

A Streak Of Sunshine

Charity Quilt Workshop



Quilt measures 42" X 46" including borders.

What can one quilter do with eight 4 1/2" X 44" strips and very little time?

Follow these strip piecing directions to create a child's charity quilt or lap robe in nothing flat!



Cutting Directions: Quilt Center:

Cut EIGHT strips 4 1/2" wide by WOF (width of fabric) which should be between 42" and 44" long.

You can choose 4 different fabrics, and cut 2 strips of each, or you can do all eight strips different. Experiment to get different variations!

If you are using up leftovers, and your fabric strip doesn't measure 42" long, simply sew more length onto the end, and treat it like one strip. Press the seams open where you joined them to reduce bulk.

Inner border: Cut FOUR strips 2" wide X WOF.
Outer Border: Cut FOUR strips 4" wide X WOF.

This quilt pattern is originally called "Streak of Lightning" and I thought that might be a bit frightening for kids.

Since our guild is making these for "The Children's Garden," a non-profit daycare for the children of homeless parents, I thought "Streak Of Sunshine" was a much more fitting name, as we work and sew to bring some sunshine to the lives of these children.

Sewing Directions:

If you have ever made a strip pieced Trip Around The World quilt or have made my Scrappy Bargello quilt this technique will be familiar to you.

Step 1: Fabric Layout



Arrange your fabric strips in a manner that pleases you, paying attention to contrast and value. In my example here, I have 2 teal strips, 2 cream strips with doll-babies on them, 2 different peach strips, and two different light/mediums.

Step 2: Sewing the strip panel



Place the second strip, on top of the first strip with right sides together and stitch them together along one long edge.

Add the third strip and so on in the same

manner until you have all 8 strips sewn into one big panel.



Pressing is important! Look at the pictures above. Can you see how the seams alternate directions? Every other strip will have the seams pressed towards the inside on both sides of the strip, the other strips will have the seams pressed away from them.

This is crucial for the next sewing step, so the seams will butt up against each other instead of going in the same direction.

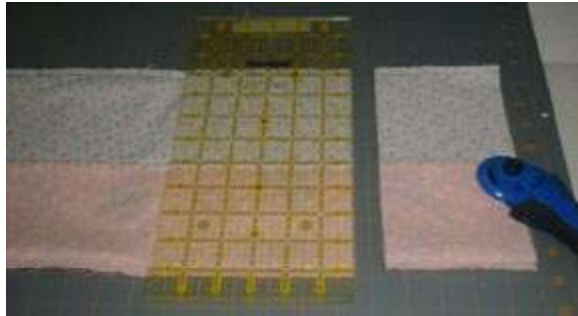
"Tubing" the panel:



Now the fun part! fold the panel in half, aligning the first strip with the last strip with right sides together. Stitch from top to bottom, sewing this

whole panel into a "tube." You don't have to press this last seam in any direction...just leave it for now.

Sub-Cutting the Tube:



Lay the Tube-Panel on your cutting board, folding it in half and aligning the top edges straight. Square off the edge, and then subcut nine sections 4 1/2" wide.



You will have 9 loops that look like this!

Now, Let the Magic Happen!

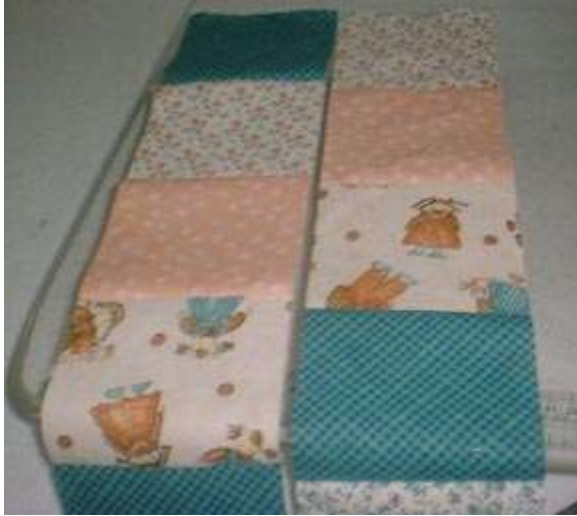


Remember this and repeat after me: THE SEAM RIPPER IS MY FRIEND!

