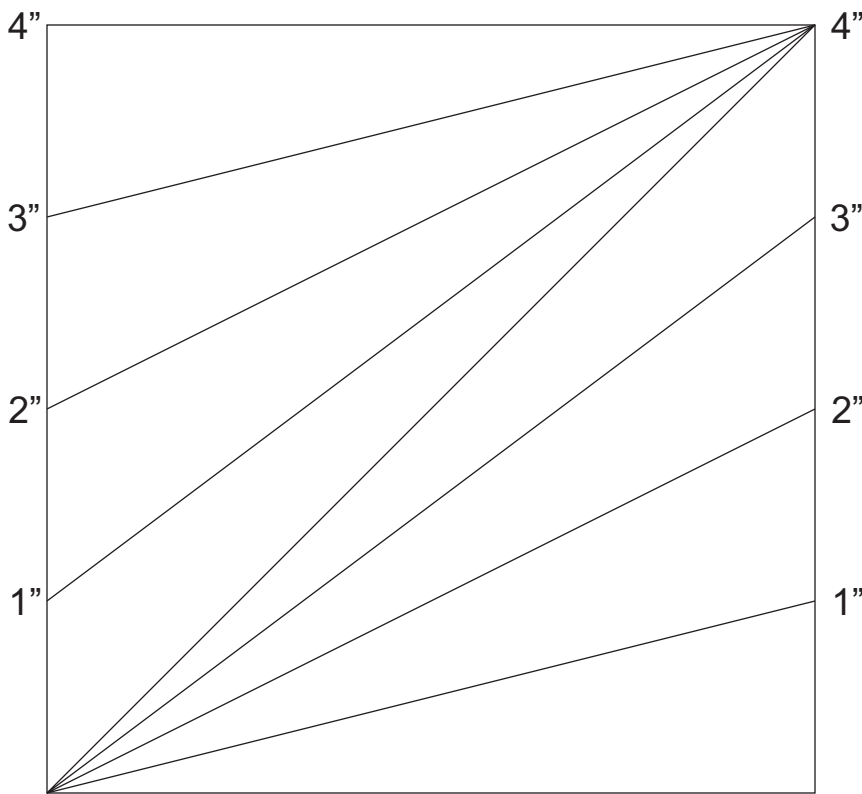


Suzie's Quick Tip:

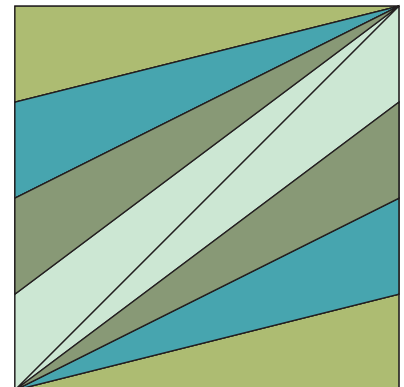
Paper piecing

It can be hard to paper piece a block when you use a conventional $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowance ($\frac{1}{2}$ " total) for your fabric strips. I use a wider seam allowance: $\frac{3}{4}$ " total for smaller pieces, and 1" total for large pieces. To my mind, it's better to use a little extra fabric and then trim the excess after sewing. It makes it easier to piece, and prevents a lot of frustration: **ripping out a paper pieced seam because the piece is slightly short is not fun!**



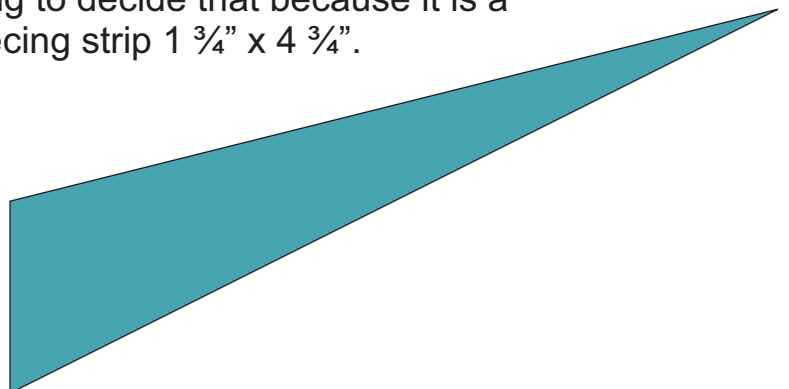
How to Determine Strip size

On the left, you will see a simple 4" block. The lines are all spaced 1" apart, and converge at opposite corners.

