

Pineapple Blocks

Pineapple blocks are great stash-busting blocks, they can be very scrappy or made with only two fabrics. The pattern that forms when multiple blocks are combined without any sashing between them is quite stunning. In order for the pattern to show, the fabric strips going one direction, either vertical/horizontal, or diagonal, need to be one fabric with a very dominant single color, preferably either a solid or a tonal that reads solid. The fabric strips going the other direction can be a variety of scraps or can be another, contrasting solid or tonal fabric.

There are three ways to make pineapple blocks: by foundation paper piecing; by using a specialty ruler like any of the [Creative Grids Pineapple Trim Tools](#), or by doing math and using regular rulers.

If you want to use foundation paper piecing, I have posted several different sizes on my website at: https://media.rainpos.com/9170/Pineapple_Block_FPP.pdf. If you need a refresher, make sure you check out my tutorial on [Foundation Paper Piecing](#). If I haven't posted a pattern for the size of block you want to make, other quilt designers have posted several and you can search the internet for them. Or, you can use the math in this tutorial to draw your own pattern.

If you want to use one of the Creative Grids Pineapple Trim Tools, the math, cutting and sewing instructions are already done for you in the insert that comes with the ruler. You can use those directions or follow along in the Sewing Instructions in this tutorial. This is probably the easiest method, so I actually highly recommend this method.

If you want to just use regular rulers, you will need to follow this whole tutorial, starting with the Math and Cutting Instructions here. *Warning: there is a LOT of math if you want to use regular rulers.* The advantage to using regular rulers is that you can do sizes which aren't included in the trim tools.

Note: this is one of the few times I will tell you to cut your initial strips oversize to trim down while you are sewing.

Math and Cutting Instructions:

- Decide how large you want your finished block.
- Decide how wide you want your finished strips. If your strips are too wide, there won't be enough of them to really show the pattern, if they are too narrow, the pattern may start to blur – as well as be a whole lot of pieces to cut and sew – , so you will want to decide on a happy medium width.

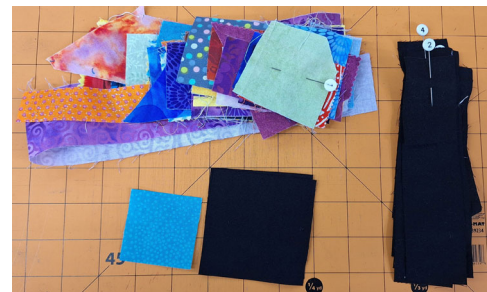
- Divide the size of the block by the width of the strips. Your result needs to be an even whole number, or the block won't work. If the result is an odd number or a decimal, you will need to change either the size of your block and/or the width of your strips.
 - Example: You want to make a 9" finished block and want 1" wide strips. Let's do the math to see if that works:
 - $9" \div 1" = 9$. That's an odd number. It's not going to work, so you need to change either the size of the block or the width of the strip.
 - 1½" wide strips might be too wide to show the pattern well, so let's try 1¼" wide strips:
 - $9" \div 1\frac{1}{4}" = 7.2$. That's a decimal, so it won't work, either.
 - Let's go the other way and try ¾" strips:
 - $9" \div \frac{3}{4}" = 12$. That's both an even number and not a decimal. It will work.
- The finished size of the center square is twice the size of the width of the strips.
 - Example: If your strips will finish to ¾", you need to do the math:
 - $\frac{3}{4}" \times 2 = 1\frac{1}{2}"$

If you want to draw your own foundation paper piecing pattern, this is all the math you need. Draw your center square on your paper, then draw the rounds of strips out from the center square.

