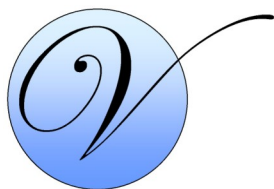


# Tutorial

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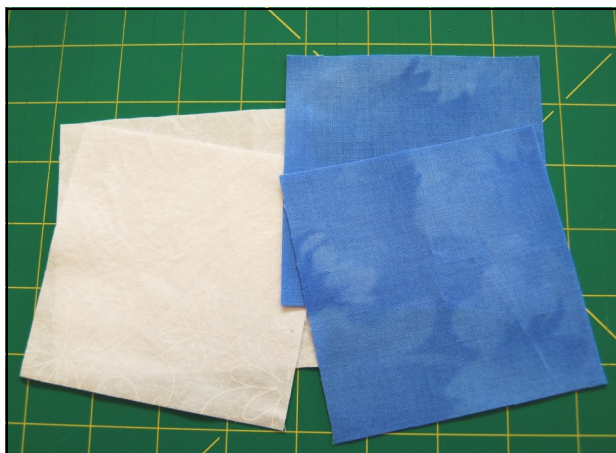
## Perfect Pinwheels



Valerie Custom Quilting  
13375 SW Sandridge Drive, Tigard, OR 97223  
<http://www.ValerieCustomQuilting.com>

This tutorial will show you the way that I make pinwheel blocks. It's easy once you know the tips that I'll share with you.

Happy reading, and happy quilting!



**Step 1:**

First, you must cut your fabric. You will need two squares of background and two squares of foreground. I chose white for my background and blue for my foreground. Because, as everyone knows, I love the color blue. :)

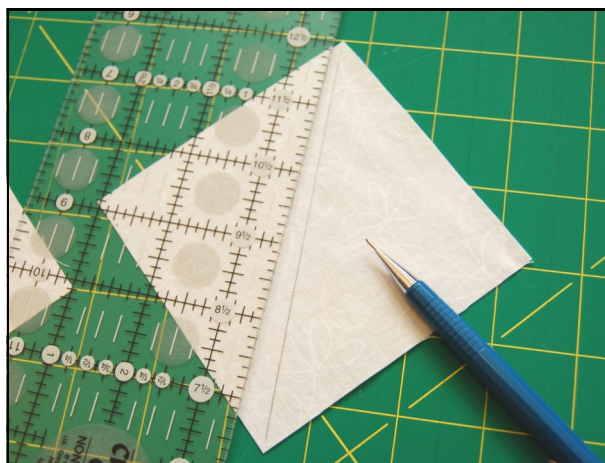
You will be making HST (half square triangle) units from these squares. But how do you know what size of square to cut?

There is a formula which you'll find in every quilting book that tells you to add  $\frac{7}{8}$ " to your finished HST size to get the size of the squares to be cut. For example, if you want your HST to measure 3" finished, you need to cut the squares  $3\frac{7}{8}$ ". Well, I don't like that as it leaves no room for corrections.

Here's what I do. I add a full 1" to the size of my finished HST so that once the HST is finished, I can go back and square it up. I do this for EVERY HST I ever make. Trust me, it will make your quilting life so much happier if you do this.

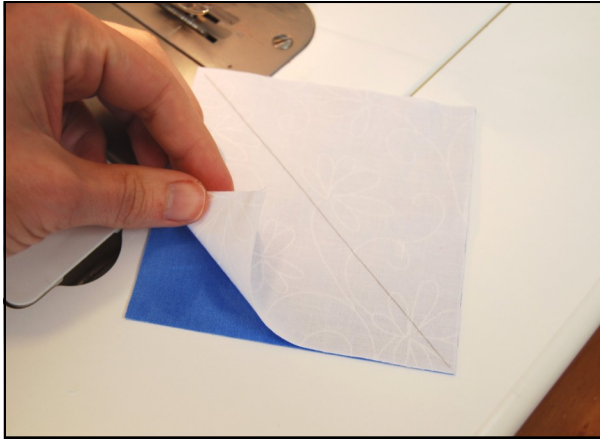
Common pinwheel block sizes and how to cut for them, by my method:

