

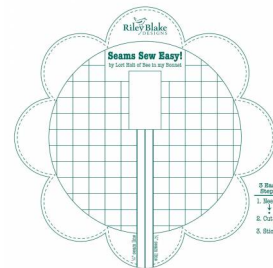
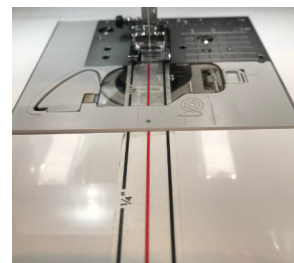
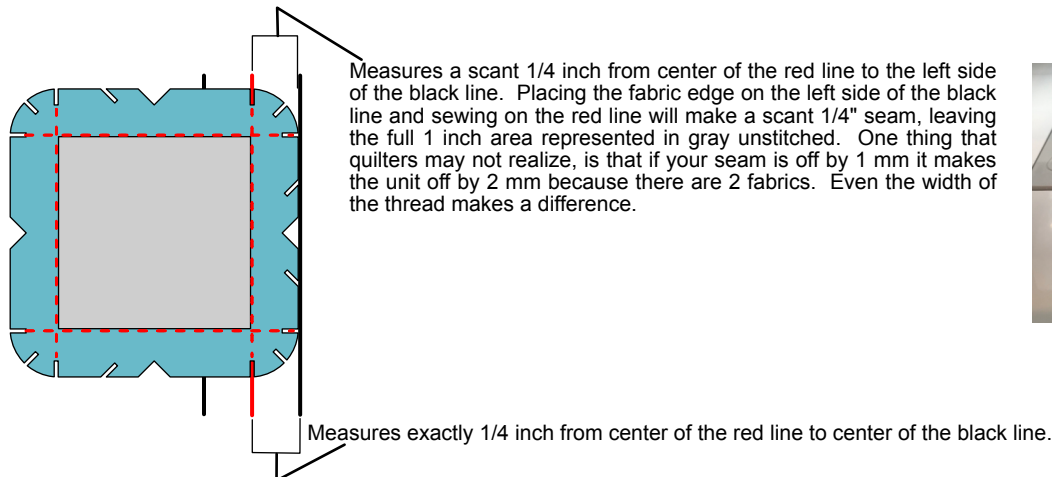
Laser Cut My Quilt

Recommended Practices for Best Piecing

Machine Setup

Seam Guide

Diagonal Seam Tape and the Riley Blake Seams Sew Easy guide are two examples of seam guides. Diagonal seam tape is a wash tape that has a red line down the center and a black line on either side 1/4 inch from the red line. It is inexpensive, easy to remove, and will not leave any residue if removed and replaced often. The Cluck Cluck Sew brand has thicker, easier to see lines than the other brands. The Seams Sew Easy guide has a temporary adhesive so it can be removed and reapplied. **My shapes are all tested and designed to be sewn using Cluck Cluck Sew Diagonal Seam Tape.** Other off-brands have thinner lines and are not accurate. Here is why:



From geometry class, we all learned that 2 points determine a line. When you only use the pressor foot, you are essentially using just 1 point at the needle and the fabric can pivot from left to right. When you use seam tape, you use the whole line and the line is accurate. Not only are you using it for diagonal seams but also all your straight seams. You can purchase this tape in my shop along with a laser-cut alignment guide to install it perfectly straight.

Thread

Use a fine thread such as a 50 wt. I use 100% cotton Aurifil Mako 50/2 in a neutral color such as white, off-white, beige, gray, or black depending on the fabrics I'm sewing.

Stitch Length

It's amazing how much control you gain by shortening the stitch length to about 1.5 to 1.7 mm. You can make fine adjustments in your sewing and it is barely noticed in the seam. Beware: Don't make them too short or you won't be able to rip them out.

Needle

The needle should be sharp and in the center position. Use the needle down feature if you have that.

Pressor Foot

The beauty of using a seam guide means that you don't have to use a 1/4 inch foot. I get better results by using the regular width pressor foot (standard foot) which extends over the feed dogs, feeding the fabric more evenly. A walking foot or dual feed foot works really well with compound seams to keep the fabrics from shifting. I encourage you to try different feet. I prefer a foot that is open or clear in front of the needle so I can see the needle notches. I use a 1/4 inch pressor foot for curved seams.

Sewing Tips

Pinning

Use extra fine pins, either 0.4 mm or 0.5 mm, for less distortion in the fabric. You will notice a huge difference. Pin where points meet to get perfect points and at match points. Pin around the outer edges of compound shapes and leave the pins in while you sew. Pin long strips to keep them from bowing. Pin curved pieces at each match point and end so the fabric is distributed evenly.