- There's more math to add seam allowances to all the pieces if you will be using trim tools or rulers.
 - For the center square, add ½" to the last measurement, and cut a square that size:
 - For a block with ¾" wide strips: $1\frac{1}{2}" + \frac{1}{2}" = 2"$, so cut a 2" square of whatever fabric you have chosen for your center square.
 - For the strips, there's a bit more math.
 - Since you are going to cut these oversize to trim down, add ¾" to the calculated finished strip width to determine the width to cut the strips:
 - For your ¾" finished width strips: $\frac{3}{4}" + \frac{3}{4}" = 1\frac{1}{2}"$, so cut your strips 1½" wide.

- For the length of the strips, the inner rounds will be quite short, and the outer rounds will be longer. For the ease of the math, just cut all the strips the finished size of the block.
 - For a 9" finished block, cut all the strips 9" long.
 - For your 9" finished block with $\frac{3}{4}$ " finished width strips, just cut all your strips $9" \times 1\frac{1}{2}"$.
- Now you need to determine how many strips you need to cut of each color.
 - Divide the finished size of the block by 2:
 - * For your 9" block: $9" \div 2 = 4\frac{1}{2}"$
 - Then subtract the finished width of one strip:
 - * For your $\frac{3}{4}"$ wide strips: $4\frac{1}{2}" - \frac{3}{4}" = 3\frac{3}{4}"$
 - Then divide that by the finished width of the strips to get the number of rounds of each color of fabric:
 - * Again, for your $\frac{3}{4}"$ wide strips: $3\frac{3}{4}" \div \frac{3}{4}" = 5$
 - There are four strips of fabric in each round, so multiply the number of rounds by 4 to get the total number of strips of each color to cut:
 - * $5 \times 4 = 20$

- The final pieces you need to cut are the squares for the final corners of the blocks. Again, you will be cutting these oversize and will trim them down as the very last step of making the block.



- Divide the finished block size by 3 and cut two (2) squares this size. If this math doesn't come out to an easy measurement, round it up to the next easy measurement:
 - For your 9" block: $9" \div 3 = 3"$, so cut two (2) 3" squares of the fabric which will be going along the diagonals of the block.

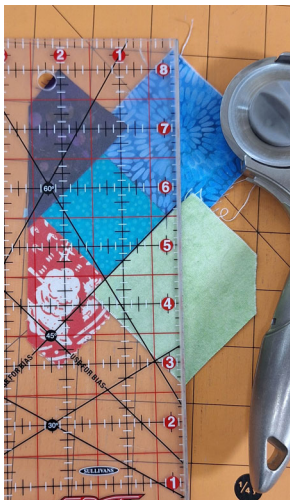
- There is a bit more math you will need during the sewing process if you are using a regular ruler instead of a Trim Tool. Add $\frac{1}{4}$ " to the finished width of the strip.
 - For your $\frac{3}{4}$ " strips: $\frac{3}{4}" + \frac{1}{4}" = 1"$. Remember this measurement, as you will be using it to trim the width of the strips during the Sewing process:

Sewing Instructions:

1. Round 1:



- a. Using the fabric strips you have designated for the Horizontals/Verticals of the block, sew one (1) strip along the long edges of the strip to one side of the center square, using a $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowance.
- b. Sew another strip to the opposite side of the center square in the same manner as the first one.
- c. Press these seam allowances away from the center square.
- d. Trim off any excess length from the strips that is significantly longer than the center square.
- e. Sew one (1) more strip to each of the other two sides of the square in a similar manner to the first two strips.
- f. Press the seam allowances way from the center square and trim excess length from the strips.
- g. Trim the strips at a 45° angle from the seams:



i. If you are using a Trim Tool, place the Round 1 Centering Square on the seams of the center square and trim using the 45° angled side of the ruler. Repeat around all four corners of the square.

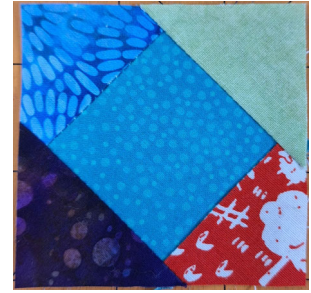
ii. If you are using a regular ruler, place a 45° marking line on the ruler one of the seams, with the edge of the ruler $\frac{1}{4}$ " beyond the point where two seams meet. Trim along that edge of the ruler. Repeat around all four edges of the square.



