

Spring String Block

The last few months we've learned new techniques for different blocks. Now it's time for a quick, fun, super easy block!

Block basics:

- Finished (finished = when you hand it in, before it is incorporated into a quilt) block size is 6 1/2" square.
- Use a neutral color (beige or white or gray) color thread.
- All seams are 1/4" seams.
- 100% cotton fabrics only, please.



Choosing your fabric:

To complete this block, you will need:

- One solid white or white on white fabric, enough to cut one 9 1/2 x 1 1/2" strip for the center of your block.
- 10 to 12 other thin strips of fabrics, anywhere from 3/4" to 1 1/2" wide, 9 1/2" long or less. The color palette for these strips is anything bright. As usual, please stay away from holiday and novelty fabrics. You will be cutting narrow strips, so use care with large scale prints. Also, you may choose a fabric with a white background, but do not use it for the strip immediately next to the white center strip.
- One 6 1/2" square of muslin to be used as the foundation for this block. **Please note: your muslin should be prewashed before using in this block.**

Setting up your block:

Yep, we're not starting with the usual "cutting your fabric" step with this block, it's put together a little differently, so we're going to dive right in. The key to this block is that the white diagonal strip is in the same exact place on every block. These steps might seem like overkill, but they will help us achieve that.

1. Fold your 6 1/2" muslin square in half from one corner to another and press lightly to create a diagonal line through the square. Why a fold instead of a pencil mark? You'll be covering this up with your white fabric, so you won't have to worry about a mark showing through the fabric if you use the fold method (if you really prefer using a marking pencil, mark *lightly*).
2. Draw two lines 3/4" away from either side of your fold line. See *figure 1*.
3. Take your white center fabric and cut one 9 1/2" x 1 1/2" strip.
4. Place the white strip on top of the muslin square, RIGHT SIDE UP, so it lies between the two lines you drew and covers both corners. See *figure 2*.

You may want to go through your scraps and choose fabrics then cut them into strips before you continue, or you may want to cut each strip as you go. Either works fine, so go with what makes the most sense to you. For these directions, I'm going to walk you through adding one strip at a time.



Figure 1

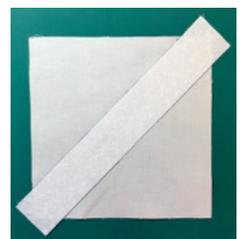


Figure 2

Creating your block:

1. Select one of your colored scrap fabrics and cut a strip 9 1/2" long and anywhere from 3/4" to 1 1/2" wide. Place it, right side down, on top of your white strip so one long edge of your colored strip lines up with the long edge of your white strip right sides together. Pin into place. See *figure 3*.
2. Sew along the long edge of the strip, 1/4" in from the edge. Fold the colored strip over and press towards the colored strip. See *figure 4*.
3. Grab another strip and pin and sew it to the other side of your white strip as shown in *figure 5*.
4. **Very important:** At this point, take a minute to double check that a) the white strip down the middle of your block is exactly 1" wide and b) the corners of your muslin block are in the exact middle of your white strip (that your white strip didn't slip "off" somehow). If you skip this step, you may not notice it's off until your block is done, and you'll be throwing out a lot more work. Redo these first steps if necessary before continuing.
5. Now you can speed things up. Add more strips to until the entire muslin square is covered, always pressing towards the new strip. You should use 8-12 colored strips on your block, with all being between 3/4" and 1 1/2" wide. Note: Do **NOT** use any fabric twice in a block. Keep it scrappy!
6. You may wish to alternate back and forth from one side to the other, using your longest strips first. This way you'll be able to use shorter and shorter strips as you go. Also, you will want to use a somewhat wide strip as the last strip on each side, to avoid having a seam within a seam in the corner later when the winner combines these blocks. Once your muslin square is covered, it will look like *figure 6* from the front and *figure 7* from the back.
7. Turn your block over so the muslin square is on top and trim it to a 6 1/2" square. You will find the muslin square has "shrunk" a tiny bit, so don't follow the edges of your muslin square exactly, use exact measurements. It should now look like the one in at the top of page 1 of this sheet.



Here's what it looks like when four of these blocks are put together. You can see the colored strips don't match up between blocks because they were different widths but the white strips line up. This is crucial to making the white diamond that holds this pattern together, and why there were extra steps to ensure that.



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7

Bring your finished blocks to the guild meeting on July 24 to participate in the drawing. Remember, you get one raffle ticket for each block you turn in, so, the more blocks, the more chances you have to win them all!

Questions? Comments? Suggestions for future blocks? Feel free to email me at smclarkson@gmail.com.