

Foundation Piecing How-to #3 JOINING THE FOUNDATIONS

- 1 Lay two foundation pieces on a table, face up, to orient them correctly.



Foundations A and B

Time to be fussy

Pinning and sewing techniques can really make a difference to the success of your project. The following can give you a good start.

Sometimes, just the right amount of chocolate could very well improve your results. [g]

- 2 Align the two pieces along the stitching line, with the fabric right sides together. As the photo to the right shows, the engineered corners will insure that the pieces line up perfectly, even if they form steep angles.

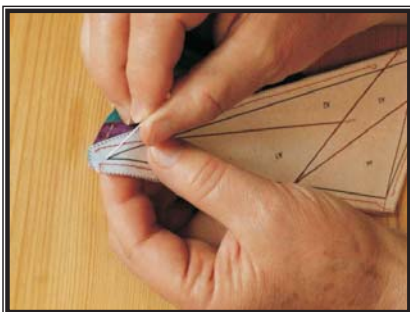


The 2 arrows show how the engineered corners fit when you sew the foundations together

- 3 This step helps you keep the foundations from shifting during the pinning process.

Place a pin straight down at the beginning of the printed stitching line, through both foundation pieces. Check the bottom piece to see that the pin comes out exactly at the beginning of the printed stitching line.

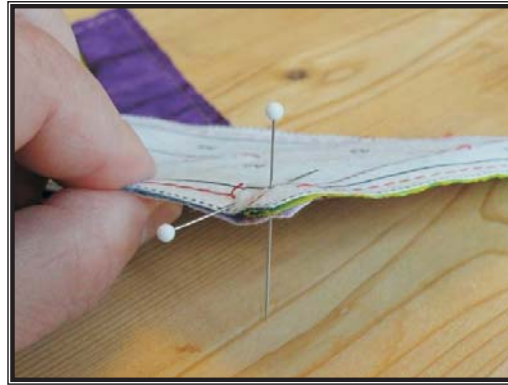
Slightly separate the two pieces to double-check the placement. The pin needs to pierce the fabric exactly in the ditch of any seam on either foundation.



It is so very worth it to take time at this stage to be as accurate as is humanly possible!

- 4 Hold the pin straight up and down as you snug the foundation pieces together. Support the pin between your index and middle fingers, so it remains perpendicular.

Insert a second pin horizontally, while still holding the first pin, to keep the pieces in place. Now it's safe to remove the first pin.



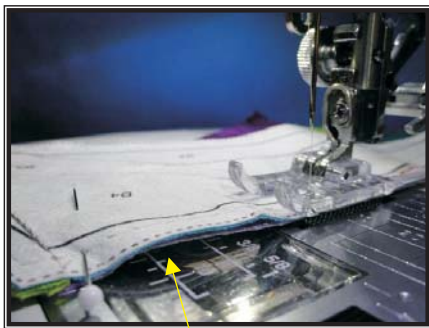
Hold the underside of the pin between your index and middle fingers to control its angle, then insert the horizontal pin that will stay in place while you baste the seam.

- 5 Repeat Steps 3 and 4 at the other end of the marked seamline, as well as at any intersecting seams.

- 6 Use a longer stitch to baste the foundation pieces together at the **beginning**, each matched **intersection**, and the **end** of the stitching line. It also helps to use a quilting or walking foot.

If you were to stitch or baste the entire seam at once, the machine's presser foot might shift the top piece, ruining your careful matching. You can see the top layer shifting slightly in the first photo, below. Some machines are more apt to do this than others. To overcome this problem, simply jump from one intersection to the next, without cutting your threads as you can see in the second photo.

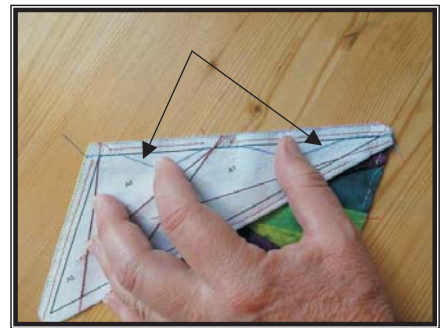
The third photo, below, shows the loops of thread that are left between the basted sections.



