

HALF SQUARE TRIANGLE PIECING TIP

January 13, 2017, Erika Mulvenna

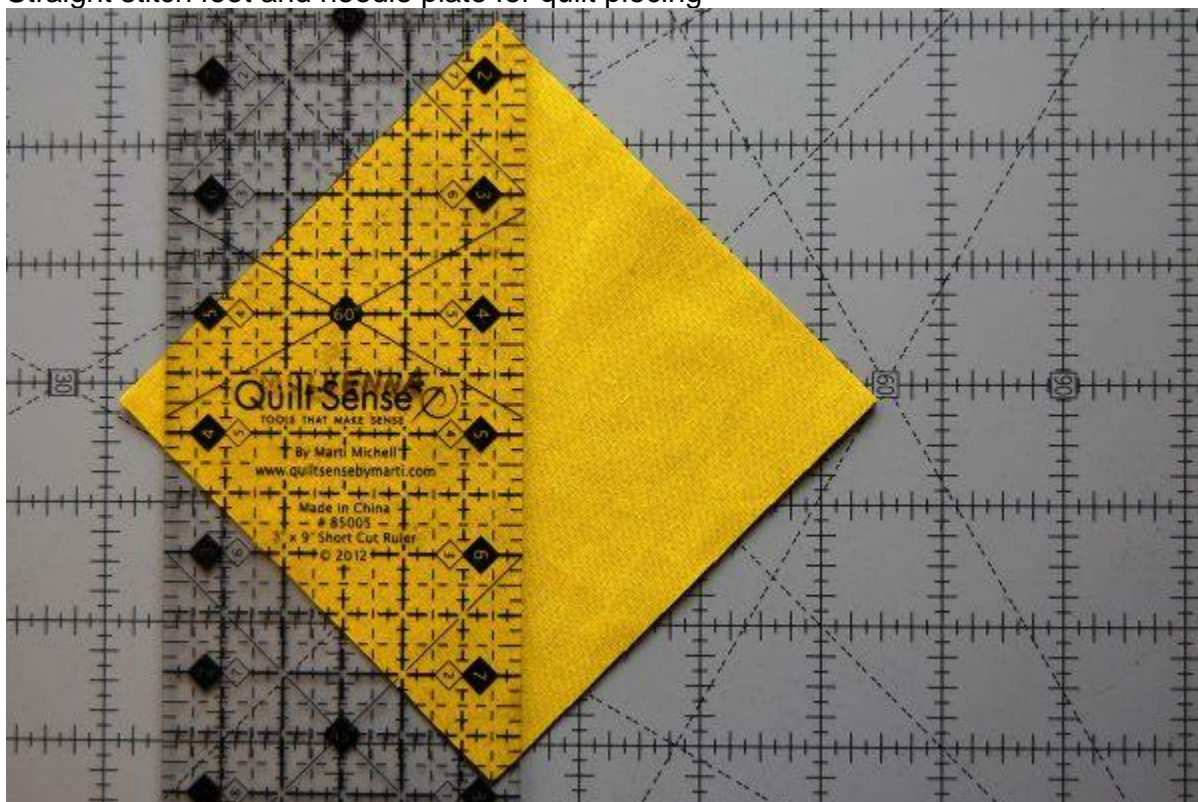


Before I was a quilter, I sewed primarily garments. I still have lots of garment sewing tools in my toolbox, and I've found a new use for one of them in quilting. I found that my tracing wheel has been helpful in temporarily marking fabrics for stitching patchwork and quilting. Here's how I've been using my tracing wheel to make quick half square triangles (HST's). Use this tip with any straight stitch foot!

