

Diamond Quilts

Diamond Placemats – 15" x 20" approximate size

Process: Cutting strips at an angle to create 4 placemats.

This method works for ANY quilt or project with rows diamonds.

- The directions below are for small placemats. The smaller panels may also be used for purses, tote bags, pillows, or garments. To create larger designs, use more fabrics and larger strip sizes.
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Fabric Requirements:

- 8 - 12 fabric "fat quarters" totaling 3 yards for the front of the placemats
- 1-1/2 yards fabric for the backing and binding
- 1/2-1-1/2 yard large-scale print (for appliqué motifs. Larger quantity provides enough to make 4 matching napkins).
- craft-size batting or batting scraps--enough for 4 placemats
- 1 yard paper-backed fusible web product (light weight, stitchable)
- tear-away stabilizer - optional

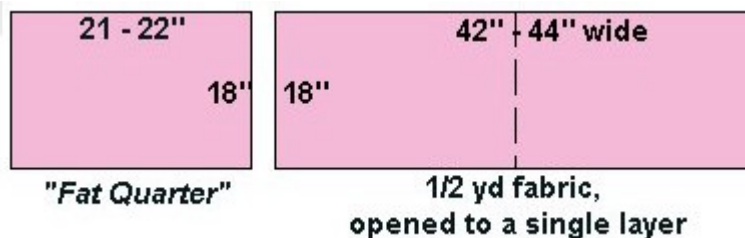
Equipment:

- sewing machine with quarter-inch foot
 - thread to match background and to appliqué design motifs
 - rotary cutter, self-healing mat, acrylic 6" x 24" ruler
 - Diamond ruler
 - iron, ironing board
 - spray starch or fabric finish
 - safety pins or spray basting adhesive (sold in quilt stores)
 - plate (to test for placement of design motifs)
 - serger for finishing napkins - optional
 - Diamond Quilts & Beyond* book by Jan Krentz - optional
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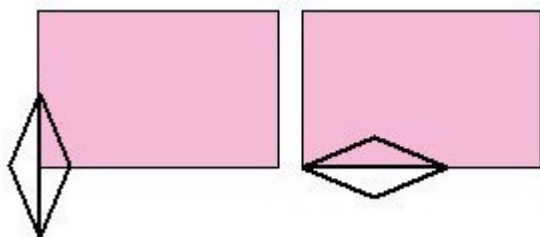
Steps:

1. Select several fabrics for the background of your project. I recommend at least eight or more designs (the more fabrics you have, the easier it is for random pattern placement within the pieced design).
2. For placemats, use fabric "fat quarters"; or, for larger projects, work with fabrics in half-yard cuts, selvage to selvage.

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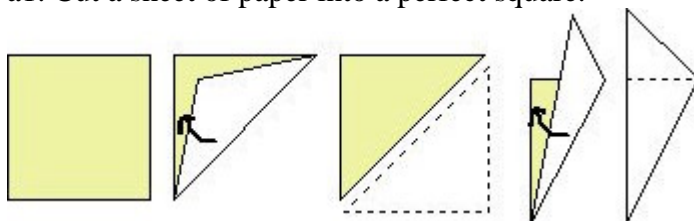
3. Layer fabrics *single thickness* in a stack that you can comfortably cut through – approximately six to eight fabrics per stack.
 - a. If you are layering just a few fabrics per stack, you'll have several stacks. More fabric in each stack = fewer stacks.
 - b. STRIPED FABRICS: align the stripes going the same direction and keep them on the top of the stack.
4. Lay a 45-degree diamond ruler on the straight edge of the stack, visually checking to see that the striped fabric is aligned with the *centerline* of the ruler (the center line goes from tip to tip lengthwise on the ruler).



(image 4)

5. If you do not own a diamond ruler:

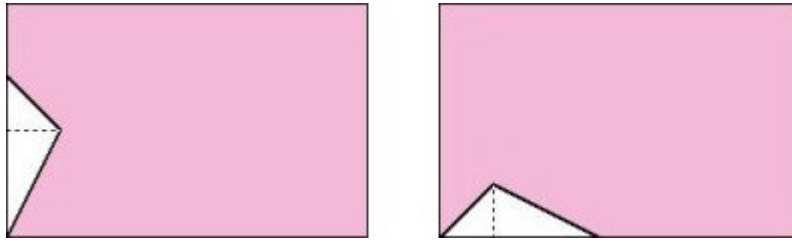
a1. Cut a sheet of paper into a perfect square.