The yellow arrow shows the foundations bunching up ahead of the needle



Jump ahead to just before the next intersection



The arrows point to the excess thread between the intersections. You can leave this in or remove it after the final sewing.

- 7 Open the foundation pieces and check that the points match perfectly.

The amazing thing about basting is that if the point doesn't match up you can simply sew over the same area making doubly sure you have matched the two seam lines on both foundations and that you have sewn exactly on the line.

If you have wandered inward from the seam line, you will have to remove the basting after resewing. If you were outside the seam line you don't have to remove any stitching at this point unless you are worried about bulk.



Checking the points

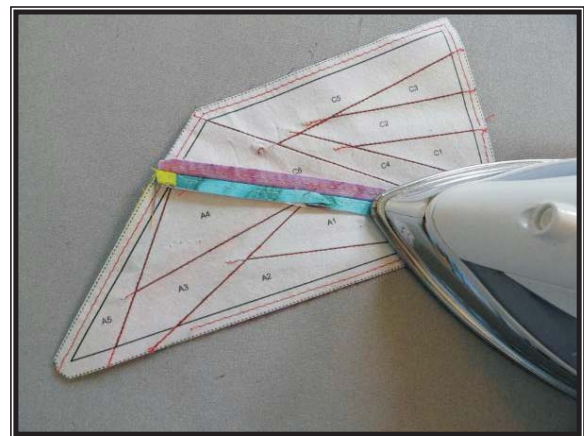
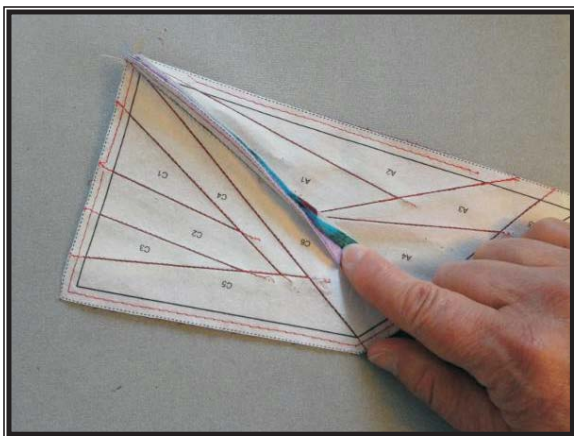
- 8 When all the points match, remove all the pins then stitch the entire seam with the same short stitches you have been using to sew the foundations.

If one piece is slightly longer than the other between the basting, place the **longer piece on the bottom** and let the feed dogs ease in the fullness.

It's a good idea to backstitch at either end of the seam, for extra security, especially if you are using a tear-away foundation material, or if you intend to tear out some of your leave-in foundations to reduce bulk.

- 9 Press the seam allowance open. If your foundation is polyester, finger-press first and then press only in the seam allowance with the tip of the iron, being careful not to touch the foundation itself. Or turn the piece over and press from the fabric side.

Pressing the seam allowance open will reduce bulk when you sew this unit to another piece. It's especially important if you are using a leave-in foundation material.

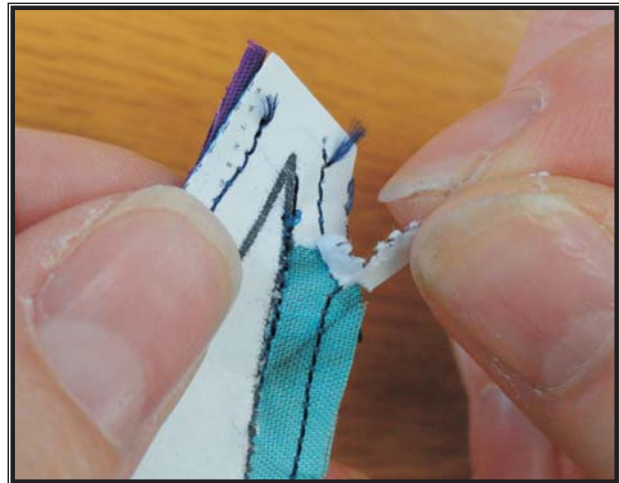


Finger press or press with a low temperature iron. Press seam allowances open for less bulk.