Use a wooden cuticle stick to keep the fabrics together after a pin is removed or at bulky areas. A cuticle stick has a slanted flat end that is firm yet soft and won't damage fabric or your machine. You can buy these at any drug store in the beauty section for a few dollars.



Pressing Seams

I was taught many years ago to press seams to the dark side and fretted over which way to press so the seams would "nest" and get perfect points. I am no longer a believer in this practice. I press the straight seams open when I make each of the units within a block. When I sew units together, I press open if there is equal resistance in the seam, meaning there are seams on both sides. I try to press open whenever possible. When there are more seams on one side, I may press towards the side with less seams, which is the side of least resistance. If there is a spacer (sashing) between blocks, I press towards the spacer because this is the way the seam wants to go. A curved seam can be pressed open or to either side, but I tend to press my curved seams to the side of least resistance. Double Wedding Ring with segmented arcs is a good example where the seams of the segmented arc should be pressed towards the background fabric on both the concave and convex sides, since all of those seams want to go that way.

Using these guidelines, I've had no issues with matching points and never have to plan which direction to press the seams. My blocks look better, are flatter, and have less bulk where points and corners join which is a huge advantage when you get to the quilting step.

Laser Cut My Quilt Shape Design

Features

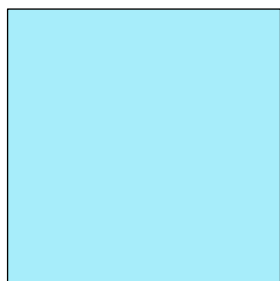
1. Accurate size.
2. Rounded corners and points that always line up.
3. Needle notch sewing guides to start and stop the seam.
4. Match points to match seams.
5. Many time-saving compound piecing options.
6. Y-seam dots
7. Concave curves are clipped
8. All curves have multiple match points
9. Fray resistant edge
10. Ready to sew!!

Materials Needed

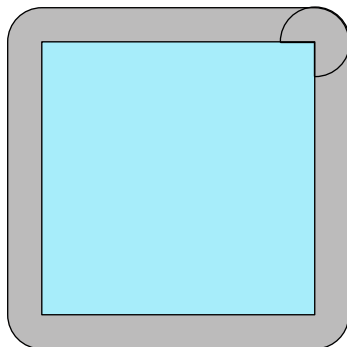
1. Cluck Cluck Diagonal Seam Tape.
2. LCMQ Diagonal Seam Tape Alignment Guide.
3. Rotary Cutter/Mat/Ruler or a scissors.
4. Sewing machine in good working order.
5. Thread 50/2 weight.
6. Very fine pins (0.4mm or 0.5mm).

How LCMQ digital shapes are made:

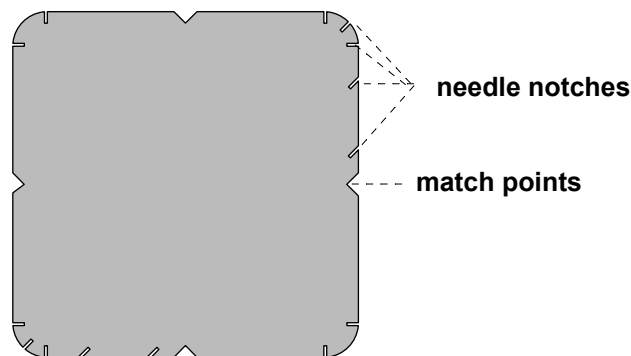
1. Starts with a shape.



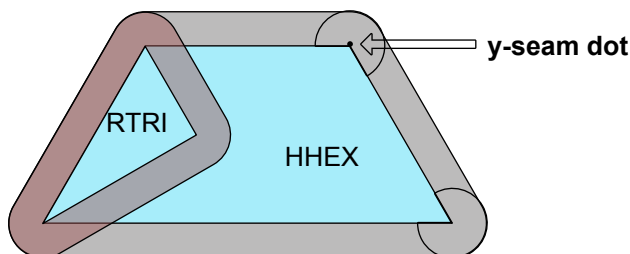
2. 1/4" is added around the shape.



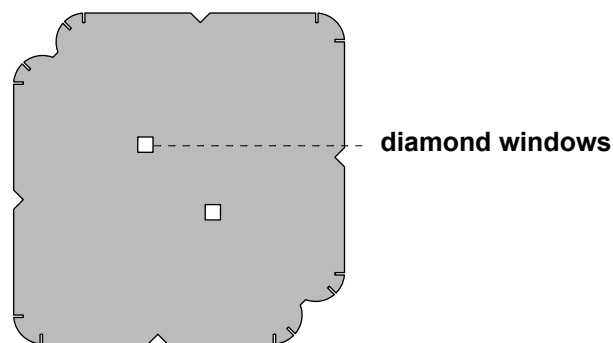
3. Edges are modified to meet the needs of the pattern.



