

## Kaleidoscope / Stack 'n Whack Table Runner



### What is kaleidoscope quilting?

While there are many different approaches to creating a kaleidoscope quilt, the traditional block dates back to the early 19th century. It involves cutting eight identical triangles, sewing them into an octagon, adding four small triangles to the corners to make a square block. Depending on how colours and prints are arranged, any number of secondary shapes and patterns can appear.

**Stack 'n Whack** is an easy way to create **quilt** blocks with unique kaleidoscope designs. These designs require a set of identical pieces cut from a print fabric. Rather than finding and cutting each piece individually, you cut and layer a number of large, identical print rectangles to make a **stack** and using a 45° triangle template you cut your triangles from the stack.

### Choosing fabric

- Look for medium to large prints with a design repeat between 8" - 24". The larger the repeat, the less the finished blocks will look like the original fabric. A wide border fabric can also be a good choice.
- Avoid stripes or strong grids

- Choose fabric you love because it will make the process even more fun.
- Bold designs will make bold Kaleidoscopes. A softer floral will make softer blocks. Large floral's work well, as do big or bold graphics.
- Don't rule out the "weird" or "odd" prints on the closeout table. These are fabrics that are often difficult to use in a traditional quilt but make beautiful Kaleidoscope blocks.
- Be sure to buy extra for borders or backing. There is nothing quite so lovely as to show off your finished table runner, only to flip it to the backing to show your viewers the original fabric. This is especially nice when you are using weird fabrics from the closeout table.



### Creating The Stack

The table runner uses five octagonal blocks constructed from eight 45° triangles with four 90° triangles on four corners to construct a square block.

The first part of the process is to choose a fabric with a repeating pattern - a large floral print will provide the greatest amount of contrast in the finished blocks (repeats can be anywhere from 8"-24"). You need enough fabric to construct at least five blocks - that will involve buying quite a bit more fabric than you need in order to get enough exact repeats - you should purchase at least 4 repeats of the fabric you select - that can be as much as 1.5m.

You need four layers - each a single repeat of the pattern. If you have enough fabric for eight repeats you will cut at least five sets of triangles - setting aside the remaining fabric for contrast elements both top and bottom of the runner.

Pin all four or eight repeat layers together, stick a straight pin on the same point in the print in each layer in several different locations near the edge. Once you have all your pins in place, shake the fabric, holding on to the pins, to align the layers.

Matt Jordan demonstrates this very clearly in his YouTube video:



## Kaleidoscope Table Runner - Creating The Stack

### **Cutting The Stack**

Make sure your rotary cutter has a fresh blade. I used a 45mm cutter, but a 60mm cutter will work as well.

Cut a 5 ½" strip from the stack; you're cutting from the width of fabric (although in this case I actually cut from the length).

Lay the bottom of the triangle line on your clear 45° triangle or diamond template at the right end of the stack strip along the edge of the fabric nearest you (that's if you're right handed - work from the left side of the fabric if you're left handed). Carefully remove any pins from under the template, cut the first wedge. Flip the template and align the bottom triangle line on the upper edge of the fabric stack, cut the second wedge. Continue cutting until you have 5 wedges. If you have fewer than 8 layers in your stack, you will need to match up your cut wedges with the print in the remaining stack strip. You want a total of five stacks of 8 identical triangles to make five octagonal blocks if possible but you can construct an octagon from two stacks of 4 if you need to.



### **Sewing The Octagons**

Debbie Jordan's Video demonstrates clearly how to construct the octagon:

#### Kaleidoscope Table Runner Block - Sewing

1. Take a set of 8 identical triangles, set them up as pairs - right sides together, sew the pairs along one side, press open
2. Take two stitched pairs and place them right sides together them, sew, press open
3. Place the two pieces constructed from 4 triangles, sew, press open



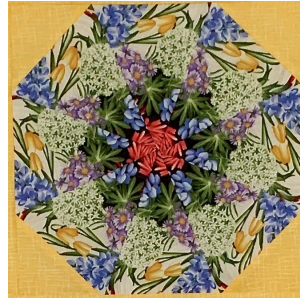
If you're accurate with your cutting and sewing, you will have all the triangles come to a point in the centre of the octagon (my pattern here is a smidge off, although the points do come together as they should).



