



### Shoo Fly Shoo!

Are you ready for a new challenge?

We've been running a yearly Leader & Ender Challenge since July, 2011!

And oh, how wonderfully varied the quilts that came from this year-long adventure have been.

We keep the rules loose – you can make as many (or as few) blocks as you like – you can turn them into whatever you want.

The whole idea is to use these pieces to keep your chain piecing of other things continuous, eliminating the need for a “sew between” or a “thread spider” made from a folded over piece of junk fabric that gets thrown away after use.

If we cut pieces ahead of time – we can build more BLOCKS instead of covering throw away pieces of fabric with thread, or even worse – leave long thread tails on our work, or the floor, or wherever they land.

And they help us use scraps, giving us a FREE quilt over the course of the year.

Every year, as I wind down my last year's Leader & Ender quilt (My [Jewel Box Stars](#) is ready to quilt – SOON!) my mind starts racing trying to figure out something fun for us to do for the next year.

When we finished our [Checkerboard Rails](#) challenge 2 years ago, I was left with BUNCHES of 1 1/2" x 6 1/2" strips from the rail part and I really wanted a way to use those up.

I also wanted a way to introduce a WEBBING CHALLENGE into the mix. And stitch these blocks in a way that will keep sets together – I get a completed Shoo Fly block in only 5 leader & ender runs!



I also have an overflowing box of 2 1/2" scrap squares!

Cut some triangles with the [Essential Triangle Tool](#) –

Cut some background rectangles.  
Throw in a center square and voila!

This little Shoo Fly block is so easy to sew while working on other things – and I love it in this 4" finished size!



Are you worried about this block being too small for you? No worry – I'm giving you directions for a 6" finished block as well:



4" and 6"!

Pick your favorite size!

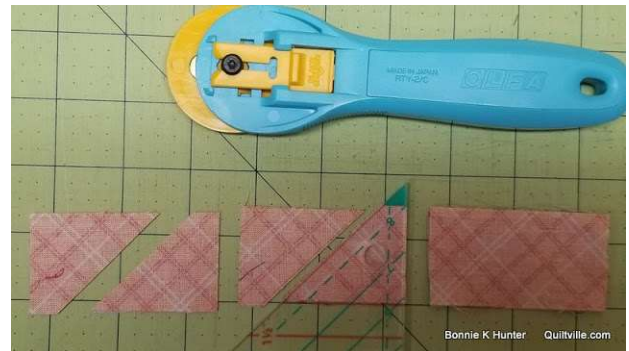
(6" size directions at bottom of post.)



Place 2 triangle fabrics right sides together.

The gray in this one is my "neutral."

Use the red 1" finished line on the [Essential Triangle Tool](#) to cut 4 pairs of matched triangles ready to sew.



Cutting triangle pair #4 – with just a smidge left over!



If I can – I'll trim 1 1/2" squares from the end of strip and save those for later -



Maybe NEXT year's Leader & Ender Challenge Project?



From either a 1 1/2" strip or a 2 1/2" strip

Cut 4 rectangles 1 1/2" x 2 1/2".

Using a 2 1/2" strip here.



All cut and ready to roll!

4 triangles pairs  
4 rectangles 1 1/2" x 2 1/2"  
1 center square 2 1/2"



The project I am currently working on is under the needle.

I've gone as far as I can go on it, and it is time to LEADER & ENDER!



Pass #1: Feed ALL FOUR TRIANGLE PAIRS  
through the machine -

Leave all 4 triangles in the machine, but snip off the block work above the leader & ender triangles. Press those – cut them apart, do what you have to do to get ready for the next run. Feed block pieces through the machine. When ready for the next Leader & Ender run – snip the 4 triangles off from the end of the chain. Press, remove dog ears and trim as needed.



Triangles should measure 1 1/2" unfinished and finish at 1" in the block.



Turn the second column over the first – it's as easy as "Turning the page."



At the end of the project chain, feed all three sets together as Leader & Ender.

**KEEP THE CHAIN TOGETHER!**

Lay out the block and let the webbing begin!



Look carefully!

Column number 2 goes right sides together with column number 1 underneath.



Snip the main block parts off the back of the chain, leaving the Leader & Ender units under the presser foot, still connected to each other. This is important. **DO NOT SNIP THEM APART.** Just let them hang out there.

Press the main blocks, cut their chain apart, and feed the next batch of project parts through the machine. Snip the 3 rows of Shoo Fly block from the chain. But do not snip them apart.



See the chaining threads in place?

LEAVE THEM THERE!

These little chaining threads actually help in keeping short seams from popping open. They are doing you a favor. The only time I would snip them is AFTER sewing my "across" rows, and then only if I were spinning seams, or pressing seams open. We are doing neither.