4. Dots can be added at y-seams.



5. Shapes can be combined to make **compound** shapes.



The seam allowances are exactly 1/4 inch around every shape. This makes all corners and points rounded, cutting off all extra fabric (a.k.a. dog ears). Any 2 shapes with a side of the same finished length, no matter the angles, will fit together end to end. See how the half hexagon and the right triangle fit together in the picture above. Seam allowance can be adjusted for foundation paper piecing where a larger seam allowance is usually desired.

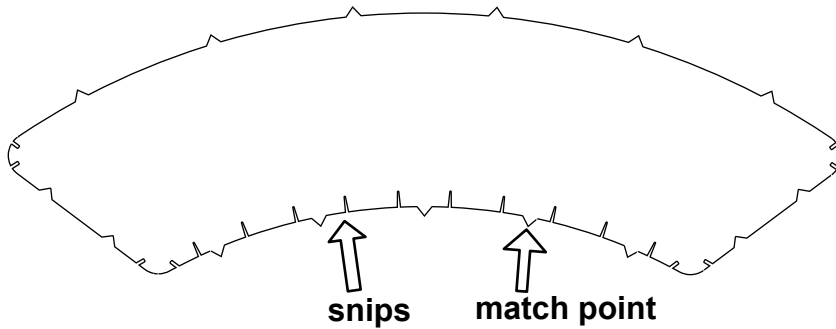
A compound shape is created by fusing 2 or more shapes. These shapes have diamond windows cut into the compound seam allowance which is created by the merging of 2 match points. The black line on the seam tape will be centered in these windows to sew the seam, eliminating the need to draw lines on the fabric.

All of these features help to improve accuracy, eliminate marking, eliminate trimming or "squaring up", and finish your quilt faster. **Any shape can be created in any size, within the limits of the laser. Shapes can be created for traditional piecing, paper foundation piecing, hand appliqué, fusible appliqué, and more. Custom cutting services are available.**

Laser Cut My Quilt

Shape Design for Curves

6. Snips are cut into concave curves.
7. Outward match points are added to curves.



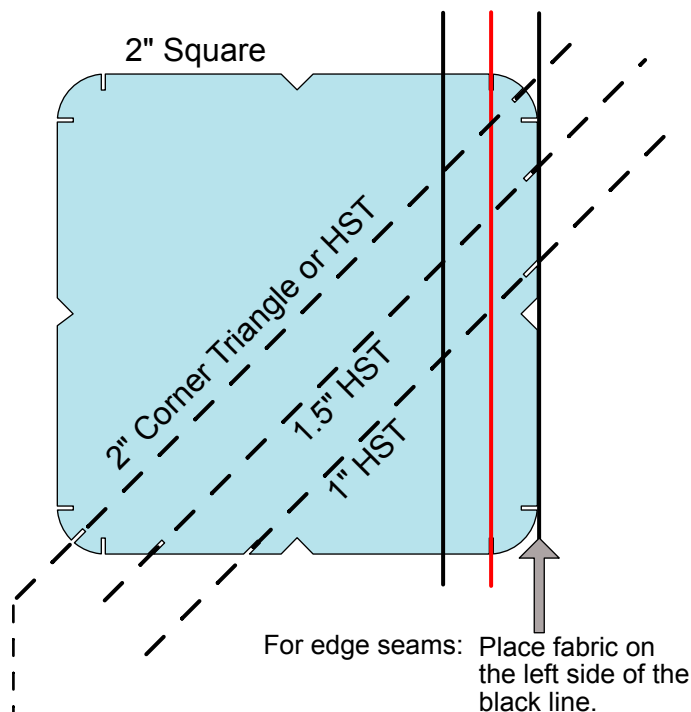
Each snip is 3/16 inch deep which is sufficient space from the seam for strength and deep enough to bend the edge around the curve.

Curved edges have outward match points that extend beyond the edge of the seam allowance because inwardly cut match points would interfere with how the snips work to ease the fabric. Most plastic templates and fabric cutting dies have only one match point in the center and you have to try to distribute the fabric evenly along the curve. Inevitably, the blocks will not be square or flat because the fibers on portions of the curve are cut on the bias and will naturally be easier to work than other parts of the curve. Therefore, all curves have several match points to help you properly align and distribute perfectly.

