



Tips for Using Quiltsmart Printed Fusible Interfacing

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Quiltsmart's technique for making appliqués is called "Rough to Right" piecing. This technique is used for patterns that look like they have been curve pieced (Double Wedding Ring) or inset pieced (Mary's Flower Garden) as well as patterns that are traditionally appliquéd but generally made with "needle-turn" techniques (Kapa Hawaii). The printed interfacing makes it EASY! This concept is based on a traditional technique called "double appliqué". The quilter used muslin to "face" a design, trimmed, then turned and stitched to a background. This was effective, but one had to trace the designs, it was a bit bulky, and needed to be pinned. Quiltsmart interfacing is lightweight in your quilt, is printed with the designs, and is fusible so no pins are needed!

FABRIC: These techniques and methods are based on using 100% cotton quilting fabric. Other fabrics may be used, but may handle and react in different ways.

HANDLING OF THE INTERFACING: The number one thing to keep in mind when handling the interfacing is to not stretch it. Stretching comes when it is pushed and manipulated too much. When turning do not use a sharp or large tool (except to pull out the tips) - the tool needs to be skinnier than the point which the fabric is going to go through. The wrong tool can stretch the interfacing and cause it to tear. There are ways to prevent stretching and tearing listed in the tips below. Once you get used to using fusible interfacing for appliqués, you will love it.

MACHINE TENSION: Check for even tension. Stitches should look the same on both sides of the fabric. They should not be loose, but evenly "woven". Check your machine stitches on a scrap (double layer) of fabric.

SEWING ON THE SOLID LINE (straight stitch):

STITCH LENGTH: Use a short stitch length (especially for the curved and angled areas). About a 1 to 1.5 (15 to 20 stitches per inch) ...practice and see what is comfortable for you. The shorter the stitch, the easier it is to make a smooth curve, and stronger seams....which help when trimming and turning narrow seam allowances (which also help make a smooth curve). Shorter stitches will also aid when clipping inside points and curves, as the seam will be stronger. Though a shorter stitch length makes a smoother curve, it is also more difficult to rip out - though I feel ripping is rarely necessary. My recommendation if you have the feeling you should rip out: If you stitched too far outside the line, just back up and start again overlapping the stitches and sew on the line. Any 'extra' stitches that remain after you trim can stay in the piece. If you had stitched inside the line, stitch a smooth line between the places in question, trimming about an eighth of an inch away from the stitching. Subtle drifts off the line will not be noticed in most designs. So, save the seam ripper for a technique explained later on.

CLIPPING: Where necessary, or identified on a pattern, clip all the way TO the stitching at all inside points - literally, right "TO the stitching". The shorter stitch length helps here. Use sharp, precise scissors or clippers (not a rotary cutter) to get right up to the stitching. You do NOT need to clip smooth curves as in the Double Wedding Ring, Rob Pete, Drunkard's Path....etc. Only clip areas where the instructions suggest or that you are concerned about. Use GOOD LIGHT, too - this is not a time to work in the dark!

TRIMMING:

Assuming that you sew on the solid line, you trim on the dashed line. If you sewed a bit to the inside of the solid line or the outside of it, then adjust the trimming accordingly. You do not want less than the seam allowances printed between the two lines....a seam allowance much less than what is printed is cause for a seam to "pop" out.

TURNING: Once clipped, there are two turning methods that we advocate.

1) TOOL n' TURN METHOD:

Use a tool and pull the fabric through a slit line (Kapa Hawaii) or a raw edge (Double Wedding Ring).

There are two turning tools that we recommend, but there are several other options on the market, too.

For Kapa Hawaii we recommend a hemostat OR the Slit n' Turn method (below). Insert the hemostat into the piece and grip the fabric (not the interfacing). Pull gently through the slit line. Extend the slit lines up into the leaf sections past the narrowest area. This will lessen the amount of pulling on the interfacing when you pull the leaf through the narrow area - lessening the amount of pull will lessen the amount of stretch. The narrow section is then simply turned to the back and finger pressed.

For Double Wedding Ring we recommend Fasturn #6. Follow manufacturer's instructions. Always poke the wire spiral into the fabric - not the interfacing. Pull gently.

2) EXTENDED SLIT n' TURN METHOD:

In this method, slit the interfacing from the center of the piece to the edge. Then turn to the back and finger press. This method lessens the tension on the interfacing, and therefore does not stretch the interfacing as much as might happen from pulling through a slit, and will be less likely to tear.

Another advantage of this method is that a pointer-creaser can be easily used between the fabric fold at the seams (not between the interfacing and fabric!) to smooth out the curves and points.

A disadvantage of this method is that it might be a bit fussier to finger press the edges. One thing that will help is to use the "pre-press" described below. This method might take a bit longer than the tool method, but it may be less frustrating if stretching of the interfacing is a problem with the particular piece you are working with - for example, the Kapa Hawaii patterns lend themselves more to this method.

FINGER PRESS:

Several techniques are helpful with the finger press step.

FINGERS: Roll the interfacing to the back of the appliqué, creasing the edges of the fabric with your fingers. Gently, but firmly crease without stretching the interfacing.

POINTER CREASER:

Run the pointer-creaser inside the fabric fold (not the interfacing) at the seams to smooth curves and poke out points. For tiny points or tips, it is best to gently use a pointer-creaser to poke out the section until it gets tight. Then, use a pin to gently pull the points or tips.

PRE-PRESS: APPLIQUÉ PRESSING SHEET AND IRON:

You can "pre-press" the edges of the appliqué using the tip of an iron (or a small iron or a mini iron). This is a great companion technique to the "Extended Slit n Turn Method".

Pull the tips (points) out with pin. Keep the pin in the fabric only - do not grip or pierce the interfacing.

ZIG-ZAGGING (APPLIQUÉ):

Use a 2.5 stitch length and a 1.5 stitch width.

Fuse the appliqué to the background, tucking any remaining "peeking" interfacing under as you fuse, working with the tip of the iron.

Zigzag using invisible thread, alternating the placement of the needle between the background and the appliqué, with most of the stitch on the appliqué - in other words: the needle that pierced the background should just barely skim the edge of the appliqué as it goes into the background fabric. If interfacing continues to show in spots, while zigzagging, use a seam ripper, stiletto, or pin to gently push the interfacing between the background and appliqué.