

Stack & Nest Quilted Blocks



Use this pattern to make a set of four soft blocks that can be stacked, nested or used for storage. The exterior of each block is made from five small quilted squares, making this a great project for practicing patchwork and using up fabric and batting scraps.

I made the exterior of my blocks using a combination of square-in-square patchwork blocks and panels of a single featured fabric, but any combination of patchwork and solid panels could be used. Just make sure that your finished squares match the sizes indicated on the chart below.

In order to make these blocks sturdy enough to hold their shape and stack easily, several layers of interfacing are used. You will need a heavyweight sew-in like Timtex® or Peltex®, a lightweight fusible like Pellon® and a padded material like low-loft cotton batting or fusible fleece.

You'll also need rotary cutting supplies, a fabric marker and hand sewing needle.

	For 3" block	for 4" block	for 5" block	for 6" block
5 squares <u>Lining Fabric</u>	4" x 4"	5" x 5"	6" x 6"	7" x 7"
5 squares <u>Heavyweight Interfacing</u>	2-7/8" x 2-7/8"	3-7/8" x 3-7/8"	4-7/8" x 4-7/8"	5-7/8" x 5-7/8"
15 squares <u>Lightweight Fusible Interfacing</u>	4" x 4"	5" x 5"	6" x 6"	7" x 7"
5 squares <u>Patchwork/Exterior</u>	4" x 4"	5" x 5"	6" x 6"	7" x 7"
5 squares <u>Batting or Fusible Fleece</u>	3" x 3"	4" x 4"	5" x 5"	6" x 6"

Use the same directions for each block size.

Let's get started!



Start by making the block lining. You'll need your lining squares, heavyweight interfacing squares and 10 squares of lightweight fusible interfacing.



Iron one piece of lightweight fusible interfacing to the wrong side of one lining fabric square. Use your ruler and fabric marker to draw lines parallel to and $\frac{1}{2}$ " from each side.



The lines you've just drawn should have created a frame that will fit one of your heavyweight interfacing squares. Place the interfacing square in the center, as shown above.



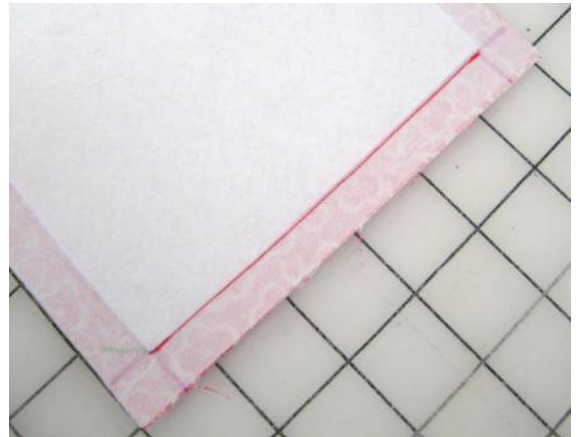
Now, place a second piece of lightweight fusible interfacing over the top of the square and fuse it in place, "trapping" the heavyweight interfacing in the middle.

Run the tip of your iron around the edge to make sure that everything is secure.

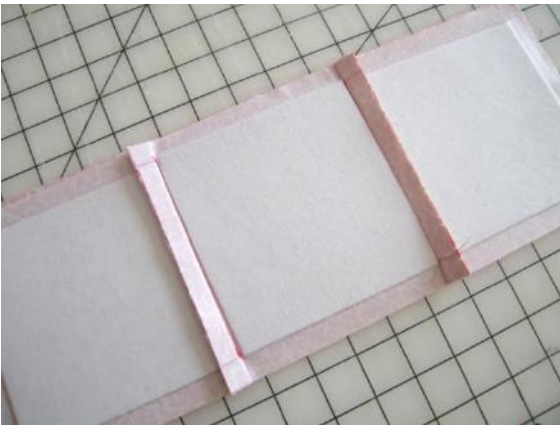


Repeat the last couple of steps with the other four lining pieces.

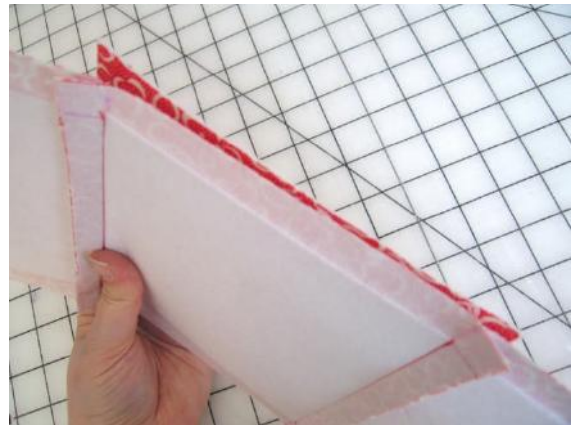
Set your machine to sew a slightly shorter than normal stitch. (This will help to secure the seams, which will be twisted and crushed during sewing.)



