

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR FOUNDATION PAPER PIECING

What you will need:

Sewing Machine: Any straight stitch will work. Use a size 90/14 machine needle and set stitch length to 15-20 stitches per inch – small stitches and a large needle will help perforate the paper making it easier to remove once the block is complete.

Tracing Wheel: To trace the pattern lines makes it easier to trim seams and to tear away paper.

Rotary Cutting Equipment: Self-healing mat, rotary cutter, and acrylic rulers. I like keep a large ruler and a small ruler handy – a small one is easier to use when trimming seams.

Thread: Cotton is the best, but cotton wrapped poly is okay as well.

Iron and Pressing Surface: Do not use steam when ironing as it will curl your paper. Use a large square of muslin or a towel to protect you ironing board cover from ink.

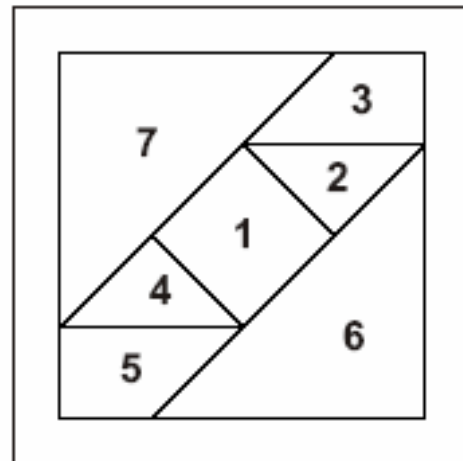
Pins: Long flexible pins that will not bend the paper too much are best for foundation piecing.

Seam Ripper: Useful for taking out mistakes and for removing small bits of paper from tight spaces.

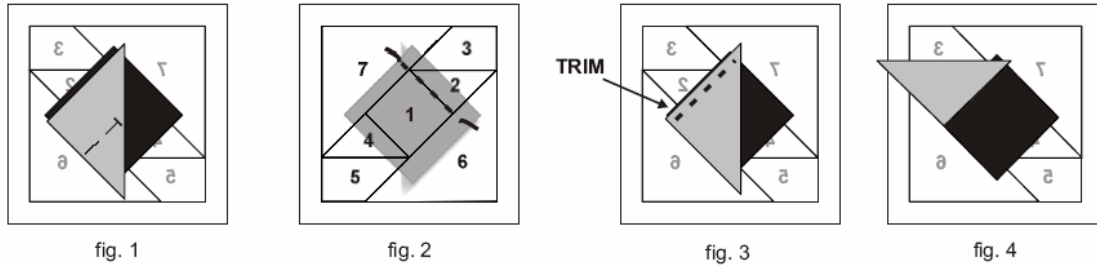
Scotch Brand Removable Magic Tape: This tape will not melt and works well for repairing any mature tearing in the paper pattern.

Sewing with Foundation Paper:

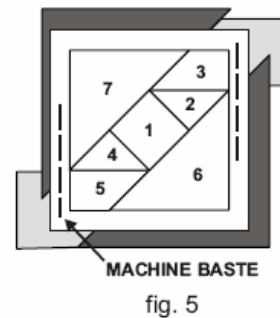
1. You will need one foundation paper for each block or for each unit of a block. *The marked side of the pattern is your sewing side, the numbers are your piecing order and the lines are your sewing lines.* Cut out the foundation pattern just outside the edge, trimming will be done later.
2. Locate piece #1 on the foundation. *With the printed side of the foundation toward you, place a scrap of **fabric right side up** on the **wrong side of the pattern.*** Hold it up to the light to make sure that the fabric generously covers all of the pattern piece as well as a seam allowance, pin in place.



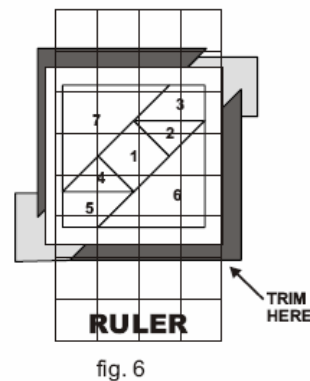
3. Select your fabric for piece #2, checking to ensure that it generously covers the intended area and a minimum of 1/4" seam allowance. With right sides together flip the piece back over fabric #1 (see fig. 1), re-pin to hold both pieces of fabric in place. *With the printed side of the paper up*, stitch on the line between piece #1 and #2, beginning and ending a few stitches beyond the line (see fig. 2). Clip threads. Turn over, fold the paper along the stitch line and trim seam allowance to 1/8" (see fig. 3) being careful not to cut the paper. Flip piece #2 into place and press with a dry iron (see fig. 4). Fold paper on perforation line between piece #2 and #3 and trim to 1/4" which will aid in the placement of subsequent pieces.



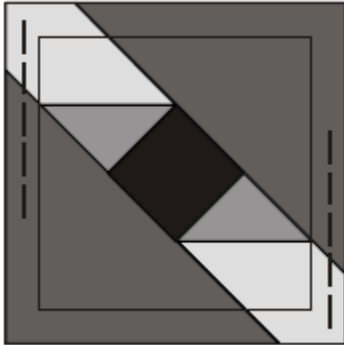
4. Continue adding pieces in this manner until the block is complete. Pieces around the outside should extend well beyond the 1/4" seam allowance and will be trimmed off later.
5. With a longer machine stitch, baste through all the layers within the outside seam allowance (see fig. 5) of the block to prevent stretching.
6. Now you are ready to trim your block.



With the paper side up, align your ruler with the outside edge of the 1/4" seam allowance and trim (see fig. 6). *Do not remove* the paper unless this block will **not** be sewn to another paper pieced block. You will need the line to match up the pieces. After the pieces or blocks are joined, remove the basting and the paper using your seam ripper if necessary.



7. Voila! Now take a look at your handy work!



Hints, Tips, and Helps:

Blocks with more than one unit: Paper piece each unit separately, but DO NOT remove the paper until all units are joined. With right sides together, match points and pin. Stitch together and trim. Baste and trim completed block when all units are joined.

Odd angle pieces: getting the pieces the correct shape for odd angle pieces is frustrating and can be tricky. These three methods may help:

Method #1: "Pin and Flip" Lay the pieces as if you were going to sew them, placing a pin on the sewing line. Flip the fabric into place as if it were sewn and hold it up to the light to see if it covers the area required.

Method #2: "Ruler Align" Lay your block down on the cutting mat – paper/number side up – and the fabric scrap just below it – wrong side up. Align a longer ruler with the sewing line and so that it also falls onto the scrap below. Cut the scrap at this angle and be careful not to cut your foundation! You may need to move (or fold) the block or the fabric scrap a bit to make sure you are cutting a big enough piece. With this method you should still 'pin and flip' to make sure that you have turned the correct angle.

Method #3: "Almost Foolproof" Make extra copies of the foundation patterns and cut apart to use as cutting guides. You will still need to trim the fabric at least 1/2" around these as they will not include seam allowances.