

Girl Scouts of North East Ohio  
NEORQC grant funded program  
In cooperation with *Memory Makers* and *Quilters with Heart* guilds  
Camp Ledgewood, 7047 Akron-Peninsula Road Peninsula, OH 44264

## How To Make A Rag Quilt

Making a rag quilt is a fun quilting technique and perfect for the beginner quilter. Rag quilts have exposed seams that fray when washed. It makes a very cuddly quilt that's simple to make and impressive to look at.

For this project, you will be sewing precut block "sandwiches" together using straight lines. Once you get the hang of it, you'll find this sews together quickly. You'll have a completed quilt to take home in just a few hours! 😊

### Step 1: Check to see you have all pieces in your packet

The cotton fabrics have been precut for you. Your packet contains two (or more) colors of fabric:

- 60 – 9" squares (30 for the front and 30 for the back of the quilt) and
- 30 – 7" squares of batting.

Thread is supplied and already on your sewing machine, ready to go!

Note: Rag quilts are made up of three layers: **a top, batting and a backing** (making a "sandwich"). Fabrics used are either cotton or flannel for the best "ragging"

### Step 2: Mark sewing lines

Using a washable marking pen and ruler, draw a line from one corner to the opposite corner, and then another line connecting the other two corners. You are making an "X" shape on the right (top) side of each of your 30 quilt top blocks (15 of one color and 15 of the second color). These serve as sewing guides and will disappear when ironed or washed.



### Step 3: Make the quilt "sandwich"

Place the 9" backing piece (right side of fabric face down), then your 7" middle layer (batting) centered on the back, followed by your 9" top piece (with the drawn "X") face up. Note: for this project, use the same color/print fabric for both the top and bottom of each sandwich.



9" backing piece with 7" middle layer batting



Top, face up

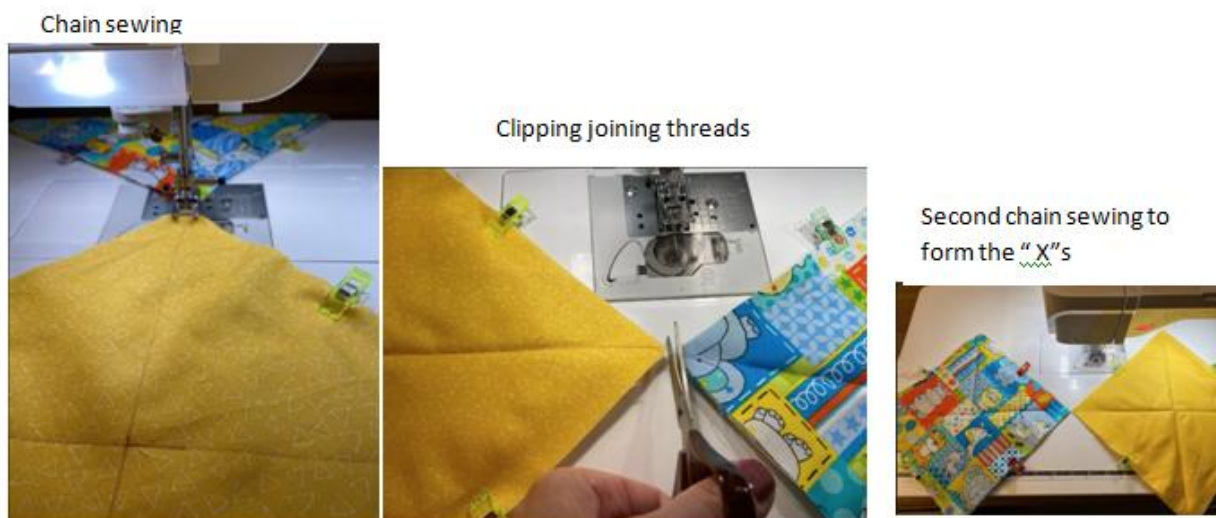
Middle batting

Back, face down

### **Step 4: Sewing the blocks**

- Smooth or press squares.
- Pin/clip the squares together for sewing. Four pins or clips are probably enough to hold it together for sewing the “X”.
- Using a **stitch length of 3.0**, stitch a large X through the center of your 3 layers from corner to corner. (*A walking foot is going to be useful here in keeping all the layers neatly together as you sew, but is not essential*). Repeat until all 30 squares are sewn with the “X”s (**15 of one fabric, 15 of the other**).

