

Paper Piecing Without the Paper

General Instructions

Instead of paper I use a lightweight Pellon interfacing which remains with the fabric pieces. The advantages of leaving the Pellon in are two fold. First, it is a good stabilizer for the block, etc. and second it allows you to use pieces of fabric without regard to either the grain or bias of the fabric.

Begin by using a No. 2 lead pencil and ruler to trace the pattern onto the Pellon. There is no need to transfer either the numbers or letters of each pattern piece as the paper being copied is already marked for your reference when stitching. Be sure to allow at least a 1/4" seam allowance on the outside edge of pattern being traced. When tracing go over a line a couple of times so that you have a nice dark line and one that you can see on the reverse side of the Pellon. It will help if you use either a clipboard to hold the two pieces or masking tape the pieces to a smooth, hard surface.

Choose your fabrics and with the Pellon cut each piece to generously fit each numbered piece in the pattern. No need to worry about reversing or mirror image. Place fabric right side up on the drawn side of the Pellon. *(If you know that you will be completing multiples of the same pattern it is much easier to make either a paper or plastic template of each piece in the pattern. This will enable you to cut multiple pieces all at once.)*

After each piece making up the pattern has had the fabric cut you begin sewing. And here is the beauty and simplicity of this piecing. It is merely "sew by number". With the right side of the first piece of fabric placed over the #1, find the sewing line between #1 and #2. The fabric piece for #2 is placed right side down over #1 to be sewn in place. The fabric pieces will be placed on the Pellon on the side drawn with pencil. When you sew, turn the Pellon over and stitch (by hand or machine) on the line beginning and ending with a couple stitches beyond the end of the stitching line. It's your choice whether or not you trim the sewn seam. Turn the Pellon back to right side. Flip the #2 piece over so it now is right side up and finger press the seam. With longer seams you may want to press with a medium hot iron. (too hot of an iron will misshape the Pellon) The next step takes the fabric piece for the #3 and places it right side down on #2 and proceed in the same manner with each continuing number. Finger pressing or pressing with an iron will ensure your piece stays nice and flat with no "puffy" pieces. On really small pieces I will use a liquid starch on the fabric prior to cutting as it seems to help the fabric retain its shape prior to sewing.

If machine stitching there is no need to bring the stitch length up to 18 or 20 as you will not be pulling out paper after sewing - a 10 - 12 stitch is just fine! (and much easier to "pull out" for any goofs! The Pellon is much more forgiving than the paper too!) You do not need to backstitch any of your stitching.

When piecing completed cut the finished block so it has a 1/4" seam on all sides. If you have a block which has two or three sections, sew the sections together being careful to maintain the 1/4" seam. When finished -- press the block. Here you may also want to use a liquid starch on the finished block.

Happy Sewing! Claire Amick :o)