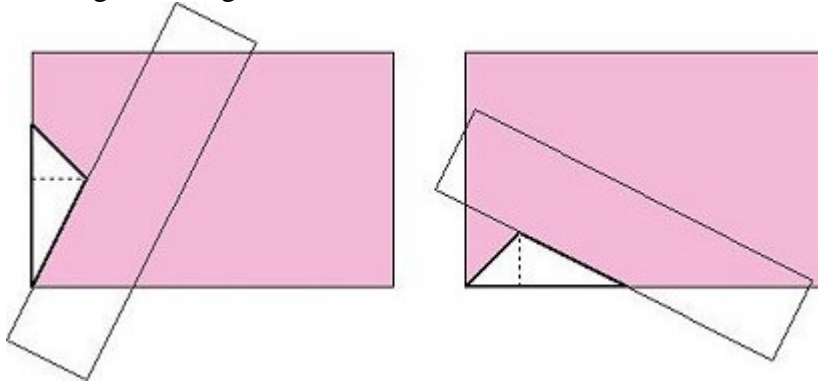
a2. Fold the paper diagonally, creating a triangle with two 45-degree tips.
a3. Cut on the fold line. Fold one of the paper triangles, dividing the tip in half.
a4. This narrow tip is 22.5 degrees--and is the angle required for the strips to be cut from the fabric.

a5. Align one edge of the paper against the fabric edge (*parallel to the stripes if applicable*)

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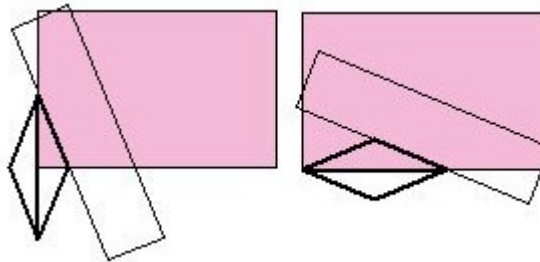


a6. Align the long ruler next to it.



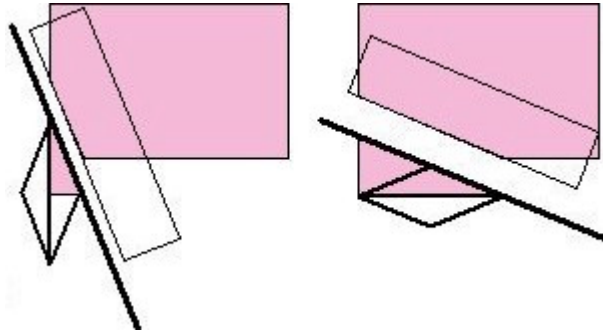
a7. Cut through all layers at this angle. Cut all strips.

6. Align a long acrylic ruler with one edge of the diamond ruler, establishing an angled cut. The ruler can be positioned on either edge, according to the fabric you're working with.

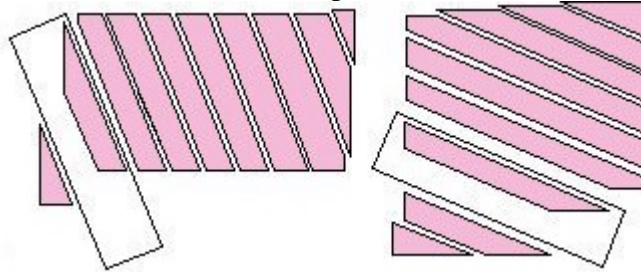


- a. Optional – draw the angle on the bottom of the ruler with a permanent marking pen. Mark the angle from both long edges of the ruler. Allow ink to dry.
7. Cut through all layers with a rotary cutter.

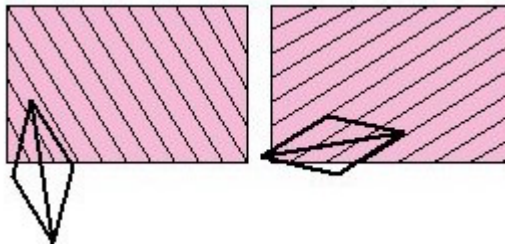
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8. Continue cutting strips at the established angle. (The red fabrics on camera were cut 2 inches wide. The finished cream-colored placemats were 2-1/2 inch strips.)

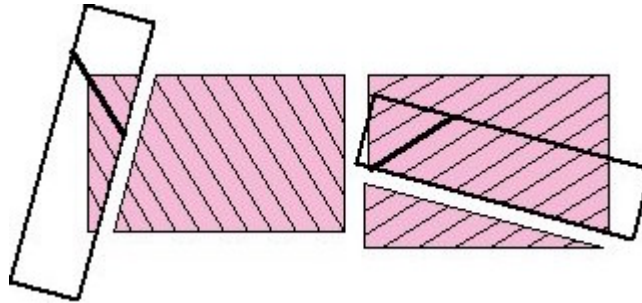
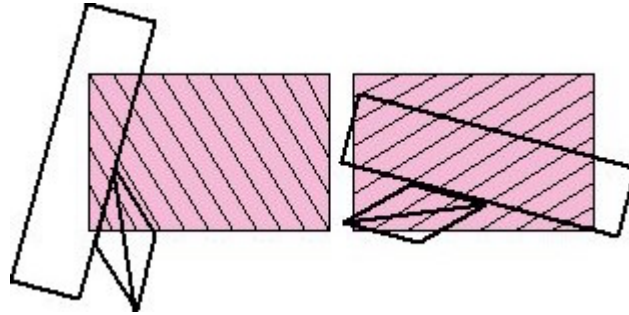


