



Pattern of the Month - September 2013

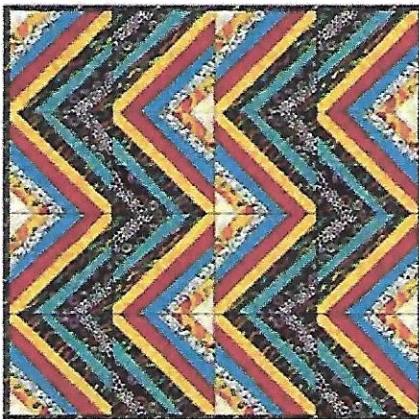
by Evelyn George
"Scrappy, Strippy Fun"

Oh, how those scraps accumulate! Here are some ideas for quick, strippy quilt blocks that can be made any size you like, to use up miles and miles of those longer strips, and other scraps, too! Also, use up those leftover bobbins and partial spools of thread -- they're perfect for scrap quilts.

FOUNDATION-BASED

Cut squares of muslin or other light-colored cotton fabric, (preferably prewashed and starched) and use them as foundations on which to sew the strips. This is a great place to use up leftover, old, faded, even recycled fabric for the squares, because it gets covered up. Just be sure it is lightweight, pressed, and clean. Seven to ten inches is a good size range for foundation squares. Cut them about an inch bigger than you want the finished blocks; they usually need a little squaring up after the strips are sewn on.

Instead of fabric, paper squares can be used. Parchment types are easy to remove. But some kinds of paper shrink when steam ironed—test first by measuring a square before and after steaming. Use a shorter than normal stitch length, as you would for other paper piecing, to withstand the stress of pulling the paper off. It's usually best to remove paper after the blocks are trimmed to size and seamed together. It does take extra time to remove the paper, but the result is a lighter weight quilt.



Center stripe

To unify assorted scrappy colors, start each block with a center stripe of the same color—for example, red, yellow, black, white, or other accent color. Cut long strips of your chosen color, about 1-1½" wide, and lay diagonally across the center of the foundation square. Add strips to one side with the stitch and flip method. Strips can be of different widths, even wider at one end than the other, or ←they could be the same width and added in the same sequence on each block. If strips are uneven, you can either straighten them first with the rotary cutter, or just lay them out, sew a straight seam (*approx.* ¼"), then trim with scissors. Press each seam before adding the next strip. When you get near the corner, choose a wider

scrap or a leftover triangle, to completely cover the corner. (Try not to have any seams too close to the corners of the blocks, as it makes them too bulky.) When one side is filled, turn the block around and fill in the other half. You can make one half light and the other dark, use a set color scheme, or just be scrappy. Use what you have available, and use it up!

Random Strippy

Use any color, any width, any style, in random order, → to fill the foundation. Almost anything goes, and it's fun, and quick! Great for charity quilts, too. Good bee project—have everyone bring their leftover strips; mix them up, and go to work. Blocks all get trimmed to the same size, so they all fit together. Add borders, or not. An all-over meander is perfect for the quilting.





Center square To make a design resembling a log cabin quilt, a special strip set is used to make center strips with a square in the middle. These directions are for use on an $8\frac{1}{2}$ " foundation square (which has a 12" diagonal). Start the strip set with a $1\frac{1}{2}$ " x WOF strip of red (or other accent color; this will become the *center squares*). Add a $6\frac{1}{2}$ " x WOF *dark* strip on one long side and a $6\frac{1}{2}$ " x WOF *light* strip on the other. Press seams in one direction and cut crosswise into $1\frac{1}{2}$ " slices. (One of these strip sets yields about 25 slices; make one strip set for every 25 of blocks in your quilt.) Use each slice as the diagonal center strip on an $8\frac{1}{2}$ " foundation square, centering the red square, and adding dark strips to one half of the block and light strips to the other. These blocks can be arranged

like log cabins,[†] with many possible layouts. For an extra accent, use red for the corner triangles, too. This one is really fun!

(Tip: For a larger or smaller block, measure the diagonal of your foundation square, add 1", then divide the total in half, and that is how wide to cut the light and dark WOF strips for the strip set. Adding the $1\frac{1}{2}$ " red strip in the middle will make the sliced pieces long enough to easily cover the corners.)

DIRECT PIECING You can skip the foundation and sew strips directly together. Keep your square ruler handy to check whether your block is getting big enough to square up to the size you have chosen. Press well before squaring up, and remember to leave seam allowances when you trim the blocks.

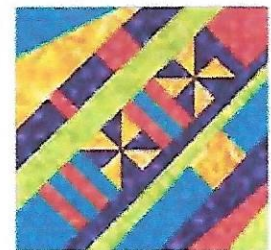
Very Small Pieces These can be used in strip quilts, too. Piece several short strips together, either lengthwise or crosswise, until you have a strip long enough to use. Press well before you incorporate it into your block, and it is best to have a plain strip on either side of it, to minimize the bulk. When squaring up the block, try not to have any seams too close to the edges or corners, so you won't have to deal with those when sewing the blocks together.

Leftover Pieced Units (triangle squares, small 4-patches, pinwheels, etc.)



If you have lots of trimmed-off triangles of different sizes, combine similar sized ones to make various little blocks, like pinwheels. These can be sewn together into strips, or add plain squares or strips to make them long enough. Match seams if you can, but don't worry if you can't, or if points get cut off or if the units come out odd-shaped (think "playful"). No foundation needed—just join strips and pieces, combining sections and more strips to make bigger pieces, until it's big enough to square up to your

block size. Just remember to stitch straight and then trim off what sticks out. These leftovers are all great in a scrappy strip quilt (or maybe it's more like a crazy quilt) — and then you don't have to think of another way to use them up!



I should warn you, scrappy, strippy blocks are addicting, because it's so much fun to see how each one comes out, and fun arranging them into a quilt. And it's really satisfying to see your scraps turn into something beautiful! So one of these days, dump out your scrap drawer/bag/box onto the table and just start sewing some strippy blocks. The size of your scrap pile will help you decide what size quilt(s) to make—but don't be surprised if you find yourself rummaging through your stash of fat quarters for just the right accent color to make a happy quilt—and it's not my fault if you have to make a quick run to the quilt shop for "just one more" of this or that color that makes it all sing!

--Happy Scrappy Quilting! And I hope you'll bring your strippy quilts for show and tell!