For patterns with curved seams it is crucial to sew perfect seams. The quilt will be very wonky if the seams are not sewn well. The problem is within the block where a badly sewn curve has warped the block. No amount of trimming will unwarp the block.

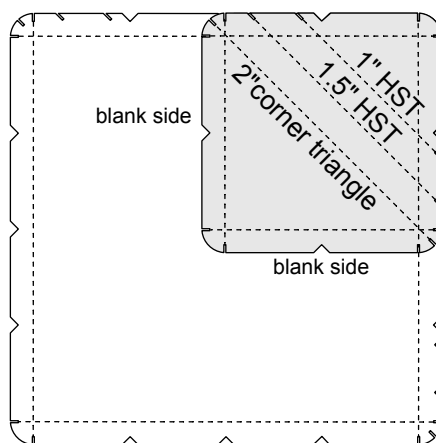
Shape Examples

The Fabulous Square

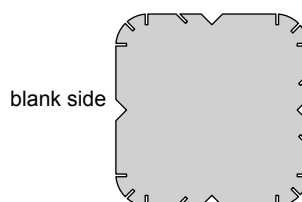


Note that this line is to the right of the center diagonal and the other 2 lines are to the left of the diagonal center so all seams are still a scant 1/4 inch.

All single squares are cut with needle notches to guide you in making half square triangles and corner triangles. Two squares of equal size can be sewn together into a HST unit of the same size plus a bonus HST unit 1/2" or 1" smaller. The square can be sewn to the corner of a larger square or rectangle to make a corner triangle (a.k.a. snowball corner, stitch and flip triangle) with a bonus HST unit (either 1/2" or 1" smaller). This is the best, most accurate way to make a variety of pieced units without wasting fabric. The seam allowance will be small when making the bonus HST that is 1/2" smaller.



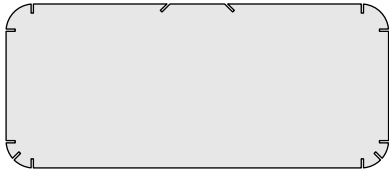
When using a square to make a corner triangle, always orient the smaller square with diagonal needle notches on the edges of the larger square or rectangle and the blank sides towards the center. You are only using the diagonal needle notches on the top shape for your sewing guide.



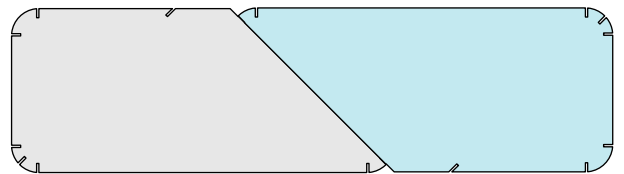
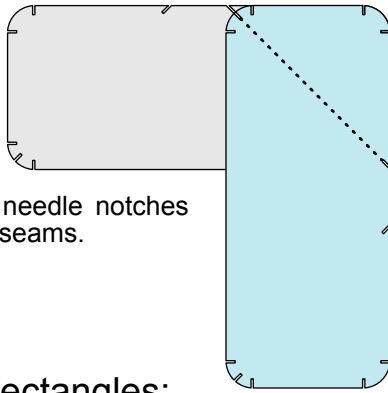
For corner triangles with directional fabrics: A second set of diagonal needle notches can be added. This square can be turned to make the stripes go the other direction. In this case there is only one blank side.

The Rectangle

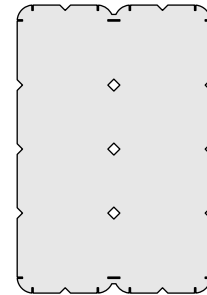
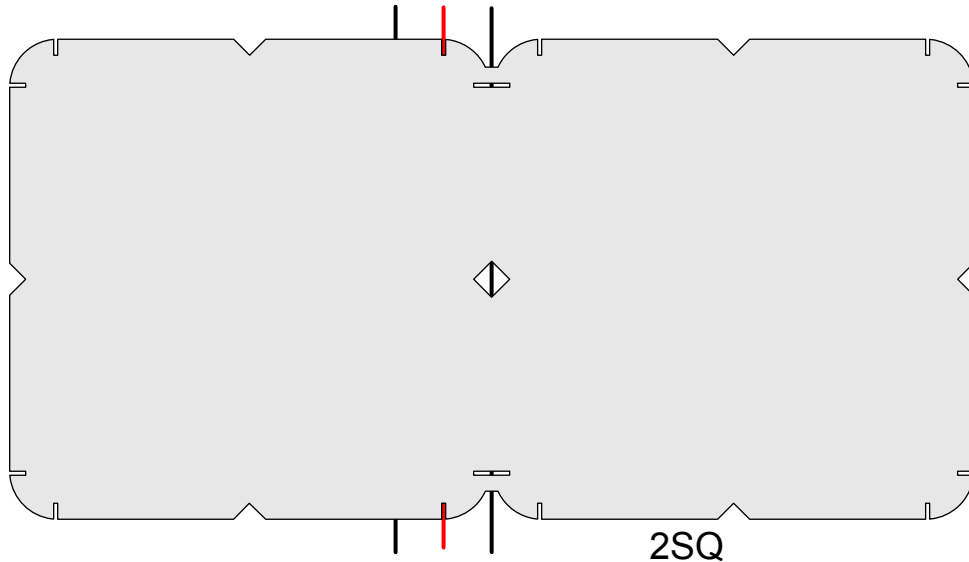
Some Shape Examples



