



## A Word About Pinning

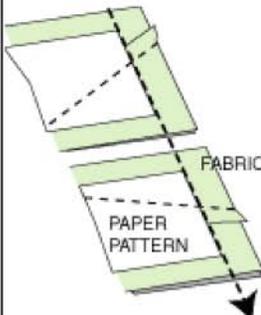
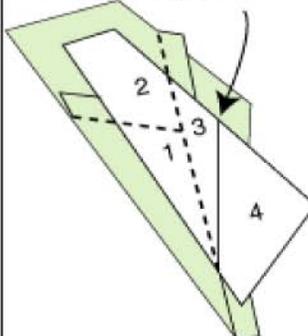
### for Paper Piecing and Machine Curved Piecing

Have any trouble with "growing" blocks or matching points? The secret is in the pinning. The pinning method below works well for both curved piecing and paper piecing (when pinning along the paper to join sections). Good pinning ensures accuracy when matching points or the beginnings and endings of seams.

	<p><b>1st...get pins parallel</b></p> <p>Pin through the beginnings and ends of the seamlines you will be sewing. Also add any pins that join match points (the facing arrowheads on Paper Panache patterns, or the hatch marks in machine curved piecing).</p> <p>The drawings at left look down between the two pieces of fabric from above. The pins in the top drawing are incorrect because their shafts are not parallel to each other and the pieces of fabric are slipping in opposite directions. Slide the fabric around minutely until pins line up parallel like in the second drawing. Leave pins hanging and press the pieces together with your fingers. Turn the seamline back to face you.</p>
	<p><b>2nd...secure the pins</b></p> <p>Leave the parallel pins from the step above pushed all the way through and hanging out the back until you get to them. The pins you will add now will be secured horizontally, joining the pencil lines on the front and back together. If you are paper piecing with Paper Panache patterns, you would be running the pins next to the paper edges.</p> <p><b>Working from left to right:</b></p> <p><b>(Pin #1)</b> Secure a pin along the pencil line immediately to the right of the beginning pin.</p> <p><b>(Pin #2)</b> Secure the beginning pin vertically.</p> <p><b>(Pin #3)</b> Secure pins along the line (as many as needed), each one to the right of its neighbor, until you reach a match point or the end of the seam. I usually pin close enough so they are almost head-to-tail. (The longer and straighter the seam is, you can put more space between them.)</p> <p><b>(Pin #4)</b> Secure any match point pins vertically. If this were a longer seam, continue pinning to right.</p> <p><b>(Pin #5)</b> Secure the last pin horizontally along the seam line. The seam is ready for sewing.</p> <p>When you sew the seam, sew slowly from edge to edge immediately next to the paper pattern. Do not pull the pins out early - as the needle gets to the sharp end of each pin, hold the head of that pin up lightly and the fabric will feed right off the pin as you sew, helping to keep the seam exactly as you have pinned it.</p>



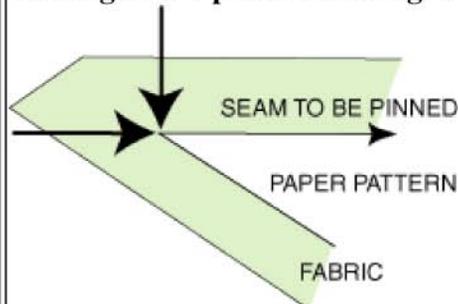
These are my suggestions for faster, easier and better paper piecing...at least, they work for me. **If you have a question you would like addressed**, send me an email and I may add it to this column with the next update.