Finished Block Size	Finished HST Size	Size of Squares to Cut
4"	2"	3"
6"	3"	4"
8"	4"	5"
10"	5"	6"



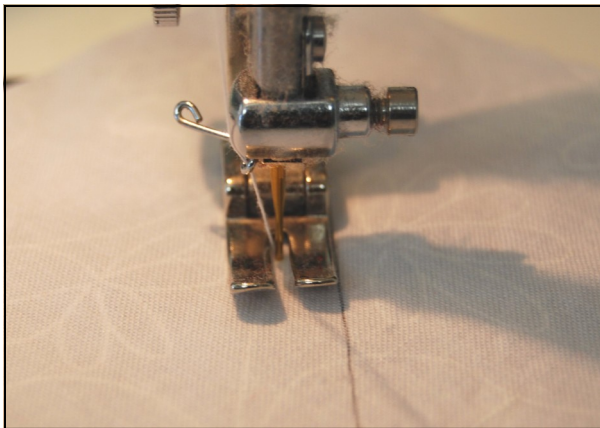
**Step 2:**

Next, draw a diagonal across the wrong side of both your lighter fabric squares. You can use a pencil like I did, or a fabric marker, whatever you want really. There is no way this mark will show on the front of your quilt.



**Step 3:**

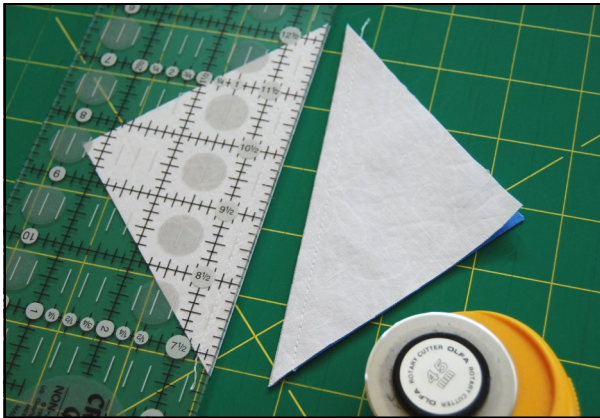
Next, layer your background piece on top of your foreground piece, with the pieces being right sides together. Make sure your raw edges are aligned.



**Step 4:**

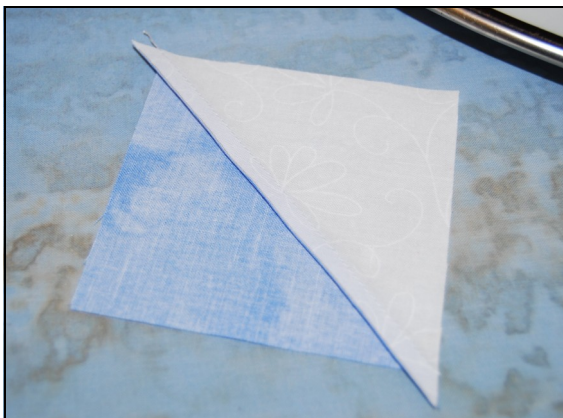
You will now sew  $\frac{1}{4}$ " from the drawn line, on both sides of the line.

Repeat steps 3 and 4 for your other pair of squares.



**Step 5:**

Now that you've sewn on both sides of the drawn line, it is time to cut your two HST apart. Do this for both sets of squares.



**Step 6:**

When I press my HST, I usually like to press the seam open to reduce bulk... unless I am making pinwheels. In a pinwheel, I need to have that seam pressed to the side so I can line up the block units to get a nice sharp point in the center.