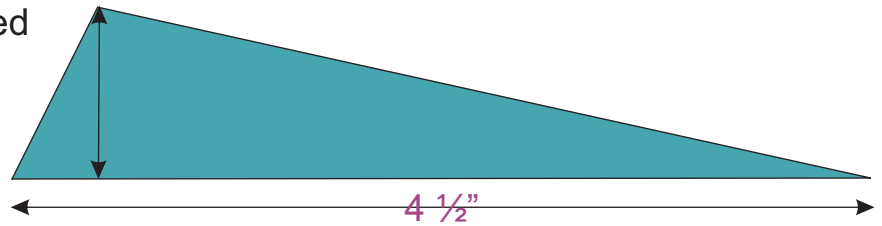


You'll note that there are 4 different sized strips - I've color coded them so that the differences are easy to see. It is tempting to decide that because it is a relatively small block, you will cut the piecing strip $1\frac{3}{4}$ " x $4\frac{3}{4}$ ".

Trust me: that's not going to work.



When you're strip piecing, you need to measure the width and length of each individual piece, and not use the finished size of the block as your measurement. This piece actually measures a little bit short of 1" wide (.9" to be exact), and 4 1/2" long - and that doesn't include the seam allowance. So, if you cut the piecing strip 1 3/4" x 4 3/4", it would be wide enough, but it would be too short.

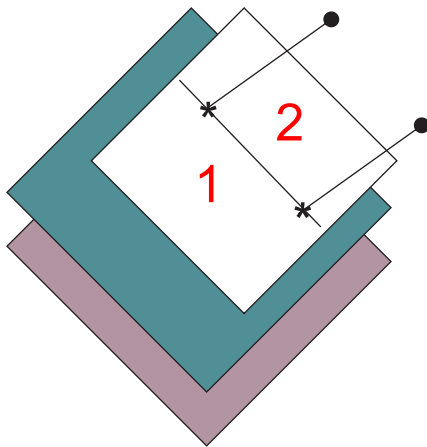


To find the length and width of the fabric strip, measure the template piece at the widest point and the longest point. Then add your seam allowance.

I would cut the fabric strip for the above piece 1 3/4" x 5 1/4"

To Pin or not to Pin - That's the Question

For many quilters, not pinning when paper piecing seems almost like a badge of honor. Personally, if the block is large: I pin. Honestly, when piecing a small block, I don't find it necessary, but larger blocks are another story.



First, I locate the stitching line between the first two pieces. I start by putting a pin through my paper template about 1/2" from the edge of the template. I do this at both ends of the line. If the stitching line is long (8" or longer), I will put a couple of extra pins on the line. This will help to prevent the strip from wiggling when stitching.

Tip: be sure that your template has a 1/4" seam allowance drawn around the perimeter. This will help you to trim the finished pieced block accurately.

Take the first two fabric strips, and place them right sides together. Put the edge of the strips over the pins, allowing an approximate 1/4" seam allowance along the length of the strip. Okay - here is where I tell you that I have yet to see the Quarter Inch Police come and drag a quilter away for not using a precise 1/4" seam allowance when paper piecing! Each strip should extend a bit beyond the block's perimeter seam allowance. Secure the pins, and sew on the paper along the stitching line. Don't forget to sew through the seam allowance.

If necessary, loosely trim the fabric strips. You will precisely trim the block once it is fully pieced.

