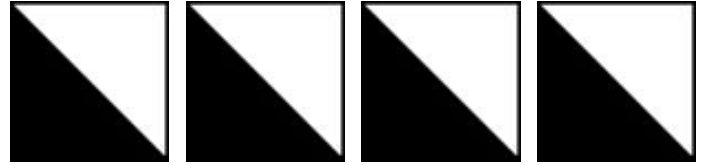


Sophie's Tips For Half-Square Triangle Units



Here's my list of the ways I make half-square triangle units (HST) plus one I haven't yet tried, the quilt-math you need to make them, and some reasons why you might want to use each technique . . . or not.

In the following descriptions, UNIT size includes seam allowances and FINISHED size does not include seam allowances and refers to the size the half-square triangle will be when it is sewn into a quilt.

Note: Full size images used here are available in my Flickr photoset, Triangle Squares – How Many Ways, at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/sophiejunction/sets/72157632277441923/with/8285039589/>

One Triangle at a Time

1. Cut individual triangles by:
 - Cut a square $\frac{7}{8}$ -inch larger than finished size and cutting it in half diagonally, or
 - Using a specialty ruler or
 - Using a die-cutting machine.

Pair triangles and sew together to form a triangle square.

USE this method when you want to make unique combinations for scrappy quilts and if you are comfortable working with bias edges.



One Triangle Square (HST unit) at a Time

2. Cut two squares that are the SAME size as your desired UNIT size
 - Stack the two fabric squares with right sides together
 - Draw a line diagonally from corner to corner on the top square
 - Sew ON the drawn line
 - Trim $\frac{1}{4}$ inch from the seam (on the side you don't want to keep)
 - Sew the small triangles together for a smaller bonus square.

USE this method if you only need one HST unit or if you want to control the direction of stripes and other one-way fabric designs.

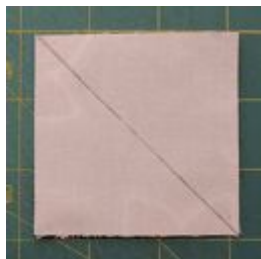


Two (HST units) at a Time

3. Cut two squares that are 7/8-inch larger than your desired FINISHED size

- Stack the two fabric squares with right sides together
- Draw a line diagonally from corner to corner on the top square
- Sew on each side of the drawn line, 1/4-inch away from the line
- Cut on the line to create two HST units.

USE this method if you want to avoid techniques that require cutting/sewing bias edges.



ROUNDING UP

Some quilters like to round the 7/8-inch up to an easy-to-add full inch and square up and square-up and trim the HST units.

USE this variation if you don't want to have to cut and sew perfectly.

USING AN IRON INSTEAD OF A PEN

Instead of drawing the line, use your iron to PRESS a crease (line) diagonally across the light/top square, stack your squares and proceed as above.

USE this variation if you don't want to mark your fabrics.

CUT FIRST SEW LATER

I often cut the stacked fabrics diagonally from corner to corner, then sew the triangle pairs together.

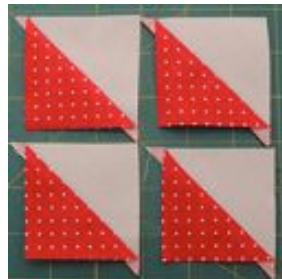
USE this variation if you like to use a 1/4-inch foot with an edge guide and are comfortable sewing bias edges.



Four Triangle Squares (HST units) from Two Squares

4. Calculate the size of large squares by dividing your desired UNIT size by .64 and round up to something measurable. For example, if you want a 2" finished size triangle square, take 2.5 (the unit size) and divide by .64 for 3.9 inches, which I rounded up to cut two 4-inch squares.

- Stack the two fabric squares with right sides together
- Sew around the outside edges of the square
- Cut diagonally from corner to corner in both directions to create 4 units
- Press and square up to the correct size.

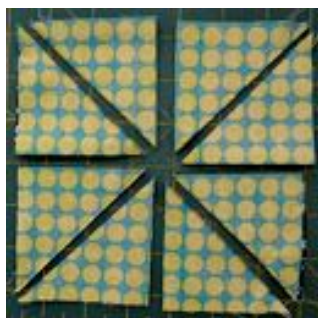
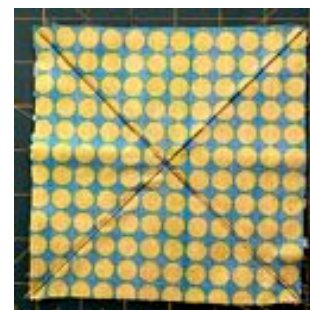


WARNING: This method results in HST units with bias on all four sides. USE this method ONLY if you are VERY comfortable working with bias edges.

Eight (HST units) at a Time

5. This is a variation of the two-at-a-time method described above (number 3) using larger squares which are twice as large: take the final size + 7/8-inch and then double it. For 2-inch finished size units, you would start with squares which measure 5 3/4-inches. (Or you might round up to 6-inches and square up and trim to size at the end.)

- Stack the two fabric squares with right sides together
- Draw two lines diagonally from corner to corner on the top square (or press creases with an iron)
- Sew on each side of the drawn line or crease, 1/4-inch away from the line
- Cut the large square into quarters (cutting through the center vertically and horizontally and on the lines to create eight HST units.

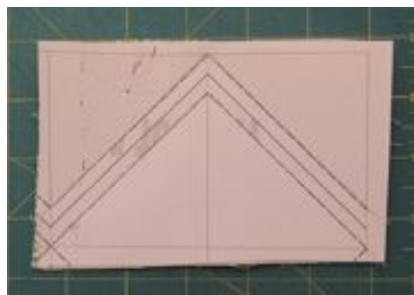


USE this method if you want to avoid techniques that require cutting/sewing bias edges and/or need 8 matching HST units.

Using Printed Foundations to Make Triangle Squares

6. Printed paper and fabric foundations for making HST units are available commercially as strips or sheets from several sources and are also available as free downloads. This example was downloaded from:
<http://www.quiltingandwhatnot.ca/Half-Square-Triangle.html>

- Cut the sheet to a size appropriate for the number of triangle squares
- Cut two pieces of fabric to the same size as your paper foundation
- Use a smaller stitch length and stitch through the stack of foundation and fabric
- Cut along all solid lines to create HST units.



USE this method if you need to make MANY matching HST units beginning with large pieces of fabric or if you are working with pre-cut strips. See the Thangles website to see how this technique works with their strip-based product:
<http://www.thangles.com/howtheywork.html>

Many HST Units from Bias Strips

7. Create a striped fabric square from bias strips cut as wide as your desired UNIT size., alternating your two fabrics, then starting at one corner, cut HST unit squares.

USE this method if you need to make MANY HST units from two fabrics, are comfortable working with bias edges and don't like removing paper foundations.

I haven't yet tried this method, but found a good tutorial on Lois Arnold's blog, at
<http://loisarnold.blogspot.com/2012/03/half-square-triangle-tutorial-bias.html>