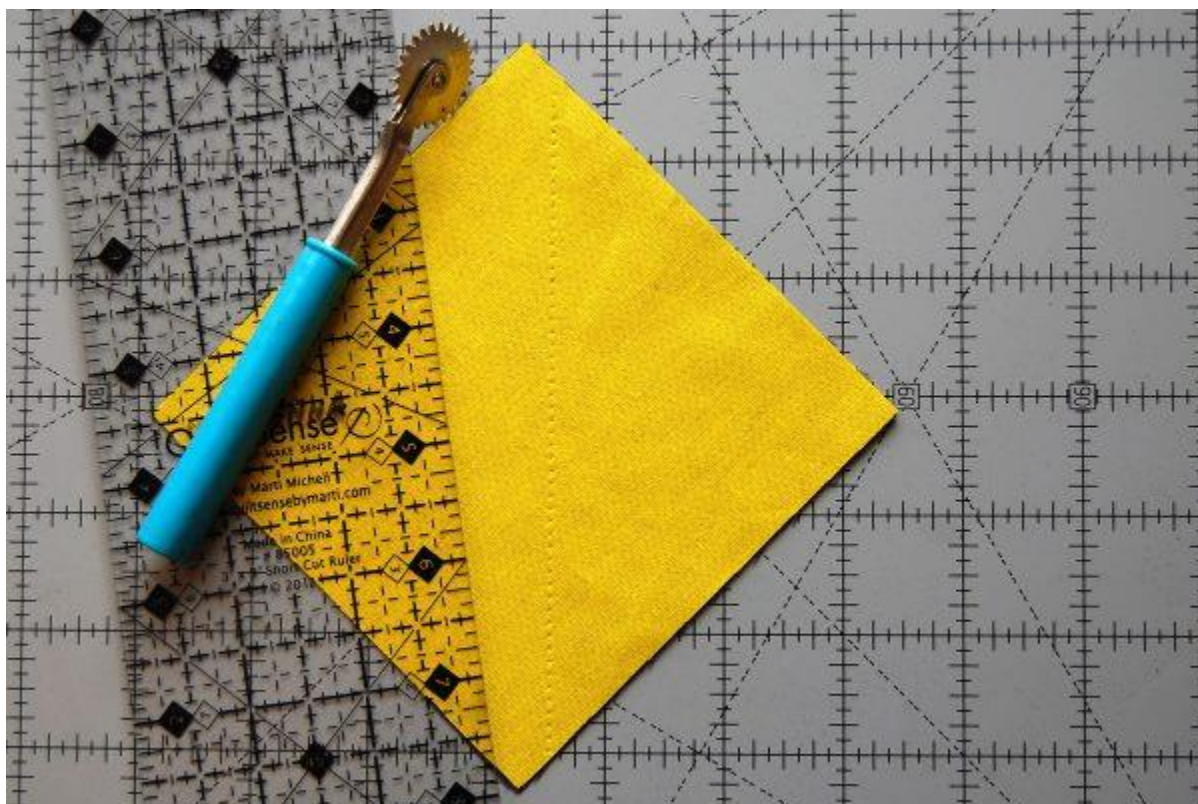
Materials to stitch quick half square triangles