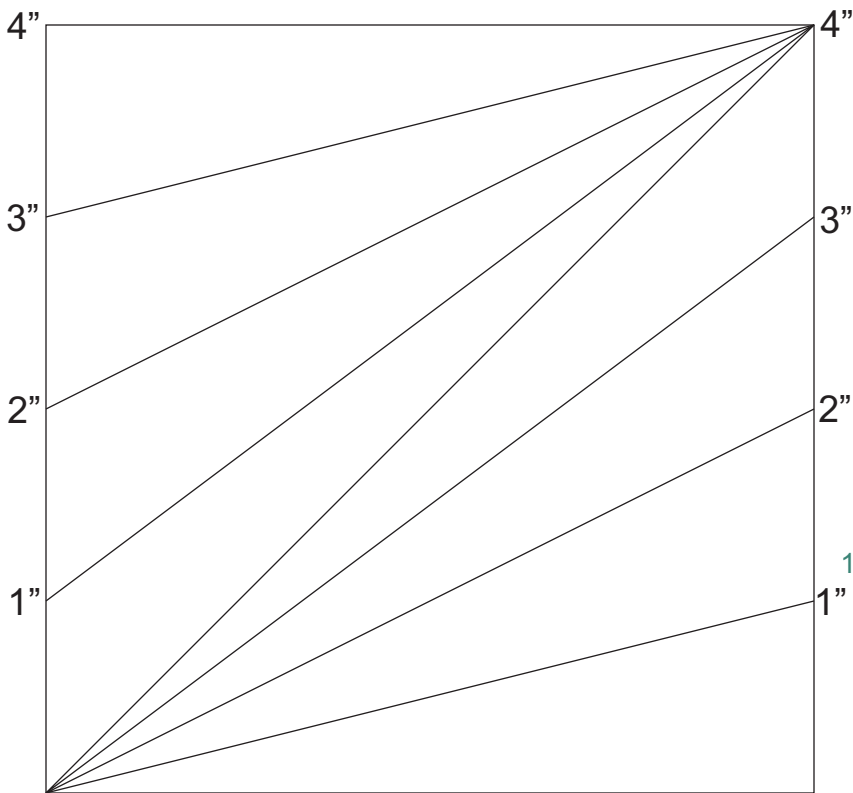
Press your Seam!

I press each seam (with an iron) once it has been sewn. This makes a flatter seam (the flatter, the better). Flatter seams will result in a more accurate finished block.

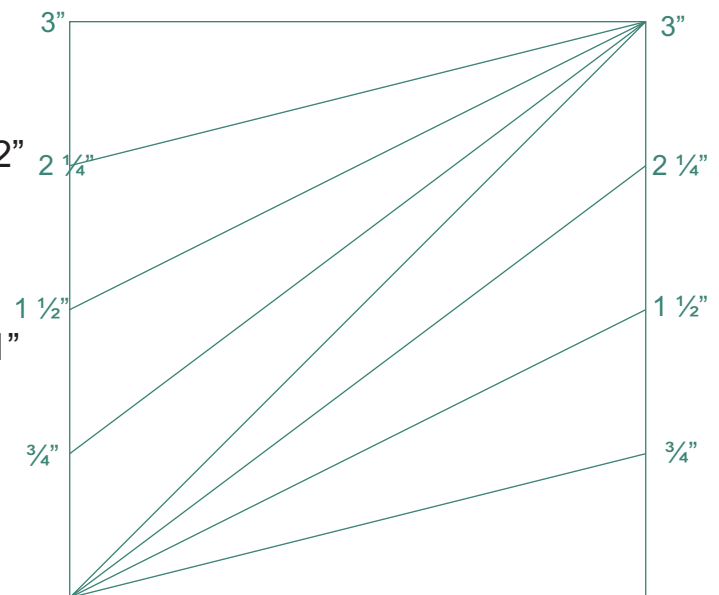
Once you have finished piecing the entire block, press it carefully once again. Place it on your cutting board fabric side down (template side up), and trim it to size. Don't forget the $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowance.

The template paper is most easily removed using the reverse sewing order. Fold the template paper back along the stitching line, and crease it with your finger. It should then tear away easily.

Changing the Template Size.



Often, you will find that the template that you want to use is the wrong size for you project. An easy way to make it smaller is to multiply the existing measurements by $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$, or $\frac{3}{4}$.



For example, if you want to make a 4" template 3", multiply all measurements by $\frac{3}{4}$ (.75). If you want it to be $3\frac{1}{2}$ ", multiply all of the measurements by $\frac{7}{8}$ (.875). Basically, you can multiply easily by any increment that you find on a ruler.

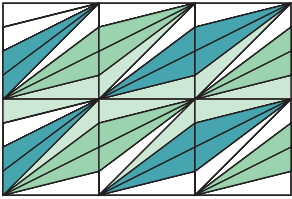
Enlarging a template is really easy. Any whole number, or anything that can be multiplied by a ruler increment ($1\frac{1}{4}$, or $3\frac{3}{8}$ - you get the idea) will work well.

Tip: the easiest way to change the size of your template is to bring it to a copy store!