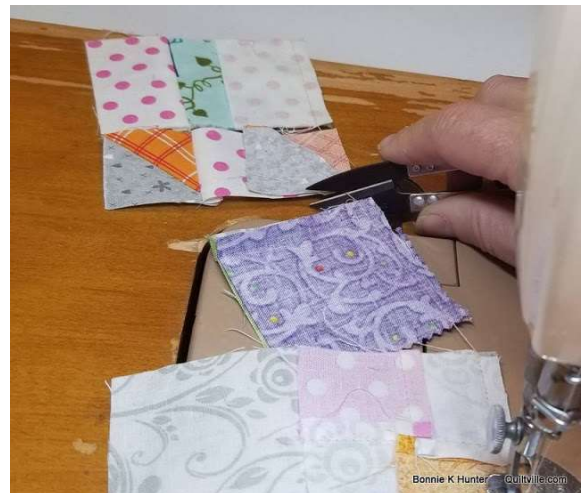


Bringing column 3 over column 2.



Feeding all three rows through at the end of a block chain.

Again – DO NOT cut rows apart!



After feeding the next round of block parts through the machine, snip the Shoo Fly block off from the chain.

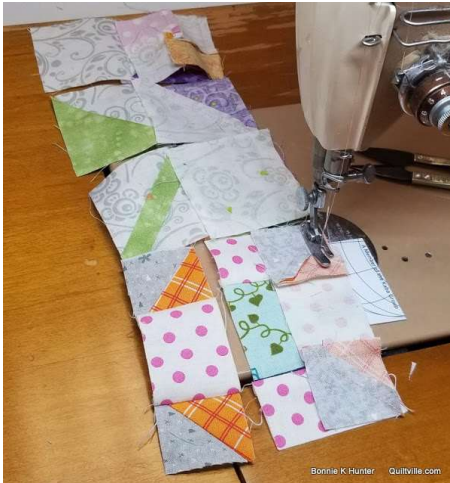


Pressing!

Press the top and bottom rows in toward the rectangles.

Press the center row out toward the rectangles.

Seams will nest when cross seaming.



Too Stinking Cute!

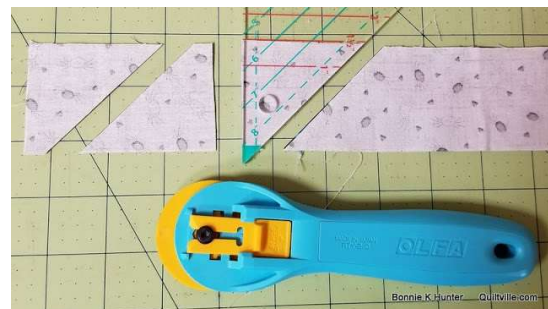
Continuing on my block assembly -

And following by sewing one cross seam on the Shoo Fly block.



Press both long seams toward the center.

My main project block is nearly complete – and so is my Shoo Fly!



For the larger 6" block:

Match a 2" strip of neutral and a 2" strip of color with right sides together.

Use the red 1 1/2" finished line on the [Essential Triangle Tool](#) to cut 4 pairs of matched triangles ready to sew. Units will measure 2" unfinished when sewn, and finish at 1 1/2" in the block.



Cut 4 rectangles 2" x 3 1/2" for block background.

Units will finish at 1 1/2" X 3" in the block.

Also cut a 3 1/2" square of color for the center.



Follow the steps for the 4" finished block above, using these pieces as Leaders & Enders while sewing other things!

Remember to:

Pass #1: Sew all 4 triangles at the same time.

Webbing:

Pass #2: Column number 2 OVER column number 1 (Always TURN the page!)

Sew all three pairs in a chain, keeping them together with chaining threads.

Pass #3: Add column 3 to column 2 in one long chain. (Press seams toward rectangles!)

Pass #4: Sew one long cross seam.

Pass #5: Sew second long cross seam. (Press seams toward the center row.)



Watch your stack of Shoo Fly blocks reach the sky!



These blocks are so fun to make, and they go so fast since I am completing a block every 5 passes through the machine. I find myself

spending an hour or so to pre-cut more blocks, so I have plenty on hand before the day's round of machine piecing begins.

Start with 10 blocks cut out and kitted up. Then later on cut some more.

I have no plans on how many I will make over the course of the year. I haven't thought that far.

But I might set them on point – or straight! I might set them with sashing – colored or neutral? I might set them with an alternate block. String pieced? Or plain? Or maybe 4" finished half square triangles in light/dark in a barn raising fashion? The ideas are endless!

But for now, I know that all I need to do is keep on making the blocks – and the quilt will come!

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