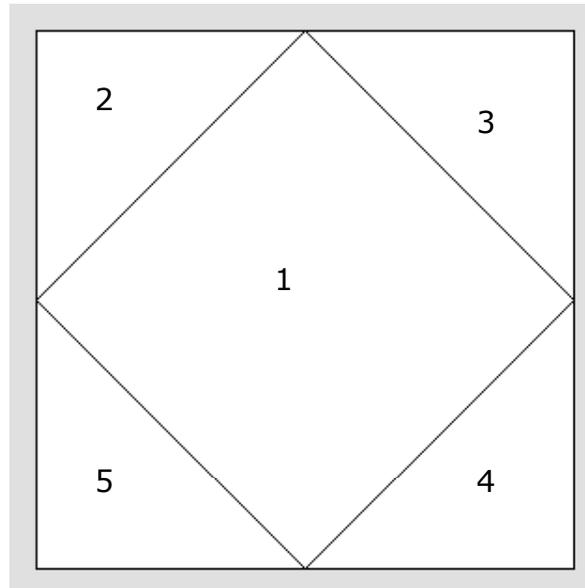


Introduction to Foundation Piecing

Traditional Foundation Piecing

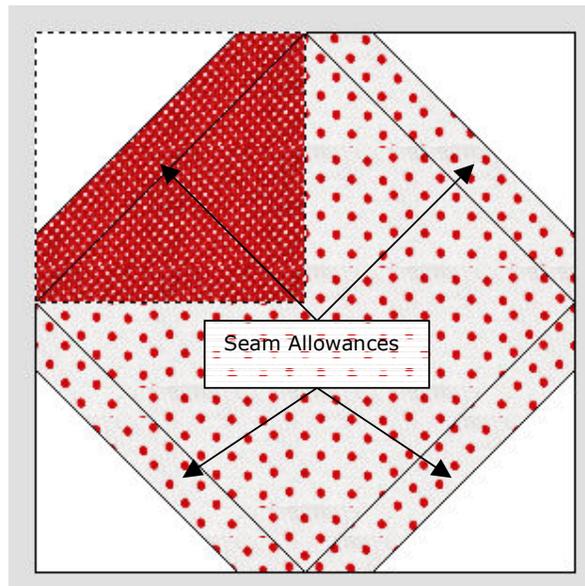
Foundation pieced (or paper pieced) blocks are created by sewing along lines marked on a foundation (paper or fabric). This method is extremely accurate.

First the block design is transferred to the foundation.



Second, fabric is cut in the approximate size and shape of piece one and piece 2.

Third, place piece one and piece two right sides together aligning their common edge.



Fourth, place the foundation right side up (i.e. the marked lines are face up), on the two pieces of fabric and stitch the marked sewing line. The two pieces are opened and pressed into place.

This method, although accurate, can be quite time consuming. You need to create a foundation (i.e. transfer the pattern) for each of the blocks. Hence if your final quilt contains 100 blocks you need to transfer the design 100 times.

If you have trouble cutting accurately or find traditional foundation piecing too slow, then this method is for you.

Foundation Piecing Using an Embroidery Machine

I use foundation piecing methods and an embroidery machine to create quilt blocks. This method has a number of advantages – it is quick and extremely accurate. Plus each block is identical thus eliminating problems aligning blocks when sewing blocks together. It is also extremely easy to create miniature quilts and doll quilts.

I will demonstrate my method using a simple hourglass block.



This block consists of five pieces of fabric (refer to Diagram 1).