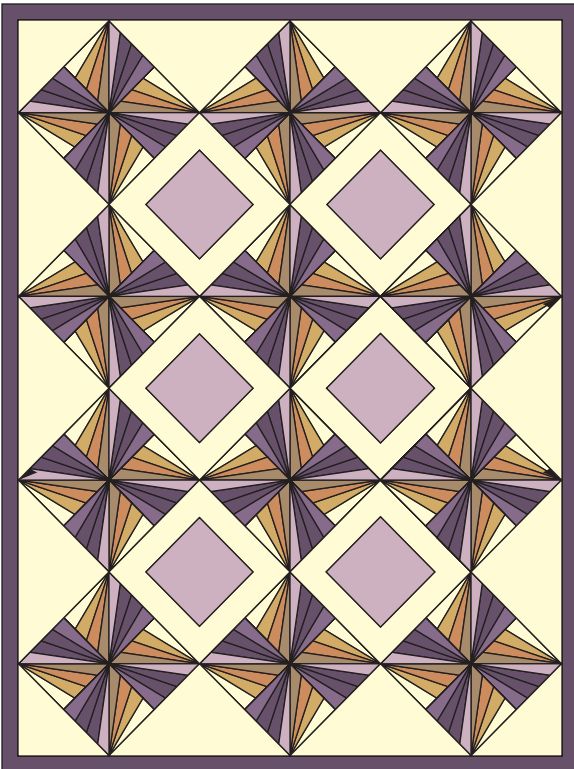
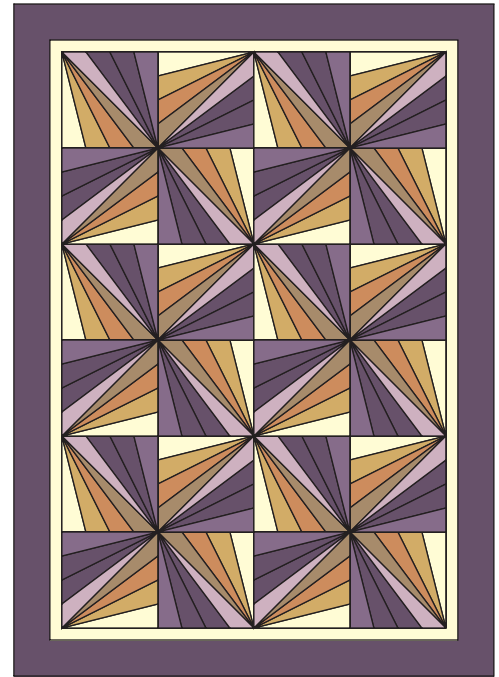
Ideas for Using this Block

Now that you have your template pieced, it's time to make a quilt. Here are some ideas:

placemats

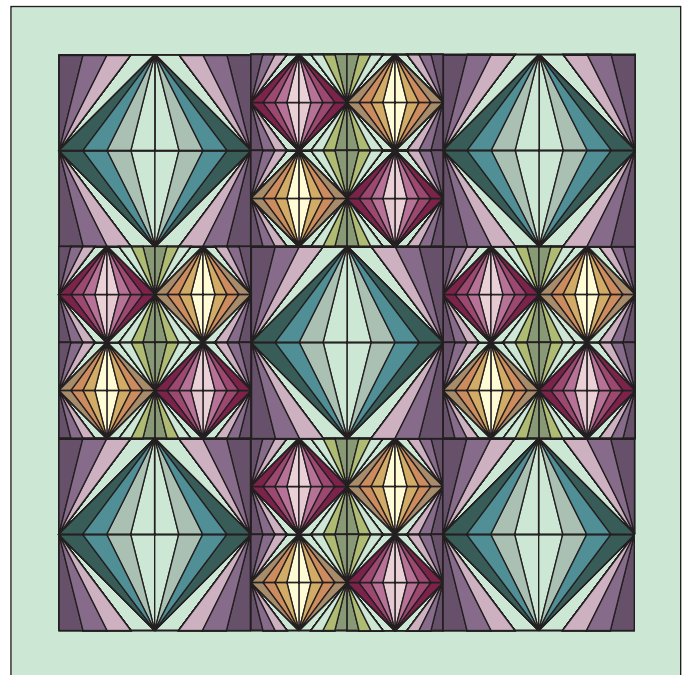


Wall
Hanging



Bed Quilt

Don't forget that you can mirror the blocks:



If you send me some pix of your projects using this block, I'll put them on my Facebook page so that everyone can enjoy them!