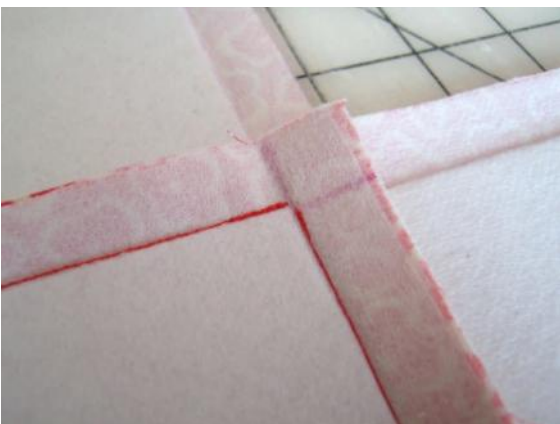
Place the right sides of two lining squares together. Stitch together, following the line you marked earlier, but not starting before or continuing beyond the point near the corners where it intersects with the lines from the adjacent sides. Sew forward and backward at the beginning and end of your seam to secure.



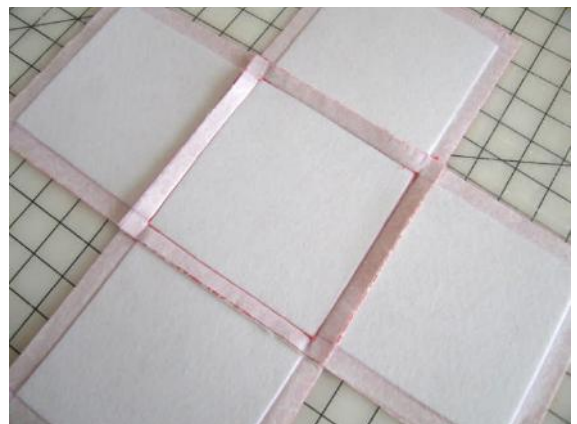
Using the same method, sew another square to the opposite side of the first. Press seam allowances toward the outside, as shown above.



Match a fourth square to another side of the first, as shown above.



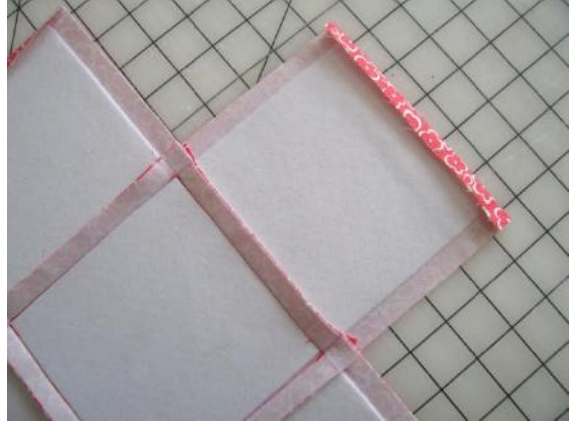
Sew in place, again making sure not to sew beyond the intersection of your marked lines. Press seam allowances toward the outside.



Repeat with the last square until your block looks something like the above photo.



The right side of your block should now look something like this.



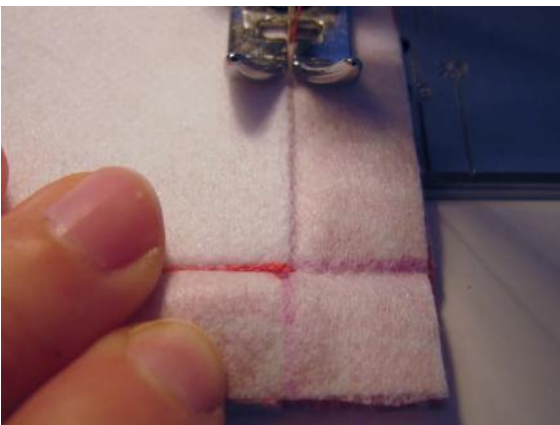
Using the marked line as a guide, press what will become the top edges of your block toward the inside. (You will need to unfold these creases before sewing sides together.)



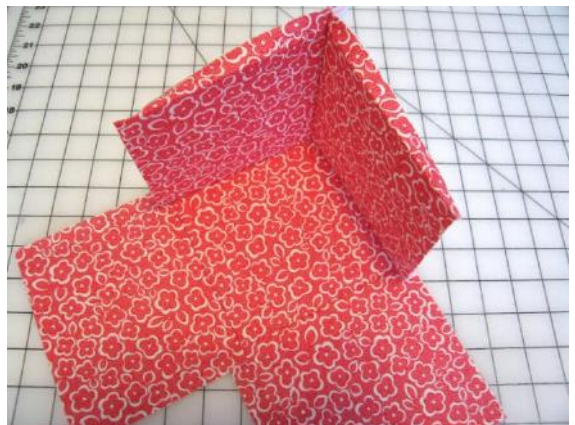
Now that all of the sides are sewn to the bottom, we need to sew the side seams. The lining bottom will need to be folded in half, as shown above.



