

The Sampler Quilt Sew Along



Sampler quilts are a great way to master different blocks and have a finished quilt when you are done. You can make as many or as few blocks as you wish and in the end you can choose which ones to put in your quilt. Our goal is to help you finish your sampler quilt before the Southern New Mexico State Fair in September so that you can enter it if you wish.

Block 1: Rail Fence

This is a great, traditional block that looks beautiful on its own or as an entire quilt. It can be easily adapted to any size you like.

Use a standard $\frac{1}{4}$ inch seam width.



Step one – Select four fabrics that you like, with at least one being dark and at least one being light.

Cut one 2-inch strip by WOF (width of fabric) from each color.

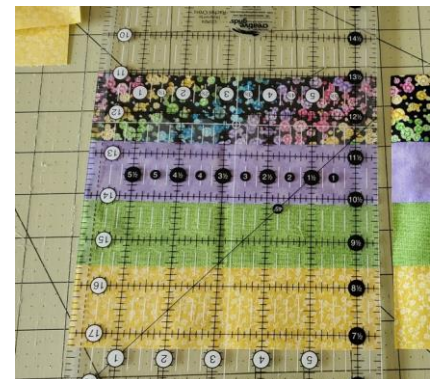


Sew these into one strip set, with the dark color being on one edge. (Press all the seams to one side and in the same direction.)



Tip: When sewing strip sets, sew top to bottom, then sew next strip from bottom to top. Alternate sewing direction to prevent flaring

Measure the width of your strip set. Ideally it should measure $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide. Cut the strip into squares, i.e., if your strip set is $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide cut the strip into $6\frac{1}{2}$ inch segments, if it's $6\frac{1}{4}$ inches, cut the strip into $6\frac{1}{4}$ squares, etc. The strip should yield 6 squares.





Take four of the squares and arrange them into a four patch that looks something like the block on left:

Sew the two top halves together and the two bottom halves together(R). Press the seams in opposite directions so you will be able to nest the seams when sewing the top and bottom together. This will help insure your block lines up when you are done.



You have now completed a rail fence block.



This block is perfect in a sampler, but it's also great as a quilt:

To make a quilt top:

- Approximate finished size 54" x 78"
- 1 yard each of four fabrics for strip sets
- 1 yard Border fabric
- Yardage sufficient to bind and back your quilt



- Cut (16) 2" by WOF strips from each fabric.
- Cut (7) 3 1/2 " by WOF strips for border.
- ** (In quilt top to the right, I cut the black border 1" and the printed border 3")

Sew together 16 strip sets that are identical in fabric order. Follow the instructions above to complete your blocks. This will yield 24 blocks. Arrange them in a pattern you like and stitch them together in 6 rows of 4 blocks each matching seams as you go. Stitch the rows together. If necessary, square the quilt top before adding borders. When you are ready to add borders, measure each side of the quilt. Cut two identical border strips and stitch them to each side. Now measure the top and bottom and again cut two identical border strips and stitch.

To resize the quilt block:

Choose your strip width. The wider the strip is, the bigger the block will be. Follow the instructions above to make your block.

Many patterns on the internet use jelly roll (2 1/2 ") strips and make a very scrappy rail fence. Experiment and have fun. Making a rail fence quilt is a good way to reduce your stash. Also remember, if you'd like to donate a rail fence (or any other pattern) quilt or quilt top to the Community Cupboard it is always welcome!