

Don't Worry, Be Scrappy!



This quilt uses the “Buzz Saw,” block in various “shades” of red, white and blue, but I’m not just going to share with you how to make the block, I’m going to discuss making multiple blocks at once so you can make a whole quilt.

This article is intended for very new quilters, but experienced quilters can “buzz” through the text and make the blocks in no time as well.

I have divided the instructions into three parts: making the triangles, assembling the Buzz Saw blocks themselves and sashing and finishing the quilt.

You can make this quilt in any color combination you want. You can make it with as many fabrics as you choose from two to two million (well, maybe not *that* many.) I did it “scrappy” in three color-groups.

I chose my fabrics and divided them into color-groups: “centers” which were red (and ran the gamut from brownish red to fire-engine red), triangles, which were blue (from light to dark, purple to cyan), and “background”, which were whites, “shirtings” (*i.e. small prints on a light background*), light tans, ecru, etc. You could choose to use centers the same color as the background, but in a scrap quilt, I feel it’s better for them to be different.

Cutting everything out first and then sewing it all together makes it a little easier to keep track of blocks using many different fabrics.

For the Blocks:

- 30 – 6" x 6" squares of background fabrics
- 30 – 6" x 6" squares of triangle fabrics
- 20 – 6½" x 6½" squares of center fabrics
- 80 – 2½" x 2½" squares of background fabrics



For the Sashing (*This is the “scrappy” sashing covered in Part III. You don’t have to cut these pieces out now, or even use a sashing for this quilt, but even I have to admit to feeling a bit daunted when contemplating meeting all those seams!:*):

20 – 1½" x 10½" strips of background fabrics

28 – 1½" x 11½" strips of background fabrics

1 – 1½" x 12½" strip of background fabrics

more fabric for a wider border, if desired (the one shown is 6 inches, finished.)

This amount of fabric will allow you to make a quilt of 20 blocks

If you look at the block, you will notice that it’s made primarily of squares and triangles. Don’t fret, you’ve already cut the squares (the centers and corners)! So, put the center squares and other fabrics to the side, we’ll start with the triangles...

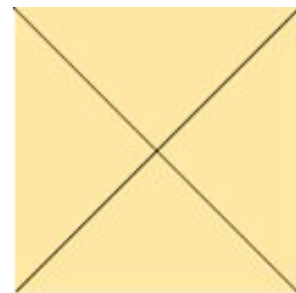
Part I: Making the Triangles:

You will notice that the triangles for this block are half background fabric and half “triangle” fabric and that the seam goes diagonally down the center of the block (i.e. from corner to opposite corner.) These are generally referred to as “half square triangle” blocks, or HSTs.



Note: Quilters use this abbreviation quite a bit, often not distinguishing between the triangle itself (i.e. one fabric) and the square block made from two triangles.

1. Place a 6" square of the background (light) fabric, facedown, on your work surface.
2. Draw a diagonal line from corner to corner on the back of the square.
3. Draw a second line connecting the other two corners. (The lines will form an X and should be at right angles to each other.)



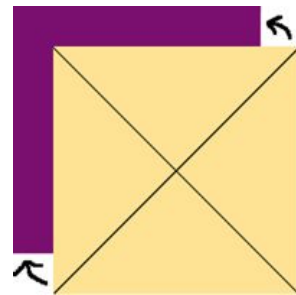
I usually mark ALL of the background fabric squares at the same time since I have my pencils and rulers out. You could just mark them as you go, if you wish.

4. Put the marked background fabric squares to one side.
5. Place a 6" square of the triangle fabric face up on your work surface.
6. Place the square of background fabric you have marked, face down on top of the triangle fabric.

(The two fabric squares should be right sides together, marked square up.)

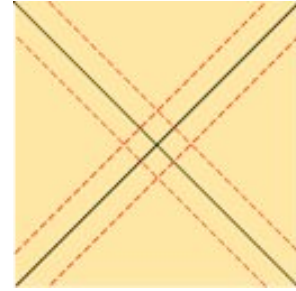
7. Pin them to keep them aligned and together.