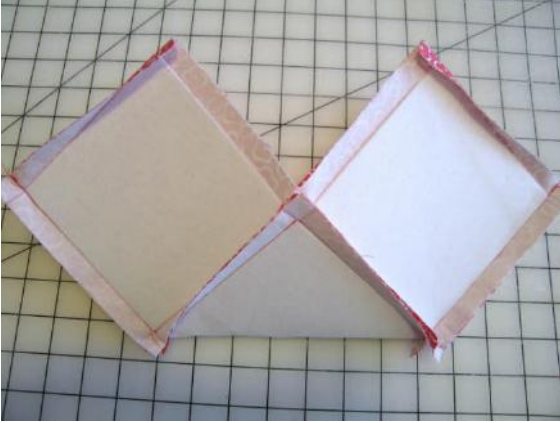
Starting at the very top (after unfolding the folded edge) stitch along the marked line, sewing two sides together. As you approach the bottom, fold the seam allowance from the bottom square out of the way as shown above.



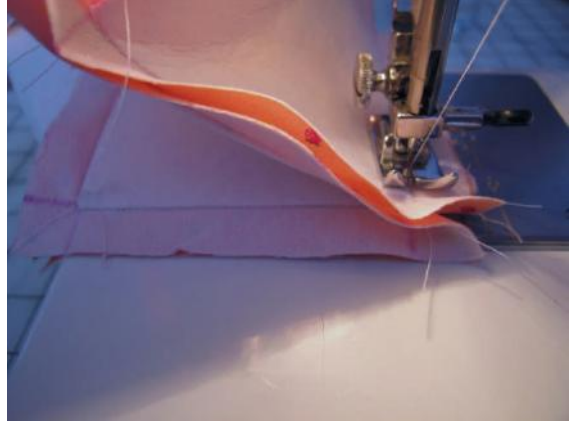
Fold the rest of the seam allowance down, as shown above, and continue stitching just until the intersection of the marked lines/corner of the heavyweight interfacing.



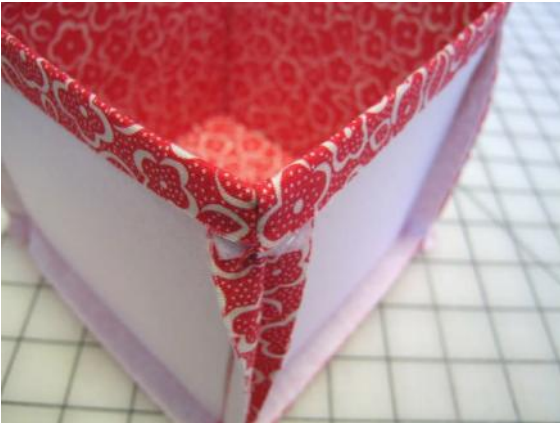
You should now have one side sewn, as shown above.



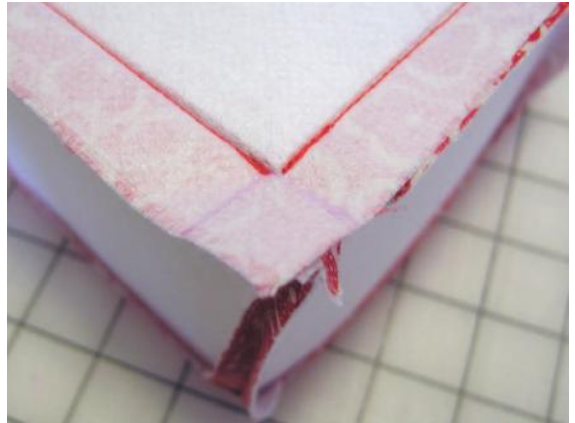
Use the same method to sew the opposite two sides together. (Note how the bottom square is folded to accomplish this.)



Continue, sewing the remaining two sides together. Note in the photo above how the bottom square is folded in order to accomplish this.



Once all four sides are sewn together, fold the lining fabric toward the outside, using the crease you pressed earlier.



In order to make sure that the lining fits snugly inside the block exterior, we need to clean up the seam allowances at the bottom corners.



Start by folding a corner back, as shown above.