- Tracing wheel
- Rotary cutter, mat, and clear acrylic ruler
- Sewing machine

- Straight stitch foot and needle plate for quilt piecing



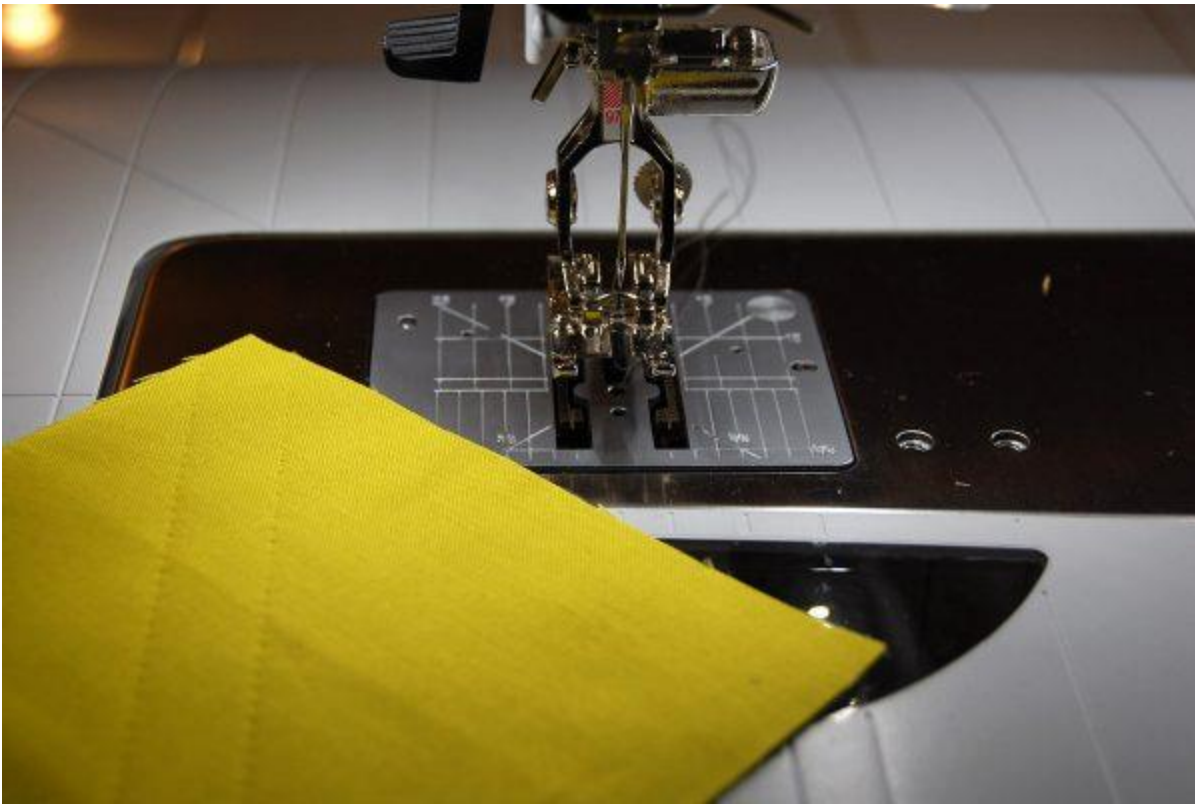
First, cut your fabric into squares. Your HST blocks will be about 1/2" smaller than the squares that you start with. Layer two squares right sides together on your cutting mat, one on top of the other. Align your clear quilting ruler on top of the square with the first quarter inch mark from the edge. Make sure your quarter inch mark on the ruler is matching two opposite points of the square as in the photo above.



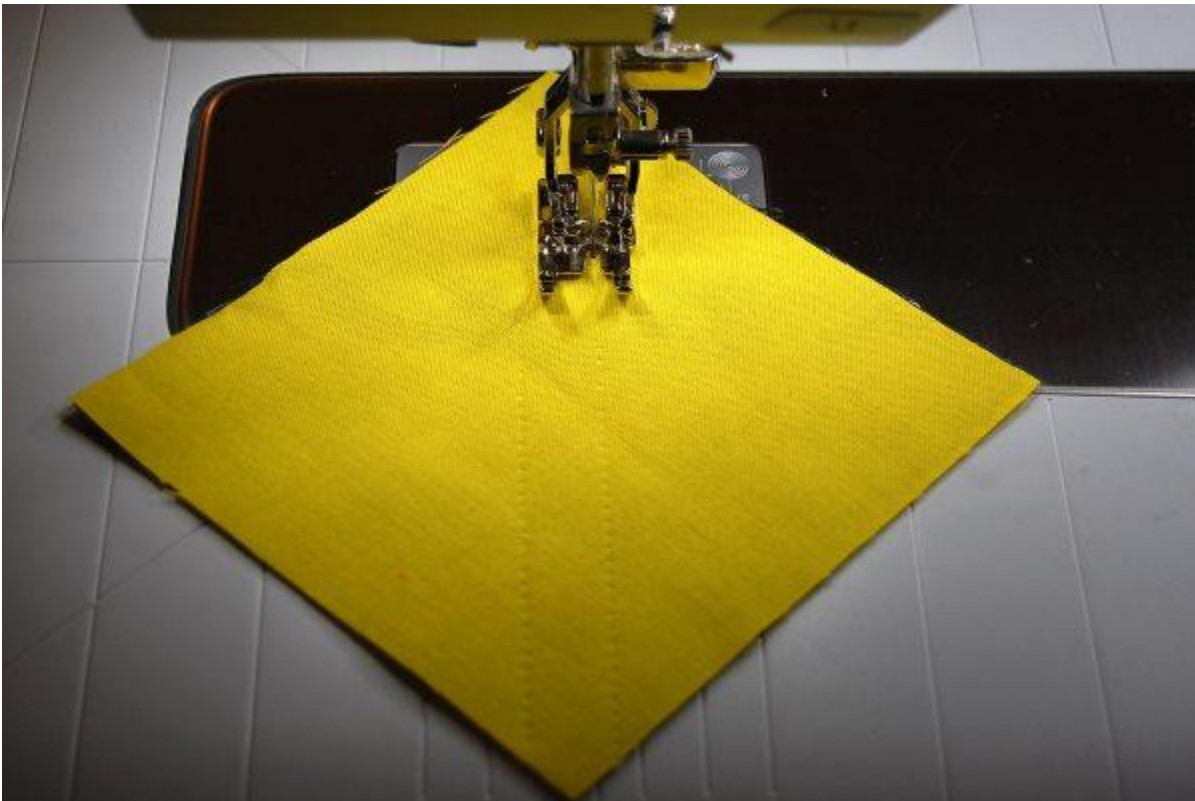
Now grab your tracing wheel, and press firmly along the ruler's edge. Make sure you've got a firm grip on the ruler so it doesn't slip as you're pressing in the first line with the tracing wheel.