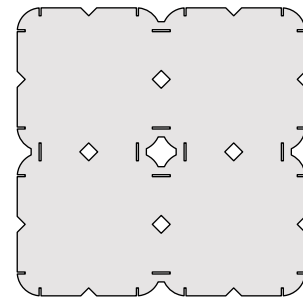
Rectangles can have diagonal needle notches cut to make diagonal or mitered seams.



Compound Squares and Rectangles:

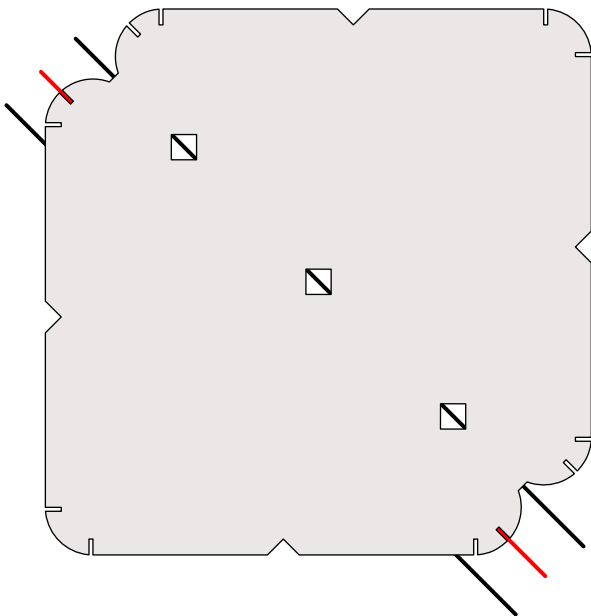


2RECT

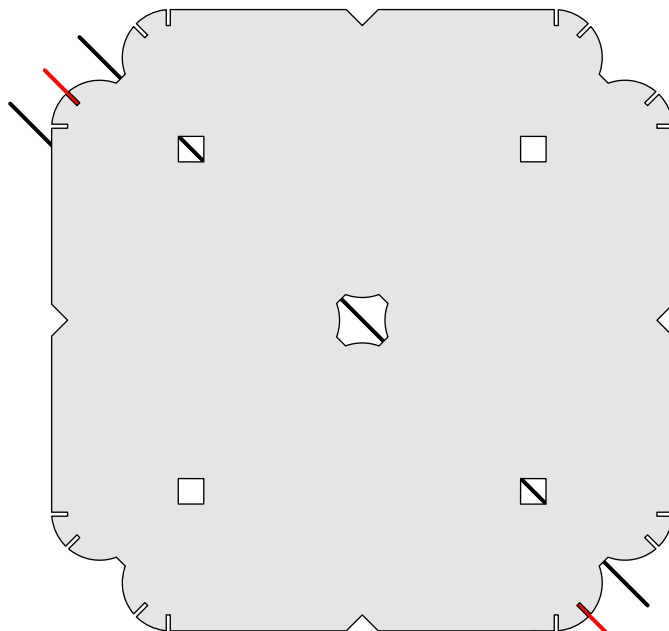


4SQ

Compound Triangles:



2-Half Square Triangles
2HST



4-Quarter Square Triangles
4QST

Diamond are cut at least every inch in the compound seam to give you a window to see the seam tape and help you keep the 2 pieces lined up correctly. Pins can be placed on either side of the compound seam and left in while sewing. There is no need to draw lines on the fabrics because the needle notches and diamond windows serve as your seam guides. The shapes are cut the correct size so you will never need to trim or square up anything. **Complete sewing instructions are available at LaserCutMyQuilt.com.**