- 10** If you plan to remove the foundation from the quilt later, it's a good idea, now, to tear the narrow piece out of the seam allowance you have just pressed open. This will make it easier to remove the remainder of the foundation later, when the quilt top is together.

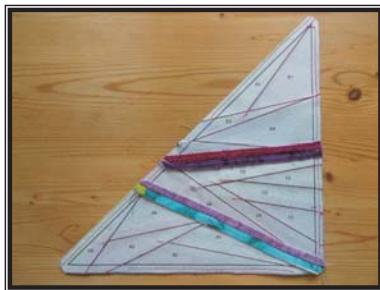
If your basting stitches are fairly long, you might find it easiest to pull the basting out of the seam allowance before you pull the foundation out of the seam allowance. If your stitches are short and the paper has perforated easily, you may not have to pull the basting out as in the photo to the right.

Use tweezers to remove any stubborn bits. You can leave the rest of the foundation in place to stabilize the block until you have completed the entire quilt top.



Removing seam allowances from the foundations

- 11** Repeat Steps 1 to 10 until your block is complete.



Foundations A, B, and C
foundation side



Foundations A, B, and C
fabric side



Completed block

- 12** In most cases, the foundation patterns on this site are symmetrical, so you will be working with multiples of 4. For example, a small quilt will have 4 blocks with or without borders. A medium quilt will have 16 blocks and a larger quilt will have 20 blocks. At this stage, in most of these patterns, you will continue making the same block 3 more times.

- 13** Using the diagrams provided in the pattern, arrange your completed blocks to form the quilt top.

- 14** Starting with the top row, pin and sew the topmost 2 blocks together, matching any intersections and the beginning and end points.

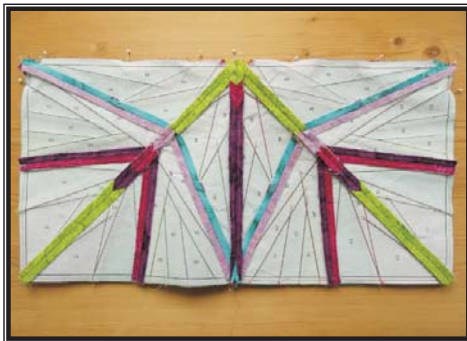
- 15** Finger-press or lightly press the seam allowance open.

16 Pin and sew the bottom two blocks (or next two blocks if doing a bigger quilt) to form row 2 (or the other half of row 1 in a larger quilt), matching any intersections and the beginning and end points.

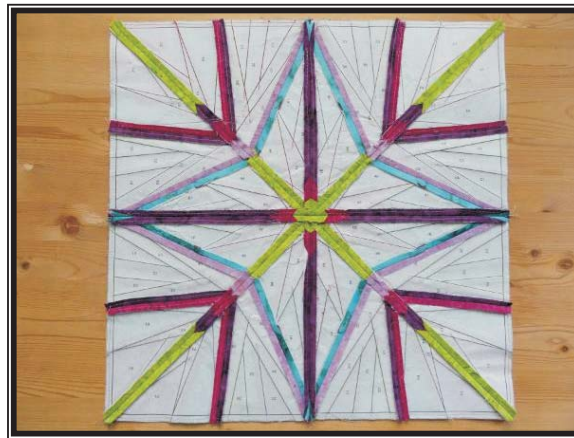
17 Finger-press or lightly press the seam allowance open.

18 Pin and sew row 1 to row 2 (or once you have completed the second row in a larger quilt), once again, matching any intersections and the beginning and end points.

19 Finger-press or lightly press the seam allowance open.



2 blocks joined



4 blocks joined

20 Add a border if you wish.

Regardless of the size of quilt you are making, these instructions cover all the basics. Any instructions unique to a quilt are covered in their patterns.

Happy quilting!

Quilt top completed