- h. You now have a small block that is essentially a Square-in-a-Square unit.

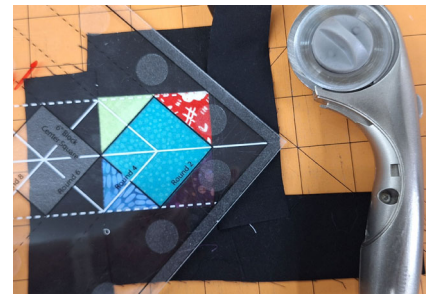
2. Round 2:

- a. Using the fabric strips you have designated for the Diagonals of the block, sew one strip to each side of the new square that resulted from making Round 1, in a similar manner to how it was done for Round 1. Always press the seam allowances away from the Center.

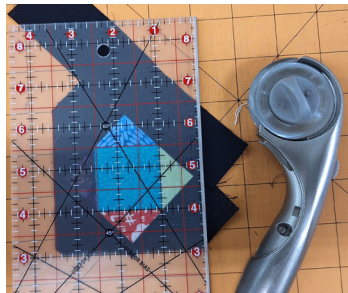


- b. Trim the strips at a 45° angle from the direction you trimmed Round 1:

- i. If you are using a Trim Tool, place the Round 2 Centering Square on the seams of the center square, and trim two adjacent sides using the corner of the ruler. Repeat on the opposite corner.



- ii. If you are using a regular ruler, place the line of the ruler that matches the final math calculation on the seam between the Center Square and Round 1.



- (1) For your $\frac{3}{4}$ " strips, place the 1" line on that seam.

- (2) Trim along the edge of the ruler.

Repeat with all four sides of the block.



- c. Now you have a unit that looks like a Square-in-a-Square-in-a-Square.

3. Round 3 and Further Odd-Numbered Rounds:

- a. Using fabric strips from the



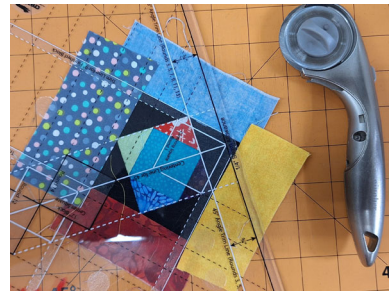
same color set as you used in Round 1, again sew four strips around the unit, again always pressing the seam allowances away from the center.

b. Trim the strips.

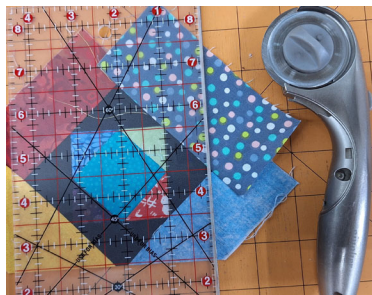
i. If you are using a Trim Tool, there is a white line on the ruler parallel to the 45° edge. Place this line on the seam line between the previous two rounds, and trim the block along the 45° edge. Repeat around the four edges of the block.

ii. If you are using a regular ruler, place the line of the ruler that matches the final math calculation on the seam between the Rounds previous two rounds.

(1) For your $\frac{3}{4}$ " strips, place the 1" line on that seam.



(2) Trim along the edge of the ruler. Repeat with all four sides of the block.



c. Beginning in this round, you are starting to trim off the tips of the triangles formed in previous rounds and the unit may no longer be a square, it's starting to become an octagon.