<h2>Chain Piecing</h2>	
	<p><b>Remember to chain piece</b></p>  <p>It is easy to become so absorbed in matching fabric to paper that you forget to chain piece. Chain piecing saves time and thread. Just slip the next seam to be sewn under the presser foot before removing the section before it. When the first section is clear of the presser foot, you can clip and remove it. Or, work in long chains, sewing several seams before clipping the thread and beginning a new line of chain piecing.</p>
<h2>Paper Piecing (covering Sections)</h2>	
	<p><b>Minimum seam allowance</b></p>  <p>You've added the fabric, flipped it open and found the seam allowance short on one side or at a corner. In my opinion, 1/8" (3mm) is enough seam allowance if you're using a good woven cotton and your project will end up on a wall. If the project will be part of a heavier, larger quilt that will see use, 3/16" (5mm) would be my minimum seam allowance.</p>
	<p><b>For smooth points</b></p>  <p>For the cleanest points, start at the wide end of a triangle and sew TOWARD the point whenever you can. This avoids sewing over the bump of the previous seam at the start of the point, which can lead to a wobbly seamline and a fat point.</p>

## Pinning & Sewing Sections Together



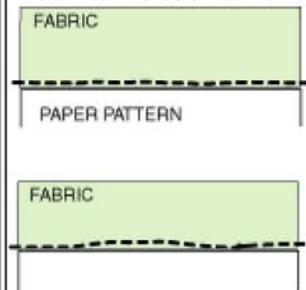
### Pinning at the points of triangles



When pinning sections together that begin or end with the point of a triangle, place the pin immediately **ALONGSIDE** the point (vertical arrow), and not at the very tip of the point (horizontal arrow). The difference is tiny, but pinning the rest of the seam should be easier and sections line up better.



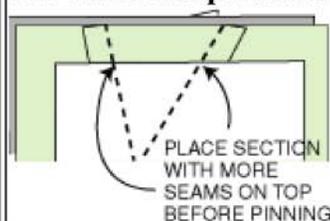
### How far is too far off the line?



Seams should rest immediately next to the paper, but you can settle for an occasional seam that looks like the top example. The bottom example would force me to rip just that area and run a new line of stitches next to the paper where it belongs. In the end, the whole idea is to avoid undesirable "block growth."



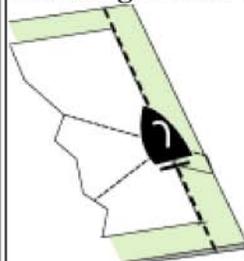
### Pin with multiple seams **UP**



When pinning two sections together, you have a choice to pin from either side. Sewing is usually a lot smoother if you place the section with the most seams "on top" and pin from that side. The side with the fewest seams would be the side that travels over the feed dogs.



### Avoiding thread show between section seams



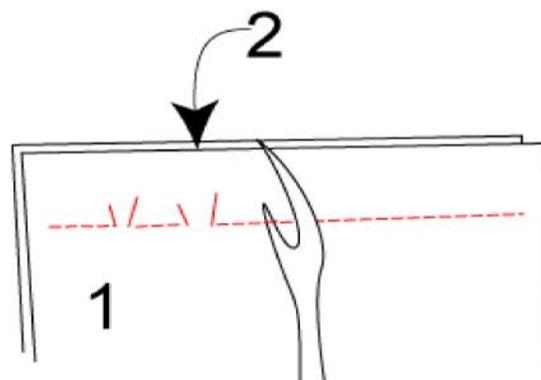
After pinning and sewing seam:

- (1) Check both sides of seam and free any tiny paper edges that may be caught in it.
- (2) Press the closed seam (see illustration). (I am a convert to this. It really does seem to "shrink" or embed the stitches more firmly into the fabric.)
- (3) Open the sections and press from the front, gently. You do not need to spread the seam with any force. Allow the seam allowance underneath to go to the side it wishes. If it does not go to either side easily, gently press the seam open on the wrong side.



