

Half-Square Triangle Options

By TK Harrison

One of the things that helps beginning quilters advance to a higher level of quilting is half-square triangles (HST). Oh how they are dreaded by a newbie! And sometimes by more advanced quilters, too!

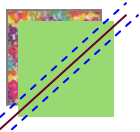
There are special papers you can purchase to help you along the way, such as Thangles®. According to their website, “Thangles are very easy to use. You never have to cut triangles or use $7/8$ " math, or square up every piece. All you do is cut straight grain strips.”

There are also a wide variety of specialty rulers, sure to make your half-square triangles come together quicker and easier than if you were to make them without these rulers. There's the EZ® Angle Ruler designed by Sharon Hultgren that is available online and in many quilt shops. With this ruler, you can cut triangles, squares and attic window shapes all from the same strip of fabric and cut half square triangles from as little as $1/2$ " and up (finished size). The EZ® Angle Ruler is ideal for use with rotary cutter and has a built in $1/4$ " seam allowance.

There's also the Quilter's Rule™ Magic Half Square Ruler designed by Mace McEligot of Mace Motifs. “This is a unique ruler designed to help you with the half-square triangle. This ruler has all the math built into the ruler so you don't have to think about how much to add. All you have to know is the finished size of the block. You can also use this ruler to square up the blocks. When you only have a few blocks to make this is simple, efficient and quick.”

But, you don't have to purchase any of these specialty items to create near-perfect half square triangles. Really! You can, of course, but it is not completely necessary. With practice, using the instructions below, making half-square triangles can be a breeze!

HST Option #1



On the back side of the GREEN $5 \frac{3}{8}$ " square, draw a diagonal line, corner-to-corner, ONE (1) time. Place the $5 \frac{3}{8}$ " GREEN square on the $5 \frac{3}{8}$ " WHITE MULTI-PACKED FLORAL square (right sides together) and sew $1/4$ " on EACH SIDE of the line you drew. Then, cut the half-square triangles apart ON the line you drew. You will end up with TWO (2) half-square triangles. Press toward the darkest fabric. Clip the corners.

The problem that many quilters find with this option is that they have trouble cutting anything with a $1/8$ " measurement. To solve that problem, round the number UP by $1/8$ ". In the above example, cut the squares for the half-square triangles at $5 \frac{1}{2}$ ". Once you have completed all of the rest of the instructions, use your ruler and rotary cutter to cut the half-square triangle the exact size it needs to be for your project.

HST Option #2



Cut the squares $2 \frac{1}{2}$ " to 3" bigger than the instructions call for. With right sides together, sew all the way around the squares using a $1/4$ " seam allowance. Using a rotary cutter and mat, cut the squares diagonally, corner-to-corner, TWO (2) times. You will end up with FOUR (4) half-square triangles. Press toward the darkest fabric.

Once you have the four half-square triangles, use your ruler and rotary cutter to square up and cut the half-square triangles the exact size they need to be for your project.

For the smaller squares, add 3" to the squares called for in a pattern and for larger squares, add 2 1/2" to the squares called for in a pattern.

HST Option #2 works best if you need smaller half-square triangles or if you have yardage available to cut the larger squares.

Whether you use specialty products or the half-square triangle options in this article, half-square triangles should not be dreaded. With practice, you *can* make near-perfect HST for any quilt project!

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