It doesn’t matter where you pin since you will be taking these pins out before you sew, but just in case you forget, try to avoid pinning the lines themselves. One pin is sufficient, but I usually use two.



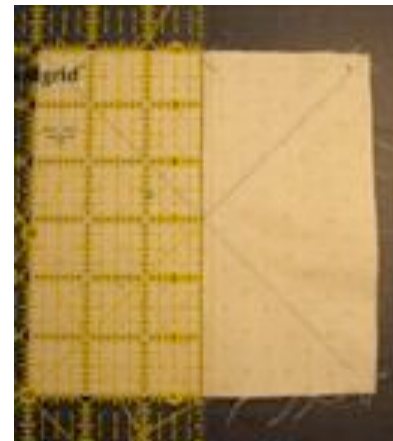
I usually match up all squares at the beginning, which is why I pin them. If you wish, you could just match them as you go.

8. Sew a scant $\frac{1}{4}$ " on *both* sides of *both* lines.
(You can “chain sew” these blocks, (*i.e. sew them one after another without cutting the thread between blocks*), by sewing down one side of the line on several blocks, then sewing down the other before you cut the threads. After doing one line of the X, cut the blocks apart and repeat with the other line in the X.)



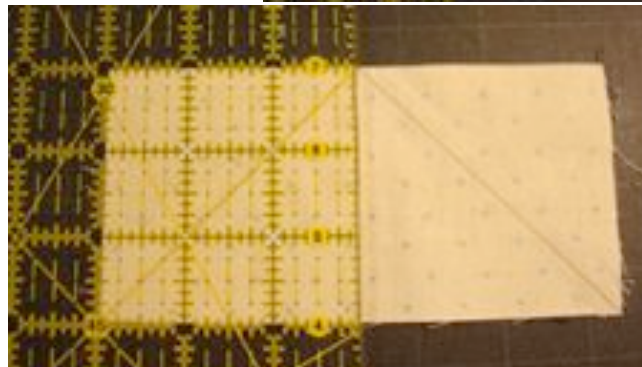
9. Cut the sewn block in half, vertically, making sure that the drawn line and the cut are at 45 degrees and that your cut passes through the center of the X. (*You can do this by using the 45 degree angle on your ruler, if you have one. This line can be seen better in the next photo.*)

You will end up with two 3" x 6" blocks.



10. Cut each sewn rectangle in half lengthwise, making sure that the drawn line and the cut are at 45 degrees and that your cuts pass through the center of the X.

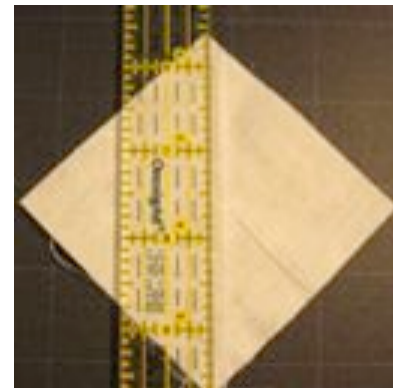
You will end up with four 3" x 3" sewn squares with a diagonal line and two lines of sewing (one on each side of the line.)



11. Cut on the drawn line.
(*If you have sewn multiple blocks, cutting them all one after another saves time.*)

12. Open all HST blocks and press seam to the dark fabric side.

13. Trim the resulting blocks to 2- $\frac{1}{2}$ ", being sure to keep the sewn line at a 45 degree angle and from corner to corner. (*A “bias-square” ruler/template makes the job much easier, but is not essential.*)



You will end up with *eight* HST blocks per sewn unit.

But wait! The Buzz Saw block requires *twelve*! Therefore, *DO NOT* keep the HST blocks sorted by color and fabric after they have been sewn and pressed.