### Adding Corners And Sashing

Now add the corner triangles and sashing:

1. Cut **ten**  $3\frac{3}{4}$ " squares from a contrasting fabric then cut each square on the diagonal - that gives you 20 corner right-angled triangles.
2. Sew one triangle to four opposite sides of the octagon to square up the block.



3. Cut **ten** strips  $1\frac{1}{4}$ " x  $10\frac{1}{4}$ " and **six** strips  $1\frac{1}{4}$ " x  $11\frac{1}{2}$ " from the same fabric as the corners).
4. Sew two shorter strips to opposite sides of all five blocks.
5. Sew one longer strip to one end of a block.
6. Attach a longer sashing strip to the second end of that block.
7. Sew the next block to the sashed first block, add another sashing piece to the end.
8. Attach the remaining three blocks, using sashing between each block, then add the final piece of sashing to the last block to finish the panel.



9. Finally, add a 2.5" outer border the length of the panel and to each end using either the same fabric from which you cut the original triangles for your octagons or you can use a contrasting fabric. [See photos at top.]

Again, here are the videos from Jordan Fabrics showing how to set up the fabric and stitch the octagons:

- [Kaleidoscope and Table Runner Block - Cutting The Fabric](#)
- [Kaleidoscope and Table Runner Block - Sewing The Octagons](#)

### Preparing The Backing

If you have enough of the original fabric you used for octagons, you might just use that single fabric for the back.

If you don't have enough of the original fabric, you can use what you have left as well as the contrast fabric you used or you can use another fabric to create a panel the same size as your finished front panel.

I constructed my back from leftovers – I hadn't bought very much of either the grey for the sashing or the grey version of the printed fabric. Not much in the way of scraps left, I can tell you.



Completed Runner – Back

### Finishing the Table Runner

The table runner is a quilt - it needs to have a top, batting, and backing layers. Assemble the quilt sandwich, quilt it however you wish. I recommend quilting in the hoop using an embroidery that fills the octagonal square blocks accompanied by stitching sashing and borders in-the-ditch (I used a 260 x 260 hoop which permits a 10" x 10" embroidery).

### Binding The Table Runner

You can finish the table runner with a traditional quilt binding. In my case, I used a 1/4" binding on the top with a 3/4" binding on the back (I cut my binding strips 1 3/4" in width) and attached it to the back by hand (I didn't want a line of machine stitching through the border on

the front). Or, you could do a hidden binding by attaching the binding on the front, top stitching on the binding side of the seam, folding the seam under, pressing, and hand stitching the open edge on the back. That way the binding isn't visible on the front of the table runner.



Completed Runner – Top

This Kaleidoscope Table Runner would also make a decent bed runner probably with seven octagons to make it long enough so it drapes over the sides of the bed. Might even want to add another narrow light inner border as well.

BTW:

*"A bed runner is a small, long piece of decorated cloth used to enhance the appearance of an otherwise plain bed. While some prefer the look solely for aesthetic reasons and would choose it even if it were more expensive than traditional decorative bedding, the primary reason to use one in the hospitality industry is to reduce costs while keeping the room attractive."*

## BEFORE WE MEET

Go through your stash - you may already have one or more 1 ½m pieces of fabric with a repeating pattern that would make an interesting kaleidoscope block. Depending on the pattern, you may want to set the print up on the WOF, but you may also decide to use the repeats along the length (or you may find you can use both - in which case you may be able to get away with a smaller amount of fabric.)

Don't forget to acquire/cut batting, backing fabric, and fabric for binding the table runner.

## Equipment

- Sewing machine
- Usual sewing kit including sharp scissors, straight pins, bobbins filled with sewing thread

## Materials & Supplies

### 1. Fabric:

- 1 ½ m of a print fabric - a large print works best - you want 4 repeats of the print which may be a bit more than 1 ½ m)
- Cotton sewing thread
- Low loft batting (20" X 60" - ie Warm 'n Natural or a cotton/bamboo)
- Enough fabric for backing a piece 20" x 60" (either a single fabric panel or a pieced panel)
- Fabric for binding (~10")

### 2. Tools:

- Essential: A 45° triangle or diamond template - either works
- straight pins
- Rotary cutter with a new blade, rotary cutting mat and ruler