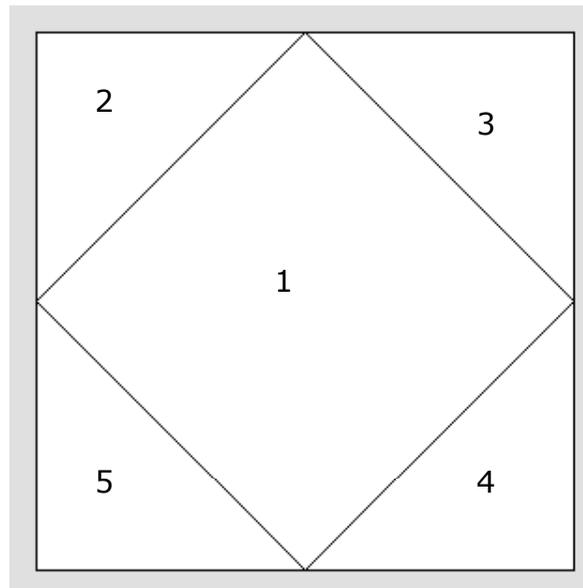


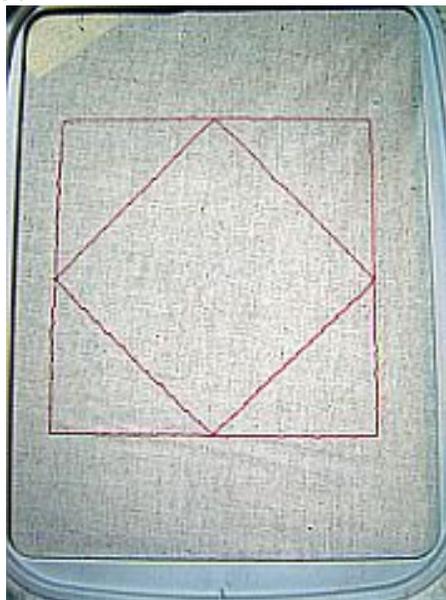
Diagram 1

1. Select the correct hoop for the block. The hourglass block is 13.8 cm × 13.8 cm.
2. Hoop your foundation fabric. This can be a stabiliser or a backing fabric. I like to use Calico.
3. Select the design (HourGlass) on your embroidery machine. This design consists of six colour changes. I select a colour that will blend with my two fabrics and use that for all six changes.

Note: It is important that you don't try to minimise the colour changes. Some of the colour changes are placement lines.

The first colour creates the foundation – use a light coloured thread or a thread that will match your fabrics.

4. Stitch the first colour



Note: I used a red thread for photographic purposes. Choose a thread colour that blends with your fabrics.

5. Cut a piece of fabric for piece 1 (it needs to be 6 mm larger than the stitched area).
6. Place piece 1 right side up over the stitched area. You might like to use a bit of basting spray or a fabric glue stick to hold the piece in place.



7. Cut a piece of fabric for piece 2 (it needs to be 6 mm larger than the stitched area).
8. Place piece 2 on top of piece 1 (right sides together) with the common edges adjacent.



The second colour stitches down piece 2 – use a colour that will suit your fabrics.



9. Fold piece 2 into place and finger press. You might like to use a little bit of fabric glue to hold it in place temporarily.



10. Cut a piece of fabric for piece 3 (it needs to be 6 mm larger than the stitched area).
11. Place piece 3 on top of piece 2 (right sides together) with the common edges adjacent.



The third colour stitches down piece 3 – use a colour that will suit your fabrics.



12. Fold piece 3 into place and finger press. You might like to use a little bit of fabric glue to hold it in place temporarily



13. Cut a piece of fabric for piece 4 (it needs to be 6 mm larger than the stitched area).
14. Place piece 4 on top of piece 3 (right sides together) with the common edges adjacent.



The fourth colour stitches down piece 4 – use a colour that will suit your fabrics.



15. Fold piece 4 into place and finger press. You might like to use a little bit of fabric glue to hold it in place temporarily



16. Cut a piece of fabric for piece 5 (it needs to be 6 mm larger than the stitched area).
17. Place piece 5 on top of piece 4 (right sides together) with the common edges adjacent.



The fifth colour stitches down piece 5 – use a colour that will suit your fabrics.



18. Fold piece 5 into place and finger press. You might like to use a little bit of fabric glue to hold it in place temporarily



The sixth colour stitches down the outer edges of the block and can be used as a cutting line for the block (it is represented by the dashed lines in Diagram 1).

19. Stitch the sixth colour



20. Use the stitching line to cut the block to the perfect size.

