



## Pattern of the Month - February 2016

By Evelyn George

### Heart Strings

*Choose some pretty scraps to piece the "string" panel, then use this easy reverse applique technique to make the Heart Strings block. There is a bonus block you can also make with the heart that is cut out --use the two blocks in the same quilt, or use in different projects. Directions are given for a 12" Heart Strings Pillow, but you can make blocks any size you want, for a quilt or other project.*



**String Panel:** Cut 6 to 8 strips about 1" to 1½" wide x about 8" from assorted Valentine prints or other fabrics of your choice. Hint: if your background square is *dark*, choose lighter prints for the String Panel; if your background is *light*, choose darker prints for the String Panel. Piece strips together with ¼" seams to make a String Panel. Press very flat, using steam.

**Background:** *(Even though this square of fabric, after the heart is cut out of it, will be laid on top of the String Panel before stitching, we are calling it the background because that's the way it will appear when done!)*

Cut a Background square about 1" larger than pillow form (for 12" pillow cut a 13" square.)

Also cut a square for back of pillow, same size as front.

*OR, for a quilt, you could cut squares and use hearts any size you choose; if you make smaller hearts, scale down the size of the strings, too.*

Make a heart pattern by folding an 8" square of paper in half. Draw a nice, fat half of a heart and cut it out, smoothing any irregularities while you cut. Unfold and view your heart. If it's not quite what you want, make another one, until you have one you really like, and it is a good size for your background square. *(If necessary, add more strings to your pieced panel so it is bigger than the heart.)*

Trace around heart pattern on paper side of Wonder Under ® or other paper-backed fusible. Freehand draw another heart inside first one, keeping the line about ½" away from first line (it doesn't have to be perfect). Draw a third heart outside first one, also keeping the line ½" away from original one. You now have 3 concentric hearts drawn on your paper-backed fusible. Cut out, cutting on only the inner and outer lines, making a 1" wide heart-shaped paper frame. DO NOT cut on the original line, YET!

Decide if you want the heart oriented straight or on-point. Fold square of Background fabric in half (either straight or diagonally), pressing to mark center. Place heart-shaped paper frame, fusible side down, on wrong side of fabric. → Center it visually, using fold as a guide. Fuse in place according to package directions. Cool. NOW cut out heart on original line as smoothly as you can, keeping both inner and outer sections intact. The heart-shaped window will be used to frame your String Panel to make the Heart Strings Block, and the cut-out heart can be fused onto another project.



***Bonus Block:** The heart shape that was removed can be fused onto another square, to make a different block, perhaps for back of pillow, or for another project. Suggestion: leave the paper on until you are ready to use it, to avoid ironing mishaps with the fusible.*

#### **Making the applique:**

Remove paper around heart-shaped opening in Background square; place square, fusible side down, on top of string pieced panel, making sure there is at least 1 inch of string panel extending under edges of opening all around. It's best to do this on an applique pressing sheet or piece of parchment paper to protect your ironing surface. Fuse with hot steam iron (for Wonder Under), or as directed, for another brand. Cool. Turn to wrong side and carefully trim off excess of string panel that extends beyond fused area.

On right side of block, stitch all around heart, covering raw edges of heart-shaped window with zigzag, satin stitch or other decorative stitch in matching or contrasting thread.

#### **Finishing the Pillow:**

Optional quilting: The pillow front can be embellished with a little quilting, if you wish. Baste pillow front to a square of batting the same size. Pin as needed and add machine or hand quilting as desired. I used chalk to outline a heart about 1" outside the string pieced one (avoiding the fused area), and hand-stitched it with a large running stitch through front and batting, in cream colored pearl cotton, before sewing the pillow front to the back. Even a little quilting adds substance, texture and style to the finished pillow.

Trim pillow front and back to same size, to fit your pillow form plus  $\frac{1}{2}$ " seam allowances (13" square, for a 12" pillow insert). Place right sides together and sew side and top edges together, leaving bottom edge open. Turn right side out and press, folding seam allowances to inside at opening. Insert pillow, pin edges together and stitch closed by hand.