9. Arrange strips in varying combinations, mixing the patterns. Sew with a steady, straight seam allowance. Create several oversized pieced units (approximately 20" x 24").
10. Press seams open, moistening the fabric with a light mist of spray starch or fabric finish. Do not stretch or distort the fabric strips.
11. Lay one pieced unit right side up on the cutting mat. Lay the diamond ruler on the fabrics, and align again with the stripe fabrics (if any) in the collection.

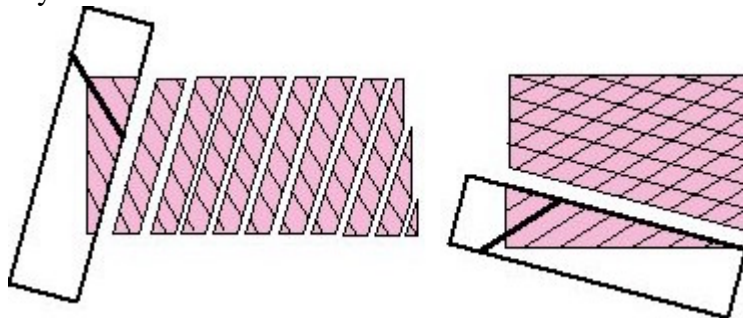


12. Align a long acrylic ruler next to the diamond ruler, aligning a 45-degree guide with a seam beneath it. Cut against the long ruler across the unit.

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13. Continue cutting rows of diamonds the *same width as the strips were originally cut*. (The red strips are 2 inches wide; the cream strips were 2-1/2 inches wide.)
Important! Check the 45-degree angles with *each cut*, and trim to straighten the edge when necessary.



14. Sew rows of diamonds together creating oversized rectangular shapes. The outer edges will be jagged and misaligned. Carefully match intersections, or deliberately offset the intersections, as preferred.
- Note: You may need to fill in short rows with extra pieces from cutting scraps. Remove short seams. Press flat. Align (allowing a quarter-inch tip to extend at either end of the pieces) and stitch short bits together to create longer rows.
15. Press seams open carefully without distortion.
16. Fused appliqué - Press paper-backed fusible web to the wrong side of a large-scale printed fabric. If you are planning to use the same fabric for cloth napkins, first cut

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18" x 18" squares of printed fabric. Set aside. Adhere fusible web to the *remaining* fabric.

17. Cut out several shapes, leaving a narrow margin of background surrounding each shape.
 18. Lay out the place mat with a plate. Position the design cut outs on the mat in a pleasing arrangement. Remove the plate. Press the design cut outs to adhere (fuse) them to the pieced background.
 - Option 1: Layer the background unit over tear-away stabilizer.
 - Change the thread color in the machine to match the background of the appliqué or the diamond background--your preference.
 - Stitch the outer edges using a zigzag or other decorative stitch, appliquéing the shapes to the background before quilting.
 19. Cut backing fabric and batting scraps into oversized rectangles.
 20. Layer the small unit with batting and backing. Pin baste with safety pins, spray baste adhesive or baste by hand with thread.
 21. Machine or hand quilt through all layers. Option 2: machine quilt / appliqué the edges of the fused design shapes in this step. (I recommend that you do not use a tight, dense stitch pattern to avoid distortion/shrinkage in this area.)
 22. Trim to the finished size.
 23. Cut binding. Apply binding to the outer edges.
 24. If you are making coordinating cloth napkins: Finish the edges of the napkins with any of the following edges:
 - Straight stitch 1/4 inch in from the raw edge. Fray or ravel the outer edges for a narrow fringed edge.
 - Serge the outer edge with dense serger stitches. Use a good-quality thread for a durable edge. Apply seam sealant to the ends of the thread, or thread a jumbo needle with the thread ends and hide the tails beneath the serged stitches. Trim excess.
 - Press a narrow hem under on all four edges. Stitch with straight or decorative stitching to finish the edges.
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Jan's tip for excellence!

Remember that grain line is important. Note the grain line in the diamond shape! If the diamonds are cut from a strip of fabric cut selvage to selvage, the resulting diamond will have two sides will be straight grain, two will be true bias. This will cause some pieced designs to stretch or pull diagonally to the side, somewhat like a pair of slacks or draperies that are cut off-grain.

If the diamonds are cut with a template, the quilt maker can easily align the center of the diamond (both lengthwise and crosswise) with the fabric grain. All four edges will now be "casual bias" – meaning they will have some stretch. When the diamonds are pieced in rows, the quilt top will be more stable and less distortion occurs when mounting the quilt on a quilting frame.