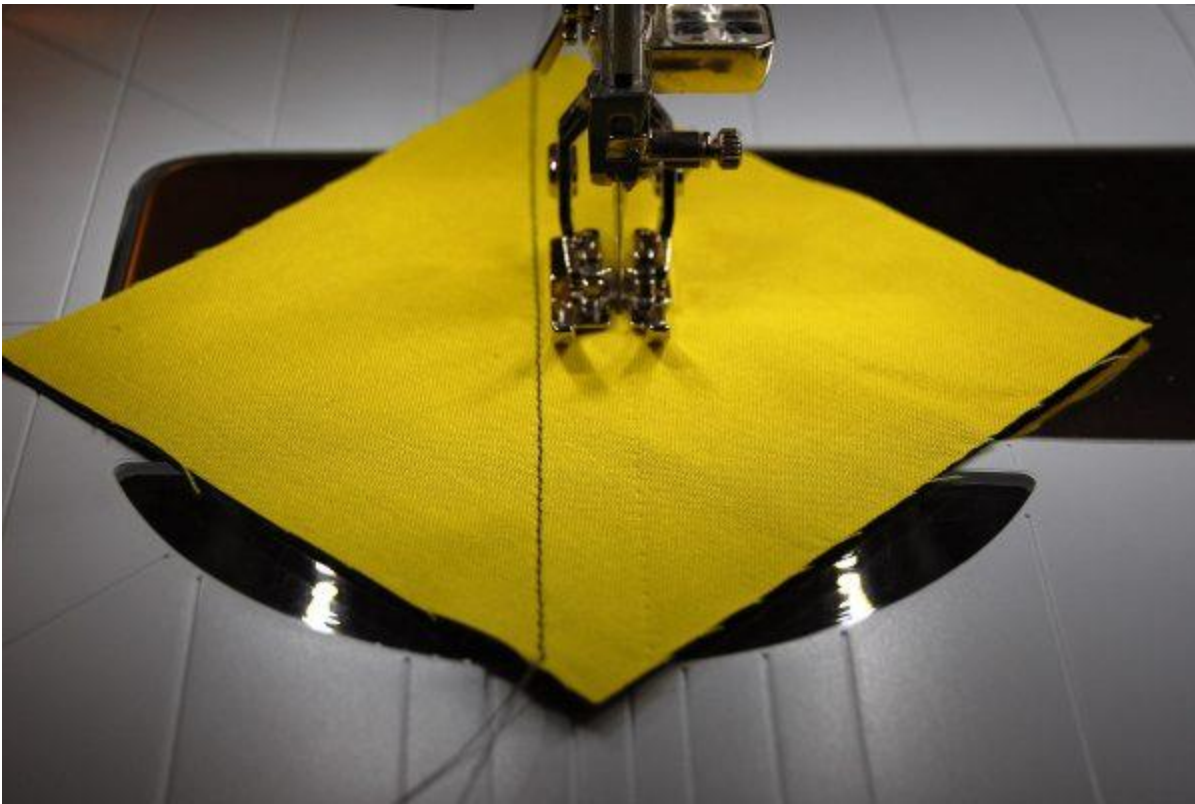
Flip the square over and mark the other side in the same way. These two marks are the stitching lines, they will be easy enough to follow along when you sew, and will disappear entirely when you press your HST's.



