

Panel OBW quilt preparation with Hexagons

by Dot Collins, dotcollins@gt.rr.com, 409-718-8696

Please feel free to call or text me with questions.

Yardage needed:

7 panels or 1 panel and 6 repeats of a coordinating fabric. If you are not sure of the repeat, you are generally safe in buying 4 yard as fabric seldom has a repeat of more than 24" (although I have seen it happen).

You may also want additional fabric, either matching or contrasting to the panel for the fillers to the pieced blocks or to extend the size of the panel.

Additional supplies need for class:

Sewing machine, neutral thread, filled bobbin, 1/4" foot for your machine, if available.

Regular sewing notions - scissors, ripper, etc.

Flower-head (flat head) pins and round head pins

Rotary Cutter, large or jumbo size

Rotary ruler(s) - 6"x 24" and 6" x 12" (bring, if you have, wedge ruler or triangle rulers, 60 degree, one with a blunt tip if possible)

Rotary cutting mat, large enough to accommodate 24" ruler.

Flannel back plastic tablecloth or batting or flannel at least 60" square – larger is better. (or portable design wall.

Be sure to bring a large mat – at least 18 x 22", large or jumbo cutter (the small may not cut through 6 layers of fabric), and good interchangeable rulers in this project. Flat head long pins are also important since you can place a rotary ruler over them and the ruler will still lay flat. You will use a couple of round head pins also.

Pre – class cutting instructions: step 2 and beyond below is optional. I have some things you may want to consider before you do your cutting and stacking. If you know how to do all of it, you will bet more done in class if you do the cutting and stacking ahead of time.

1. If you washed your fabric, be sure to press crisply – use some sizing or spray starch, before cutting. repeat of my fabric.
2. Leaving your fabric folded, finding spot along the selvage and then perpendicular across to the folded edge and then subcut sections for the 6 repeats needed. It may not be quite as accurately cut but you will do some clean edge cutting later. If you are using panels, cut out the 6 panels.
3. Press your cut sections so that they are smooth and free of distortion. Layer them on top of each other with as much accuracy to closeness as you can do. If you are using the full width of the fabric or panels, you will rotate so that you have about 24" (or less, depending on your repeat) wide by 42" long.
4. Find a specific point in the design that you can pierce with a pin in each of the layers. With your six cut layers aligned on top of each other, use a round head pin to go straight through each layer at the same point, keeping the pin vertical to the horizontal layers of fabric. Hold the round head pin vertical and snugly against all layers and place a flat head pin across it, through all the layers of the fabric.

5. Move down the fabric and repeat the pinning process, putting the round head pin in vertically at the same point for all layers of fabric, then placing the flat head pin across it through all the layers. Move across the fabric and repeat until there are six to twelve pins in place (more if you wish) and all of the repeat layers are securely held together in all areas and exactly aligned for cutting.
6. Check across the fabric layers to make sure they feel smooth but do this cautiously to avoid getting pierced with a pin. Re-pin if necessary.
7. The next step is to cut strips. These will vary depending on which quilt you are choosing to make. I have some things for you to consider that will help you decide what size strips to cut. There is also a website that you can use to help you decide how wide to cut your strips, based on the scale of the print.

One thing you can do is take a picture of your panel or one repeat of your fabric. Be sure to crop out any edges that are not in the fabric. Open a website called www.oneblockwonder.com/designhelper. The images you get by changing the height of the strip cut will give you an idea of what is too large. Import the picture to your computer (or you may use it on your phone if you can open the app there. Use the picture to import into this. Change the triangle edge size (inches) on the options sheet to see what the hexagons may look like when they are cut. These will vary depending on which quilt you are choosing to make.

Another thing to consider is the finished width of your panel. Your sewing life will be much easier if the width of the hexagon block times the number of hexagon blocks across is equal to the width of the panel. If this does not happen, you will either have to cut the panel down or add fabric around the panel to make the blocks fit. That is the reason why the blunt-tip 60-degree ruler is preferred.

If you want to consider finished hexie width and finished panel width, these strip sizes will yield a hexie width, using the blunt-tip 60-degree triangle ruler.

<i>Strip size (inches)</i>	<i>Hexie width (inches)</i>	<i>Strip size (inches)</i>	<i>Hexie width (inches)</i>
2"	3"	2.5"	4"
3"	5"	3.5"	6"
4"	7"	4.5"	8"
5"	9"	5.5"	10"

8. Make a clean edge cut as small as possible at the top and bottom to make sure all the layers will be the same in the following steps. As you cut strips, you may have to remove pins. You will ruin your rotary cutter blade if you strike a pin. Remove as few as possible. Sometimes I am able to reposition the pins without distorting the fabric layers but you have to do that carefully.
9. Note that when sewing and pressing your blocks, seams will be pressed open to keep the blocks flatter. Also, do not trim any dog-ears of the seams unless they fall to the sides of the sewn seams. The dog-ears will often help you align pieces for sewing.
10. Also, keep all your scraps. On almost all of my stacked and cut quilts, I have sewn small leftover pieces to larger leftover pieces to get enough for another block where it is needed.