



“Scrapbuster Block”
9 ½ inches unfinished

This is not a pattern, but a technique -- a really stress-free way to use up a big bunch of small scraps! Basically, you sew scraps together, trim as you go, and keep adding until you have a patch big enough to square up to your chosen size, for example, 9 ½” square.

You do have a container of scraps somewhere, don't you? Most anything will work for this technique: very small trimmings, extra squares, strips of any length, triangle squares or other leftover units, bits and pieces of fabric too nice to throw away, etc. (I have unsorted containers full of small leftovers.)

We are suggesting only a few rules:

- Use 100% cotton, quilting weight scraps
- Use normal stitch length (small enough to be secure)
- Use no foundation
- First sew (in a straight line), then trim edges even

Scrapbuster Technique

(Note: In case your scraps are all neatly pressed, folded and stacked, you might want to revise this technique!)

Dump out a bunch of loose scraps onto your table next to the sewing machine. Push the largest pieces to the far side, and the smallest pieces near the machine. (Don't spend a lot of time on this; you'll probably toss the pile every now and then!) Pick up pieces randomly from the pile as you go. The more variety of colors and patterns, the better a scrappy quilt looks!

Start by picking up any 2 pieces approximately the same length on one side. Sew together, with approximately ¼” seam allowance. Don't trim yet, just pick up the next 2 pieces and continue chain sewing until you have a bunch of “twosies.”

Cut the “twosies” apart. Now trim off any uneven seams, and take them to the ironing board. Press however the seams want to go.

Back to the machine: If any “twosies” are close to the same size, sew them together into “foursies”. Seams do NOT have to match, and it's OK if points get cut off! Chain stitch a bunch, then cut them apart, trim the edges, press.

Another method is to sew a series of small pieces onto one side of a larger piece (like a strip). Put the strip under the machine, place a small piece on it, lining up edges on your right. Stitch together. Continue stitching more small pieces to the strip, until you come to the end of the strip (or until you decide that's enough of that.) Cut apart, trim, press. Keep adding on and building to make your scrappy pieces bigger. It's a good idea to use larger pieces around the outer edges. (Some gets trimmed off.)

Continue combining scraps and pieced sections of similar widths, with the goal of creating a scrappy piece large enough to trim down to a 9 ½” square. If you have a 9 ½” square ruler, trim around it. Or, use the lines on your cutting mat to trim blocks to a 9 ½” square. If you need just a bit more to fill in a corner, you could add a triangle.

You could also work crazy quilt fashion, or add strips around in log cabin style.

The best method is to try a few ideas and then see what your particular pile of scraps suggests.

Get creative, keep sewing, and before you know it, you'll have a stack of blocks instead of a pile of scraps!