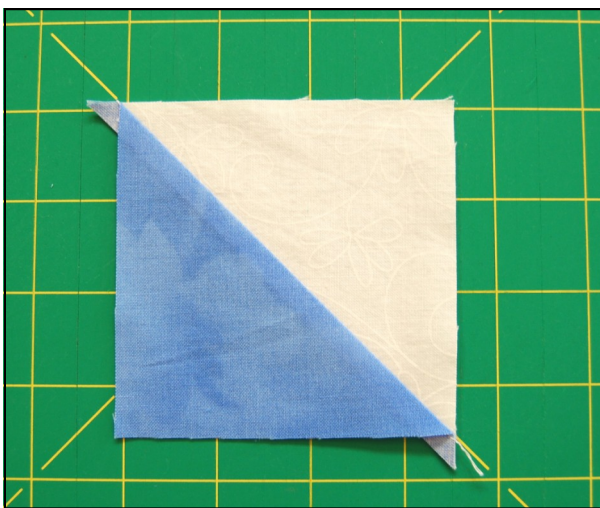
So for pinwheels, press your seam to the side, towards the darker color. Press all four HST in this manner.



**Step 7:**

Here you see the completed HST. Are they really complete? Remember how we made the squares a little bit bigger than they had to be? That's so we can trim them to size.

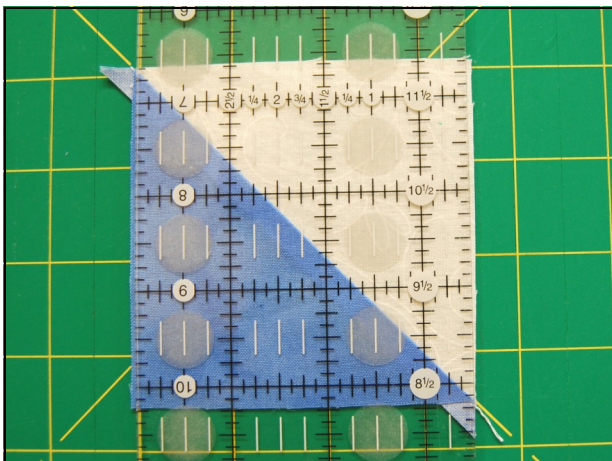
So guess what? It's time to trim!



**Step 8:**

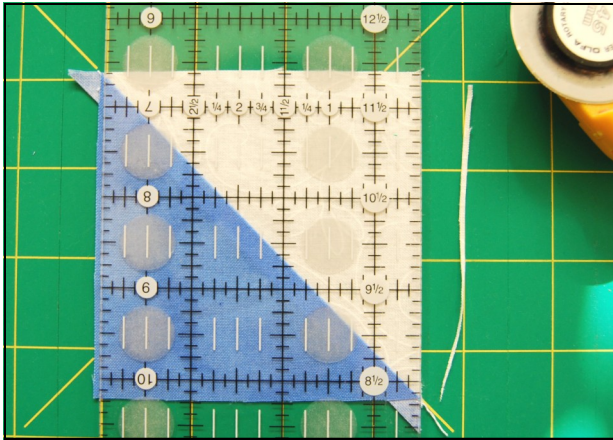
Align your HST so that the diagonal between the two fabrics follows one of the 45° angle lines on your cutting mat, and so that the edges are JUST over the lines where we'll be cutting.

I am making a 6" finished pinwheel, so each of these HST must be cut to 3½" square. See how the left side is just over the line, and the right side is just past the half-way point? That's perfect for trimming.



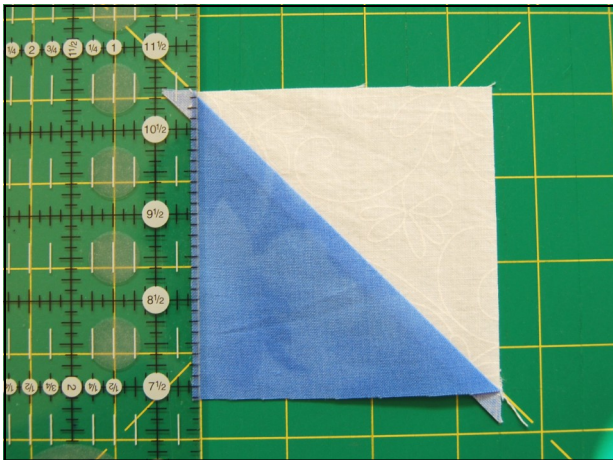
**Step 9:**

I've lined up my ruler so that I can trim the right side of the HST. See how just a smidgen of fabric is beyond the edge of the ruler?