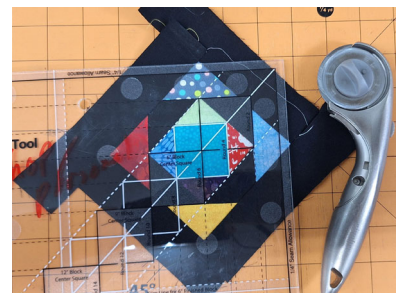
4. Round 4 and Further Even-Numbered Rounds:



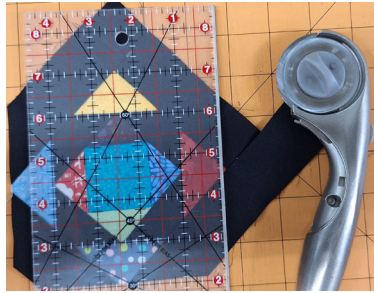
a. Using fabric strips from the same color set as you used in Round 2, again sew four strips around the unit, again always pressing the seam allowances away from the center.

b. Trim the strips

i. If you are using a Trim Tool, you will see black and white squares to line up with the center square. Choose the



correct one for whichever even-numbered round you are making, and trim in the same manner as you did for Round 2.

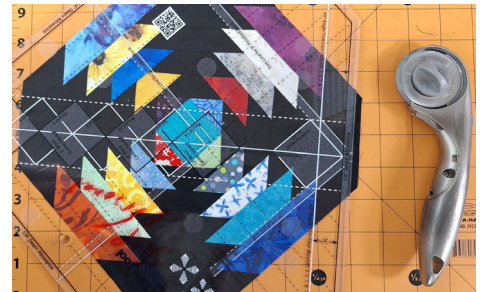


- ii. If you are using a regular ruler, place the line of the ruler that matches the final math calculation on the seam between the Rounds previous two rounds.

- (1) For your $\frac{3}{4}$ " strips, place the 1" line on that seam.
- (2) Trim along the edge of the ruler. Repeat with all four sides of the block.

5. Continue adding rounds of strips until the octagon is as wide as the desired size of your block. Remember that your measurement needs to be $\frac{1}{2}$ " larger than your desired finished block size, to account for seam allowances. Your final round should be an even-numbered (diagonal) round.

6. Trim these final diagonal strips to the same width as the rest of the strips.



- a. If you are using a Trim Tool, there is a white line on the ruler parallel to the 45° edge. Place this line on the seam line of these final strips, and trim the block along the 45° edge. Repeat around the four edges of the block.



- b. If you are using a regular ruler, place the line of the ruler that matches the final math calculation on the seam line of these final strips

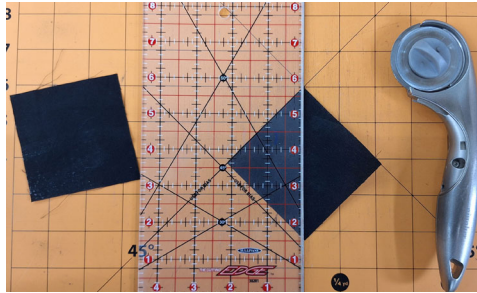
- i. For your $\frac{3}{4}$ " strips, place the 1" line on that seam.

- ii. Trim along the edge of the ruler.



Repeat with all four sides of the block.

7. Now you need to turn the octagon into a square by applying triangles to the diagonal edges. *Because this is one of the rare occasions where you will be sewing unsupported bias edges, I highly recommend that you apply starch or Best Press™ quite liberally to the two squares you will be using before you cut them into triangles.*



- a. Cut each of the two squares you made for the corners diagonally once to form a total of 4 triangles.

- b. Sew these triangles along the long edge of the triangle, to the diagonals of the octagon, using $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowances. Press the seam allowances away from the center of the block.



- c. The corners are now over-sized, so trim them down to the proper size for your block:



- i. If you are using one of the trim tools, there are marks on the ruler for lining up the block and trimming the corners. You will trim the corners in the same way you trimmed the even-numbered rounds.

- ii. If you are using a regular ruler, measure carefully and trim appropriately, remembering to trim it $\frac{1}{2}$ " larger than the finished size you want, so as to have seam allowances.

- iii. For a 9" finished block, trim your corners so that your block is $9\frac{1}{2}$ " square.