Decide which square you would like to be in the top left corner. With your seam ripper, rip out every 3rd or 4th stitch leaving the square you want at the top. The other square becomes the bottom as you open the loop into one long strip.

To get the "Streak of Sunshine" effect, our quilt squares are going to have to 'stairstep'. Lay your first long open strip to the left of your machine. Now take the second loop. What was the top square in the first strip, is going to become the bottom square in the second strip. This is going to move each square UP a stair-step.

Decide where you need to unpick the second loop. Lay it next to the first strip after unpicking to be sure it is right.



Place the pieced strips right sides together and stitch. Because you alternated the direction in pressing the seams, they will nest and butt together. Press well.

These secondary seams can all go in one direction from this point on. I like to press toward the strip I just added.



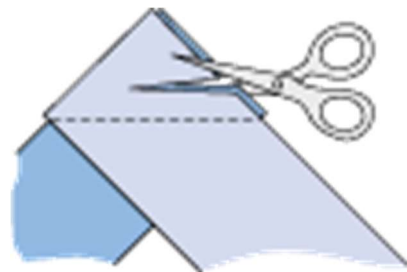
Here I am adding the third stairstep. Sew all nine of your pieced strips this way, pressing after each new stairstep is added.



Here is my finished quilt center!

BORDER TIME!

We are going to add the long sides of the inner border first. I like to join my narrow border strips on the diagonal the same way I do for making binding. The only exception to this is if the fabric is a stripe...I have better luck just stitching them end to end. It is less noticeable that way.



Form an "L" with the end of two border strips with right sides together and sew from corner to corner. If you look at the diagram above, you will see that the top strip is moved inside the end of the bottom strip, and just a bit up from the edge of the bottom strip...this leaves you two little "V" areas. You want to stitch from the exact V at the top to the exact V at the bottom.

I position mine just a bit 'off' this way so that I have a target to shoot for when stitching the seam. Then I trim the excess and press the seam open.

Measuring Borders:



For small quilts like this, I like to lay the quilt top on my ironing board. Center the quilt top lengthwise on the ironing board, and smooth it out. No stretching or pulling, just flat. Then I take the border strip that I have just stitched and pressed and lay it also down the center of the quilt top. Smoothing with your fingers and not stretching.

Be sure that the left edge is right at the left edge of the quilt, and it hasn't crept away on you.

I cut ALL my borders this way, using the border strips to measure across the center of the quilt, instead of using a measuring tape which may stretch or lay differently than the fabric I am using. My borders always turn out square and straight this way with no ripples.

Cut 2 strips the length of the quilt top. Pin the border to the quilt, matching the center and top and bottom. Stitch the two sides in place, one on the left, one on the right. Press seams towards the borders.



Now you are going to do the same thing for the top and bottom inner border. Lay the quilt top on the ironing board centering the quilt on the board, with the borders you have just sewn on your left and right. Smooth. Lay the border strips down across the quilt (including the first borders you just added) and cut two pieces, one for the top, one for the bottom.

Pin them to the quilt top with right sides together, matching centers and ends. Stitch. Press seams towards the borders.

For the outer borders, you are going to follow the same procedure, only using the four 4" strips. When strips get wider than 3.5", I like to sew them together straight end to end instead of on the diagonal or bias. This is mostly due to the fact that a bias seam is going to be longer than a straight seam, and because the strip is wide, it will be even more noticeable. There is also a lot of waste when you are joining wide strips on the bias.

The choice is up to you! Sew the outer borders to the long sides of the quilt first, then add the final top and bottom borders.



Here is the finished result, ready for quilting!

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