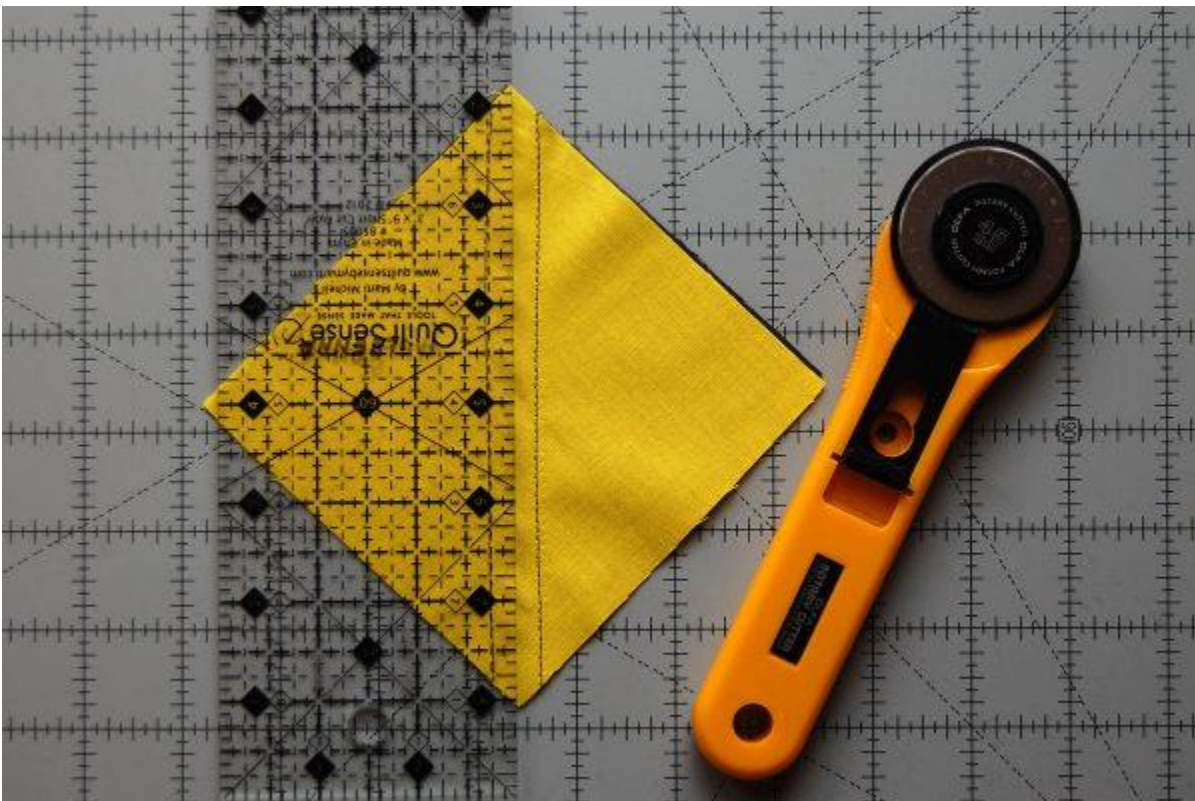
Set up your sewing machine for quilt piecing; I use a straight stitch needle plate and Patchwork foot #97D to optimize the straight stitch on the machine. You can use whichever piecing or straight stitch foot you prefer, and a straight stitch needle plate if you have one.



Stitch along the first line, following the mark you've made with your tracing wheel.



Next, stitch along the second line. Here's a fabric tip: if you are working with fabrics that seem to shift as you're sewing along the marked lines, try sewing both lines *in the same direction* instead of flipping the square over to sew the second line in the opposite direction. You can also use the Dual Feed feature to keep fabrics from shifting, or try the [Walking foot #50](#).



Take your stitched square back to your cutting mat, and cut from corner to corner in between the stitched lines.



Press your HST's well after cutting. You can press your seams as desired – open, or to one side or the other.



And finally, give your freshly pressed HST's a trim to square-up and remove the extra seams.



A quick and easy way to stitch up a bunch of HST's!

Techniques: patchwork, quilting