## SEAM RIPPIN' 101

**First lesson:** We all gotta rip sometime.

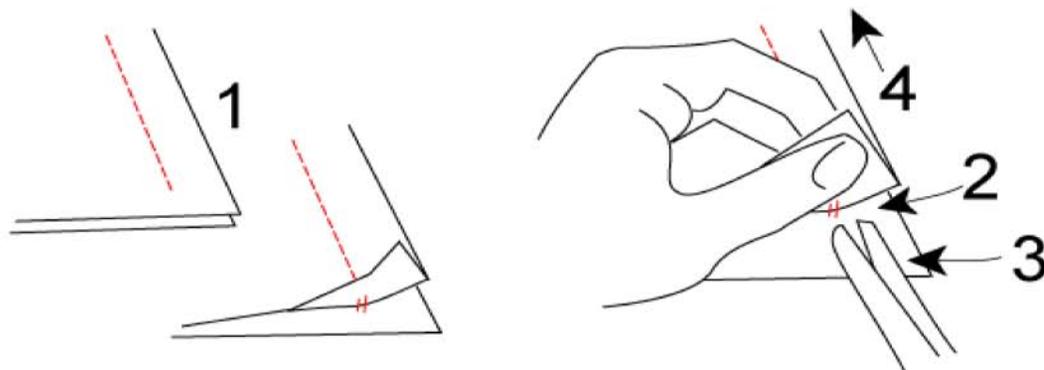


**Second lesson:** When I was a quilt newbie, I ripped seams like I had been taught, moons ago:

- 1** Break every fourth or fifth stitch. (Errg. It takes t-i-i-i-me to get that seam ripper into those stitches.)
- 2** Separate the two pieces of fabric starting in the middle somewhere and work the stitches apart to either end.

Still do it this way, too?

**Third lesson:** Scissors make the job much faster and more pleasant.



For right handers (adjust if you're a lefty):

- 1** Lay fabric flat on table as shown, and peel up the corner of the top layer of fabric.
- 2** With the tips of some standard shears, clip the first threads in between the two layers. (Do NOT use your pointiest, sharpest scissors, or you **will** cut your fabric at some point.)
- 3** Hold the tips of the shears flat to the table, holding down the bottom layer of fabric.
- 4** Holding the top layer with thumb and forefinger, rip back gently as far as it will go (a few stitches). Repeat steps 2-4.

Master this and you probably won't mind ripping as much (sure, it is possible to tolerate ripping...!) Save your seam ripper for mid-seam ripping jobs.



## PRESSIN' ADVICE

**Hi Linda,**

**I'd like to know if there are any tips of how to press paper piecing blocks. Some people say press all seams open - I'm having a devil of a time trying to sew the sections together and keep things relatively flat. Can you offer any suggestions on the pressing of the blocks. It would be much appreciated. Cheers, Maureen from Ottawa, Canada**

Hi, Maureen

Always use a dry iron. My pressing suggestions:

### 1) WORKING ON THE SECTIONS:

Immediately after sewing a seam on the paper, and BEFORE you flip the fabric open, PRESS the line of stitching that you just made. I find this really helps to avoid stitches showing on the right side when you do flip it open. NOW, flip the fabric open and press the seam flat GENTLY from the right side. Do not pull the fabric or stretch the seam while pressing.

### 2) SEWING THE SECTIONS TOGETHER:

Most of the time, you should NOT press seams open. Press them in the direction that they naturally want to fall. I press seams open when the directions tell me to, usually to distribute seam allowances to keep things flatter. I also press seams open when there seems to be a problem pressing the seam to one side. Sometimes there are so many seam allowances it won't stay pressed to one side; then I open it.

Re: Keeping blocks flat: You will have more problems keeping things flat if: (1) you sew too fast --You need to keep your stitching as near to the intended stitch lines as possible. (2) If you don't pin the sections together carefully so that the seam allowances are distributed where they should be.

Flatness is always a function of how carefully one works. I know this is not always a natural thing for all sewers, but if you start to adapt some suggestions here and there, you will find that your work will improve.

Hope these help!--Linda

If this helped you, feel free to print this out for your paper piecing friends.

**Paper Panache, Images and Ideas for Paper Piecing**

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