

## String Piecing Ideas and Techniques

Written by Abigail Dolinger, February 2020

**Blog:** [abyquilts.wordpress.com](http://abyquilts.wordpress.com)

“Strings” are narrow strips of fabric generally left over from other projects. I save strings 1 ¼” – 2 ½” in width; I sort them by color and store them in a large flat plastic container with a lid that can be stored under a bed.

There are several methods of string piecing, each appropriate for different types of blocks or quilts.

- 1) No foundation: machine piece narrow strips of fabric together, press seams, and trim to the desired shape and size.
- 2) Muslin foundation: cut squares of inexpensive fabric ½” larger than the desired size; machine sew strings to the foundation using a sew-and-flip method. Once the foundation is covered, trim the squares to the desired size. The muslin remains in the quilt.
- 3) Paper foundation: cut squares or other shapes from thin paper (such as a telephone book) the exact size required by your project. Use a #90 needle and shorten the stitch length. Machine sew strings to the paper using a sew-and-flip method. Allow the strips to extend ¼” beyond the paper. Press with *dry* iron or use a wooden presser. Once the foundation is covered, turn the shape over and trim away excess fabric using the paper foundation as a guide. It is easier to remove the paper prior to sewing the shapes to other patchwork pieces, but the paper *may* remain until just prior to quilting.
- 4) Batting foundation: cut squares or rectangles from predominantly cotton batting ½” larger all around than the size required by your project. Machine sew strings to the batting using a sew-and-flip method. Press with a dry iron. Once the batting foundation is covered, trim the squares or rectangles to the desired size. Stay-stitch all around the edges.
- 5) Batting and backing foundation: cut squares or rectangles from predominantly cotton batting and backing fabric ½” larger all around than the size required by your project. Lengthen stitches and machine sew strings to the batting/backing using a sew-and-flip method. Press with a dry iron. Once the batting/backing foundation is covered, trim the squares or rectangles to the desired size. Stay-stitch all around the edges.
- 6) Non-woven interfacing foundation: cut squares or shapes of interfacing ½” larger than the desired size; machine sew strings to the foundation using a sew-and-flip method. Once the foundation is covered, trim the shapes to the desired size. The interfacing remains in the quilt or, in the case of a dissolving product, disappears when washed.

## String Pieced Quilts

### *No foundation:*

Gray and black blocks with aqua sashing and borders

Floral Chinese Coins with green sashing and borders

9-11 Dark Day at the Pentagon



### *Muslin foundation:*

Antique Log Cabin

### *Paper foundation:*

Baskets Round Robin

Modern Dresden block of the month

Fan Pathways

Love Shack – workshop with Bonnie Hunter

Churning Along

Vortex

LeMoyne Star

Nancy Quilt by Lynne Harris

Railroad Crossing – using adding machine paper

String Pieced Stars - <https://abyquilts.wordpress.com/?s=string+pieced+stars>



### *Batting foundation:*

String pieced zippered bag

Tote bag



### *Batting/backing foundation:*

Potholder

### *Non-woven interfacing foundation:*

Slash and Insert block with dark gray background

### *Examples of string-pieced blocks:*



## String Pieced Spool of Thread

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### Supplies:

Paper foundation – 4 ½" x 5 ½"

White background fabric – 2 1 ½" x 5 ½" rectangles, 4 1 ½" squares

Brown – 2 1 ½" x 6 ½" rectangles

Colored strips of various widths, about 5" in length

### Method:

*Make the thread unit.* Cover the 4 ½" x 5 ½" paper foundation with colored strips, using a sew and flip method. Use a #90 needle and shorten stitches. Turn the foundation to the wrong side and trim off excess strips using the paper as a guide.

Sew 1 ½" x 5 ½" white background strips to the sides of the 4 ½" x 5 ½" string pieced unit. Press seams toward the white background strips.

*Make the top and bottom of the wooden spool.* Draw a diagonal line on the wrong side of the 4 1 ½" background squares. Place the squares on the ends of the 1 ½" x 6 ½" brown strips; take care to orient the drawn lines as shown. Sew on the drawn lines. Flip triangles outward and press. Trim away excess seam allowance.

*Assemble the spool.* Pin and sew the top and bottom of the spool to the thread unit. *The spool block measures 6 ½" x 7 ½."*