Sometimes a previous seam will get in the way when you're trying to trim the $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowance. That's easily taken care of. Simply tear the paper away from the stitches before trimming.