Note: You may choose to do one block at a time or try “chain sewing” the blocks instead. This involves sewing each block connected to the next until all 30 are done (completing just one side of the “X” first); then clipping the joining threads to separate the blocks and then chain sewing again to complete the “X”s.



### **Step 5: Layout design**

On the floor (or any large flat surface), lay out the sewn squares in six rows of 5 across to form the look you like. Using the two or three fabric colors provided, lay out the design that appeals to you for the top and bottom of the quilt. For example, if using two fabrics you could use alternating block colors (as seen in the picture below). Rows 1, 3 & 5 follow the same alternating block color order and Rows 2, 4, and 6 begin with the opposite color order from the odd rows and alternate block colors – this will stagger the blocks for an appealing look. *Note: When using more than two fabrics to make your quilt, after laying them out on a flat surface and arranging the look you want, it helps to take a picture of the layout to refer to later.*

×		×		×
	×		×	
×		×		×
	×		×	
×		×		×
	×		×	



Row 1  
Row 2  
Row 3  
Row 4  
Row 5  
Row 6

### **Step 6: Sew the squares into rows**

- We will be using a 1 inch seam allowance.
- Opposite to usual sewing, you'll be sewing with the **WRONG** sides (back side) together – whatever you want on the back of your quilt needs to be sewn facing each other which allow the fabrics on the front and the seam allowance to appear on top.
- You may choose to sew a row of 5 blocks (the horizontal row) or 6 blocks (the vertical row) together at a time.

Pin/Clip the first two blocks of the row together, back sides facing each other. Sew. Then pin/clip the third block to the second and sew, repeat for the fourth, fifth, and/or sixth blocks - making sure to alternate fabrics (as in your layout). This completes one row.

Repeat sewing the other rows until all are done.

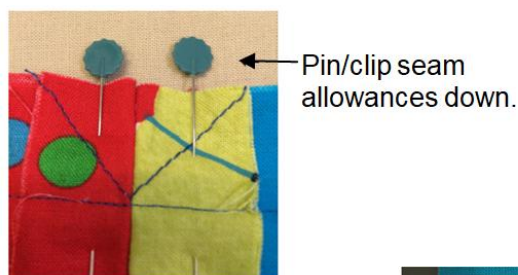


Detail of squares sewn together.



### **Step 7: Sewing the rows together**

- Following the pattern, attach rows to each other, sew them **WRONG** side (back sides) together and matching seam intersections. Be sure to open up the seam allowance front and back as you sew and match the seam allowances on your squares.
- To pin/clip accurately, with the back sides together and cut edges even, stick a pin directly through both seam intersections, then flatten the seam allowance on both sides with your fingers and pin/clip them down. You can now remove the intersection pin and sew the seam.



- Double check that you haven't sewn a fold on the bottom side.
- Sew all the way around the perimeter of the quilt (1" seam), backstitching at each seam join (just for security – optional step).



### **Step 8: Clipping the Seams**

- Using a spring loaded ragging scissor (will help ease the pain out of your hands from repeated clipping) or regular sewing scissors - make perpendicular cuts in all seams, approximately 1/4" to 1/2" apart). Be careful NOT to snip into your stitching or you'll have to re-sew that seam! Snip all around the edges too.
- Clip away excess seam allowance at intersections.
- Inspect the quilt. Did you forget to clip any seams?
- Inspect the back of your quilt. Are all of the seams intact?



### **Step 9: Washing your quilt to make it fray**

(Courtesy of <quilting.about.com, How to Make a Rag Quilt>)

*"I usually put a bit of soap in the wash, and use softener, because they both seem to help fray the edges of a rag quilt. Use plain water if you prefer. Some people recommend putting a filter on your washer drain to keep loose threads from building up in septic systems. My own personal opinion -- cottons disintegrate easily, and stray threads shouldn't be a problem unless you're making oodles of rag quilts.*

*My front-loading washer's filter catches many of the threads, and more stick to the damp fabric, and are later caught by the clothes dryer. (Remember to clean out the lint trap halfway through drying and again at the end of the dry cycle),*

*Inspect the quilt. Did you forget to clip any seams? Clip them now, before you dry the quilt (you'll likely need to wash it again to increase fraying). Remove when dry and clip away loose threads if necessary.*