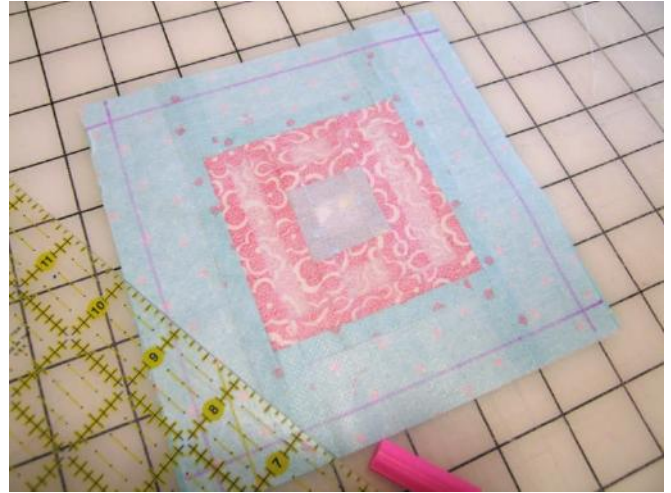


Next, fold both sides toward the middle, much as you would if you were making a mitered corner.



Secure the seam allowance in each corner with a couple of stitches, as shown above. Be careful not to pull your stitches too tight, as it could warp the shape of your finished block.

Once you've secured all seam allowances, set your lining aside.



Begin making your block exterior by ironing a square of lightweight fusible interfacing to the wrong side of each of your exterior/patchwork squares.

Use your marker to again draw lines along each side but, this time, make them 3/8" from each side.



Place your batting or fusible fleece square inside the frame you've just marked. If you're using fusible fleece, iron it in place.



Machine quilt each square as desired. (Make sure to readjust your stitch length first!)

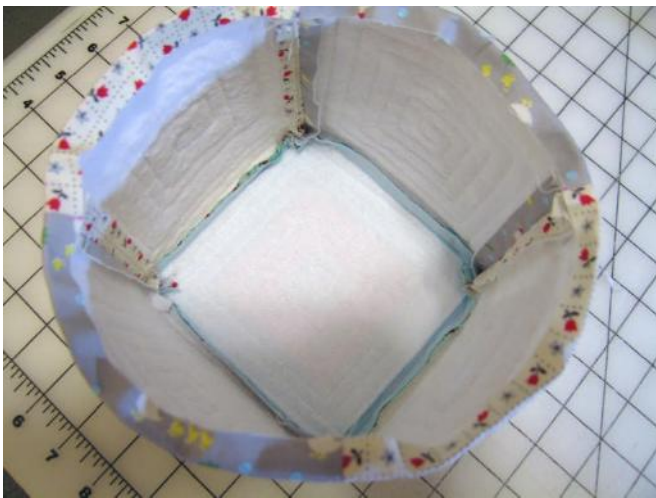
I started in the center of each block and quilted a continuous square-in-square pattern over each panel.



Reset your machine to a shorter stitch and sew your five squares together using the same method used for sewing the lining, again following along the marked lines, which are now $\frac{3}{8}$ " from the edge instead of the $\frac{1}{2}$ " used for the lining.



Again using the marked line as a guide, fold and press the top edge toward the outside.



Turn block right side out, as shown above.



Carefully feed block lining inside the exterior, lining up the side seam allowances and pressing the corners together. You may need to crush the lining slightly to fit it entirely inside but, if your seams followed the marked lines as instructed, the lining should fit snugly inside without warping.



Press down at each bottom corner, making sure that everything lines up. You may need to massage the side seam allowances to get everything just right.

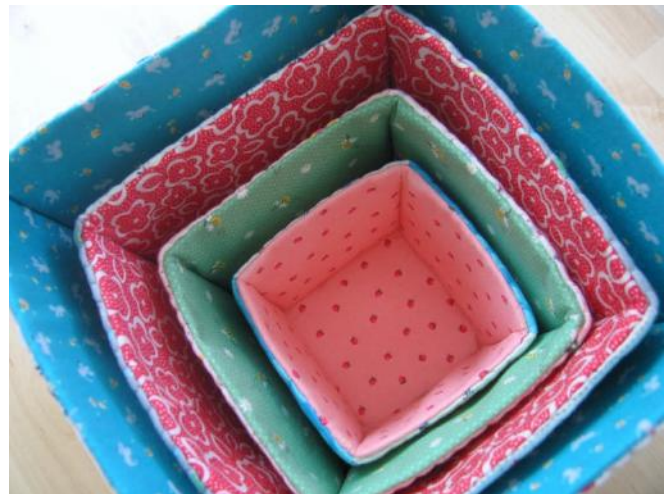


Use a blind stitch to close the top edge of the block. This may seem like a lot of work, but I think it's the cleanest way to finish the block.

If you're dead set against hand stitching, fit your machine with a walking foot and sew around the top of your block, keeping your stitches close to the edge.



When you're done stitching, pinch the corners and finger press each side against a tabletop to smooth out any wrinkles that may have occurred during sewing.



And you're done!

Enjoy your finished blocks!