

Half Square Triangle- Encyclopedia

Half square triangles, are squares that have been cut on a diagonal, and the result is two equal triangles. Each one of these triangles has a 90 degree angle in the corner and they have 2 equal legs, or sides.

Half square triangles are very popular in quilt blocks. There's a fast way to make these by using your rotary cutter. The rule is that you need to add $\frac{7}{8}$ of an inch to the finished size. So what does that mean? Let's look at this 6 inch pin wheel block. That means when I sew this block into my quilt it's going to be 6 inches big. This pattern does not have a seam allowance on it. Quilters use a $\frac{1}{4}$ inch seam in order to sew these blocks together. So this is a 3 inch square right here, if I were to cut that in half, this side would be 3 inches, and this side would be 3 inches. And that would not help me put this block together. So instead, I need to add seam allowance. So if I, here's my 3 inch block, if I add a $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch, on each side, I've got a $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch here, a $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch there, I've cut this block 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches and I have two $\frac{1}{2}$ square triangles, but that's still not going to help me because I need to sew a seam on the diagonal. That means that I'm going to not only have to add a $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch on this side and a $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch on that side, but I'm also going to have to add a seam allowance in the center here. A $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch for this triangle and a $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch for this triangle. And because it's on a diagonal you would think it would be a $\frac{1}{4}$ and a $\frac{1}{4}$, makes it a $\frac{1}{2}$ but because it's turned, it's not quite $\frac{1}{2}$ and inch; it turns out to be $\frac{7}{8}$ of an inch. And so I've cut this square at 3 and $\frac{7}{8}$ inches.

The finished size was 3 I add $\frac{7}{8}$ of an inch to that so I cut this 3 and $\frac{7}{8}$ inches and that means, I'm going to have enough seam allowance to sew this square, this triangle, these two triangles into my finished quilt block.