*Inspect the back of your quilt. Are all of the seams intact? If you accidentally clipped into one or two, fold back the frays and sew over the original seam, backstitching at the beginning and end of the new seam. For extra strength, make the repair a little longer than the original seam line.*

*Wash and dry the quilt one or two more times if you'd like the frays to be softer and more noticeable. Check again for loose seams and make repairs if necessary."* **See pg 5 for more washing instructions.**

### **Step 10: Enjoy your new quilt! ☺**



## Additional information if you want to make this quilt at home:

### Summary of Supplies needed:

- Rotary cutter (optional but recommended), Ruler for accuracy, mat
- Washable marking pen
- Sewing pins or clips
- Fabrics - You may choose to use more than two fabrics to create your rag quilts (or even choose to make it “scrappy” with a variety of fabric scraps) – the design is up to you. Fabrics should either all be washed, dried and pressed or neither washed & dried.
- Matching or neutral thread
- Batting - suggest using *Warm & Natural* batting or flannel fabric. Big fluffy poly batting is not suitable for this project.
- Sewing machine
- Walking foot (optional but recommended)
- Scissors (spring loaded are recommended)

The size of the quilt can be changed just by adding or subtracting the number of blocks you make.

**In Step 4, sewing the “X”s:** you may choose to use a straight stitch or add a little “something extra” by using a zigzag or decorative stitch (if you machine has this feature). It will take longer to sew out, but give you a different look.

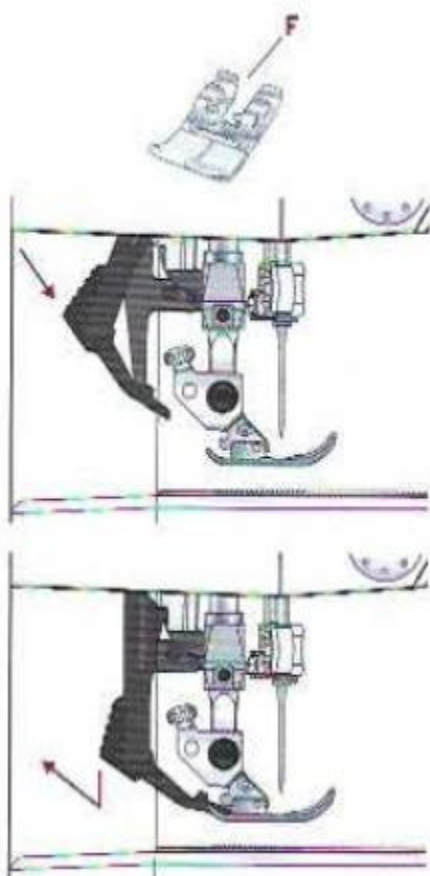


**In Step 9: Washing your quilt.** If you use *Crayola Washable markers*, as we did today, for **best results wash promptly in hot wash cycle**. Do not prewash or use chlorine bleach. Repeat laundering may be required.

Compiled by Jane Korsberg, Sharon Ramsay 2023

References used:  
 “How to make a rag quilt” by Deby at So-Sew-Easy.com  
 “How to Make a Rag Quilt” A Free Rag Quilt Pattern and Tutorial by Stacy Fisher  
 quilting.about.com, How to Make a Rag Quilt.

Here is a diagram of how to engage the dual feed system for the Pfaff 1475 sewing machines we are using today.



### IDT™ system (integrated dual feed)

For sewing any fabric precisely, PFAFF® passport™ sewing machine provides the ideal solution: the integrated dual feed, IDT™ system. As on industrial machines, the IDT™ system feeds the fabric from the top and bottom at the same time. The fabrics are fed precisely. On light fabrics such as silk or rayon the dual feed prevents puckering of the seam. The even feeding action also ensures perfect matching of checked and striped fabrics. The IDT™ system keeps all layers of quilt projects aligned to prevent shifting of the layers.

#### Engaging the IDT™ system

*Important: For all work with the IDT™ system, use presser feet with the center back cut-out (F).*

Raise the presser foot. Press the IDT™ system down until it engages.

#### Disengaging the IDT™ system

Raise the presser foot. Hold the IDT™ system with two fingers at the ribbed ankle. Pull the IDT™ system down, then pull it away from you to release the IDT™ system slowly upward.