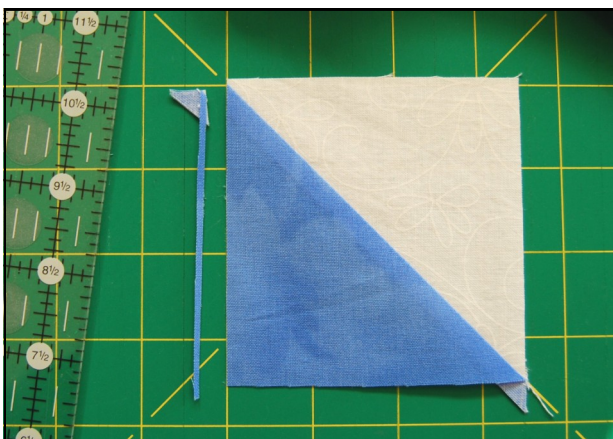
**Step 10:**

Carefully trim off that little smidgen of fabric with your rotary cutter, and discard.



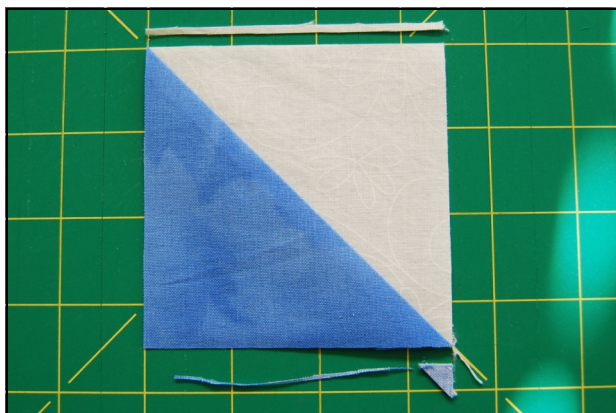
**Step 11:**

Now you have to trim the other side as well. Line up your ruler with the cutting line on the left side of the HST, and carefully trim with your rotary cutter.



**Step 12:**

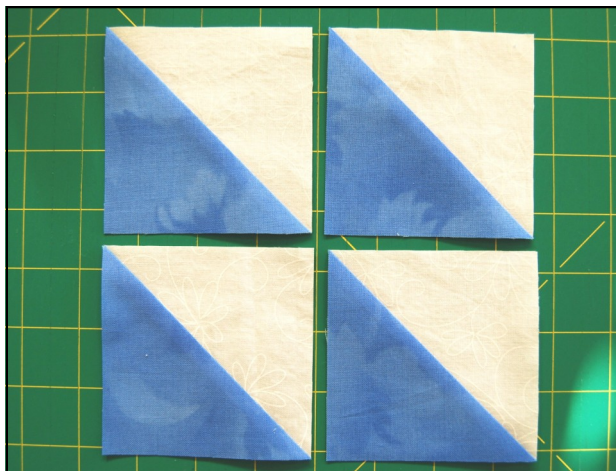
And there we have it, the left side is trimmed.



**Step 13:**

To trim the top and bottom of the HST, do NOT move the block! Leave it where it is and either carefully turn the cutting mat, or reposition yourself so you can safely trim the top and bottom. You don't want to mess up your alignment!

Once you're properly positioned, carefully trim the top and bottom in the same way as you did the sides.

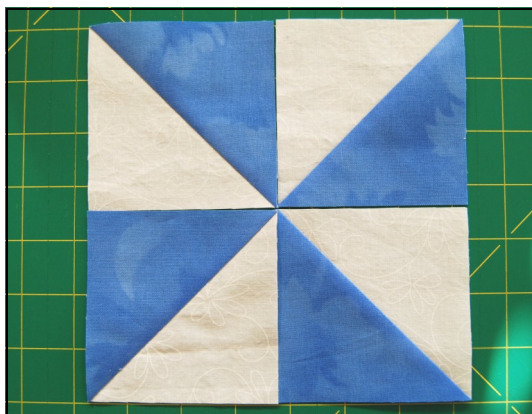


**Step 14:**

Trim all four of your HST, and you'll be left with four perfectly sized units that will make a perfectly sized pinwheel.

