

August 2021 Block of the Month

Square in a Square in a Square in a Square

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As Quilters, how many of us have a favorite technique, or two or three, that we use much of the time? We might even avoid some skills because they are too confusing, or time-consuming. Or if we just change a pattern a teeny, little bit, we can do it another way—with a technique we think is easier.

I have to admit I do that too, but I've also been willing to learn whatever new technique will expand my skill set to create the next quilt design that comes into my head.

This month's design is truly easiest to make with Paper Piecing. You know, the upside down and backwards sew-it-to-paper method that works quite perfectly for a design with geometric straight lines and non-standard size pieces. You get to rough-cut all the pieces larger than necessary, then trim to perfection to achieve precision points and corners.

I chose to work with a colorful print fabric, and three tone-on-tones that coordinate with it. The always useful focus fabric method. The fabrics are arranged in four different progressions in four blocks, so they come together nicely at the corners to form another secondary square. These secondary patterns are one of the coolest things about many traditional patterns. You can also make just two fabric arrangements to keep the whole over-all pattern simpler, or even go scrappy with four values from light to medium-light, to medium-dark, to dark.

The pattern on the following pages is full-size for a 6" block, once you add an outer seam allowance. Included are rough-cut sizes for each "square," and the numbered order for sewing it all together.



Full-size pattern for 6" finished block

Add quarter inch seam allowance to this drawing, before starting to sew fabric pieces in place.

If you want to make a bigger block to start with, enlarge basic pattern to the desired size, THEN add a quarter inch seam all around.

12" block: enlarge 200% 9" block: enlarge 150% 8" block: enlarge 134%

Rough-cut sizes for pieces for each 6" block:

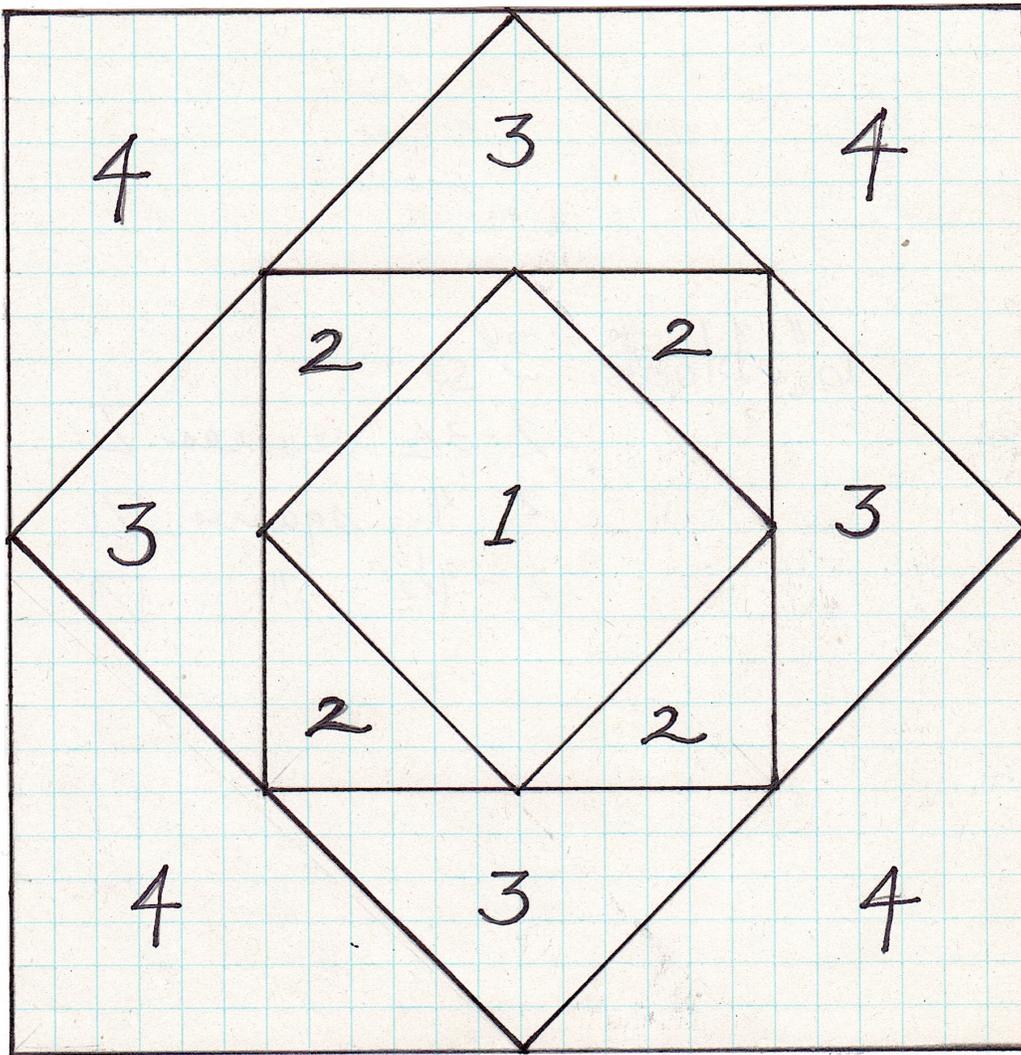
1. Center square: 1 - 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ " to 3" square
2. Next square: 2 - 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ " squares, cut into 4 half-square triangles
3. Third square out: cut 2 - 4" squares, cut into 4 half-square triangles
4. Fourth square out: cut 2 - 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ " squares, cut into 4 half-square triangles

Start with the center square, and sew all four #2 pieces to it. I like to sew two at a time, across from each other. As you sew each one, you can hold it or pin it to the blank side of the paper, so you can see the stitching lines to follow on the other side. This takes a bit of practice, but I expect there are good demo videos on line. As you add each piece, finger press it into place, AWAY from the center.

Using the same methods, attach ALL the #3 Pieces on all four sides, and finger press them away from the center. At any point, you can trim away excess fabric. Be careful to NOT CUT any pieces across the center. Finally add the #4 pieces, trim any seam excess, and press flat.

Trim your block to the correct finished size, 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ " or larger. Finally, carefully tear away the backing paper along the stitching lines, which are now working as perforations to make the tearing easier.





Full-size
6"
Pattern
Make
1 Copy
per
needed
Block

