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BEGINNER BASICS – Paper Piecing

Advantages vs. Disadvantages of Paper Piecing (1 Video)

Transcript:

There are many advantages and disadvantages to using paper piecing as a quilting technique. Let's look at the advantages first.

When paper piecing, it is very easy for you to be accurate. In this quilt there are Pineapple blocks that are about three inches big. In each one of these three inch Pineapple blocks there are 60 + fabrics in them. There's no way that I would be able to piece these blocks unless I paper pieced them. I can't be that accurate. So paper piecing allows you to sew very tiny pieces together accurately.

When paper piecing, there are no $\frac{1}{4}$ " seams and there's no precision cutting so you can take scraps of fabric like this and not worry about cutting them out and not worry about getting that perfect $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam. This is very relaxing for most people because often people worry about cutting pieces accurately and sewing perfect seams.

Last but not least, when paper piecing, there's a foundation that you are working on. Because you are using that foundation, you're able to use fabrics other than cotton in your quilt. You probably wouldn't use something like this because it would be too difficult to sew to cotton. But with that foundation underneath, you're able to put in things like this lame. This red piece was added because I had a foundation underneath to sew it to.

Let's look at the disadvantages. When paper piecing, it can be very confusing at first. You're going to end up with something looking like this. You're also going to be sewing on back of the paper and the fabric will be on the other side. It looks like a bunch of nothing when you are sewing on it. It can be very confusing.

And not only is it confusing but after you sew you have to take that paper out which isn't the easiest thing to do. You're going to have to tear out each one of those seams. Sometimes the paper comes out easy if they are big pieces. Sometimes you will need tweezers to pull out the paper.

If you have sewn your fabric on to a foundation other than paper then you can't take it out. It stays in there which means there's going to be added thickness which makes it more difficult when you go to quilt this into your block. Of course, if you are just using this for little picture frames or things like that, you don't have to worry about that foundation.

Not all quilt blocks can be paper pieced. There are thousands of blocks on the market that have patterns for paper piecing. Unfortunately, simple blocks like this Nine Patch, is not a block that can be paper pieced. So there are many blocks that you will not be able to use this technique when sewing.

The alignment of fabric is very difficult. In this block, I've used these stripes. I wanted the stripes going in this direction. If I try to do that when I paper piece this small block (if I try to align the stripes), it would be very difficult.

So paper piecing is not good for everything but I hope I haven't persuaded you to give up on this. I find great joy making these small squares. I use them in cards. I use them in picture frames. I use them to make small quilts like this one. I've also used this technique in projects other than quilting. It has allowed me to sew pieces that I would normally shy away from.