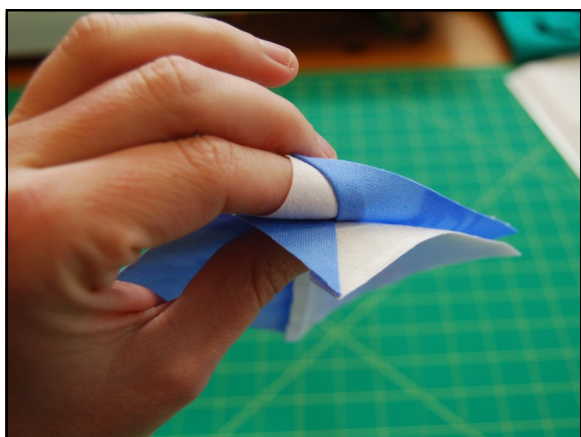
***Do I have to make them large and then trim?***

I know, it is tedious and boring to trim all those HST. But you're left with perfectly sized and square units, which is MUCH better than using HST whose sides have warped and stretched out of shape, and may also be stretched too large. Your piecing will be much more accurate if you do this.



**Step 15:**

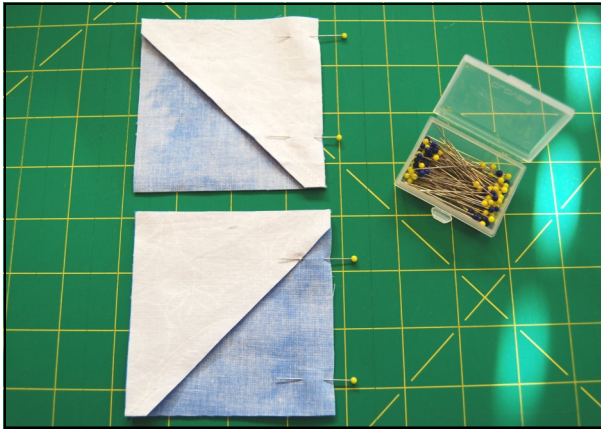
Now you can lay out your HST to make the pinwheel shape. Look at how nice they lined up, since we trimmed them! :)



**Step 16:**

This is where those seams being pressed to the side come into play. When you align your pieces, you should have the seams butting tight against each other as shown. THIS is how you will get those nice sharp points coming all together in the center of your block.

Align two of your pinwheel pieces so that the seam allowances butt against each other and the raw edges are even with each other.

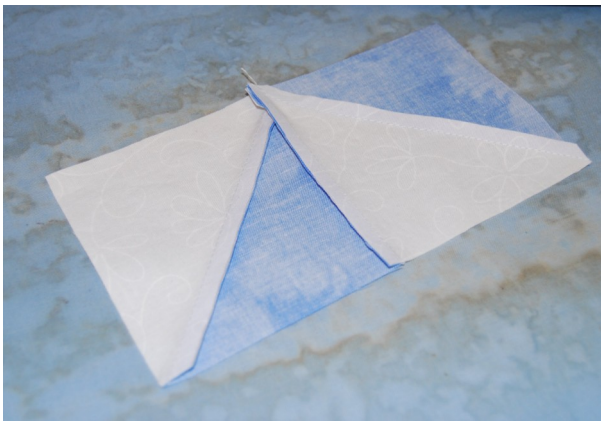


**Step 17:**

Once your pieces are aligned nicely, pin in place so they don't shift.

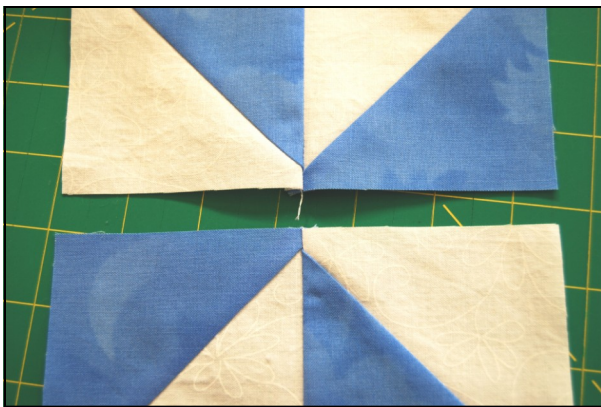
(After some practice, you'll be able to do this step without pinning.)

Once your pieces are pinned, sew them together with a scant  $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowance.



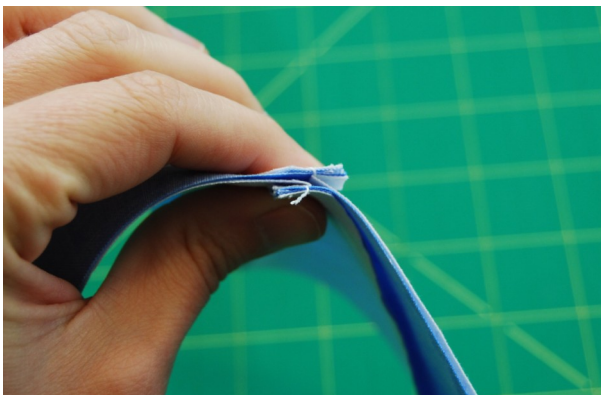
**Step 18:**

Again, you will press your seam to the side like you usually do for quilting. Press towards the darker fabric. Repeat for both units.



**Step 19:**

Now that both units have been pressed towards the darker fabric, do you see how the seams can be aligned with each other to get crisp points where the centers come together?

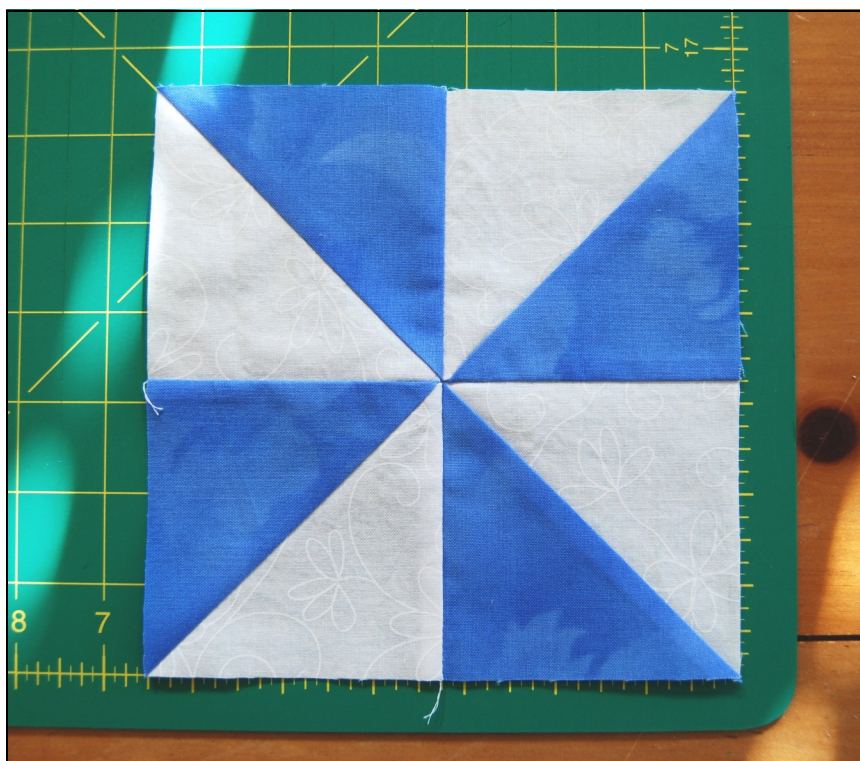


Here you see the two pieces being aligned with the seams butting up against each other.



**Step 20:**

Align your two units so the center seams butt up tight against each other and pin in place. Sew together with a scant  $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowance.



**Step 21:**

Press your seam and voila! You have a perfect pinwheel!

Remember that I said I was making a 6" finished (6 $\frac{1}{2}$ " unfinished) pinwheel block? Look at the marks on my cutting mat. Because I trimmed my HST to the correct size, my final block also sewed up to the right size. Isn't that awesome?

If you trim your HST in all your projects, you will be much more accurate in your piecing and your quilts will benefit.