

A free project, compliments of...



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Making Placemats from Orphan Blocks

by Vicki Welsh

This placemat tutorial was designed to use orphan blocks or anything that you want for the center block. The instructions may seem a little long but that's not because they are complex. I have added several detail photos of tips that will help you in this project and others that you may do in the future.

Materials

First you need your center blocks. I used the first four blocks from the Three Creative Studios Block of the Month project. They finish to 12". My placemat will be 18" x 12", finished. You can adjust the size of the placemat or the sizes of the other pieces to accommodate your blocks.

Cut:

2 strips of sashing (dark purple) – 1 ½" x 12 ½"

2 border strips (I used leftover hand dyed fabrics from the block construction) – 2 ½" x 12 ½"

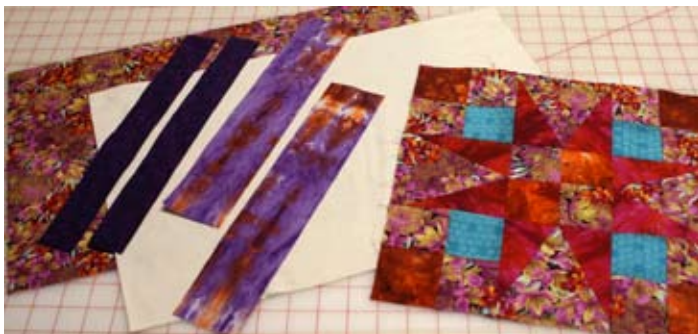
Batting – 12 ½" x 18 ½" – I like to use old (clean) flannel sheets for my placemats. It requires minimal quilting, doesn't shrink when it's washed and adds heft without puffyness.

Backing – 12 ½" x 18 ½" – This was a great way to use up the rest of the flower print that I hated!



Step 1

Sew dark purple sashing strips to each side of the block and press the seams toward the sashing.



Step 2

Sew one border strip to one side of the placemat. Press the seam toward the border.



Step 3

On the other side sew the border only about 1" at the top and 1" at the bottom, leaving most of the seam open. This opening is where you will turn the placemat. Press the seam toward the border as if the entire seam has been stitched.



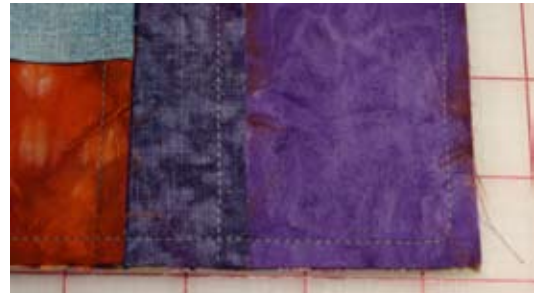
Step 4

Layer all of the parts. Place the flannel (batting) down first, layer the backing right side up and then the top right side down. Align all of the edges.



Step 5

Stitch around the entire edge of the placemat. Remember that your opening for turning the placemat right side out is along the edge of the border seam from Step 3, so you do not need to leave another opening for turning. A tip that I learned from garment construction is this one about stitching corners. When you get within one stitch of the turn point, stitch 1 or 2 stitches on the diagonal and then turn to stitch the next seam. This may seem illogical but it actually makes a better point.



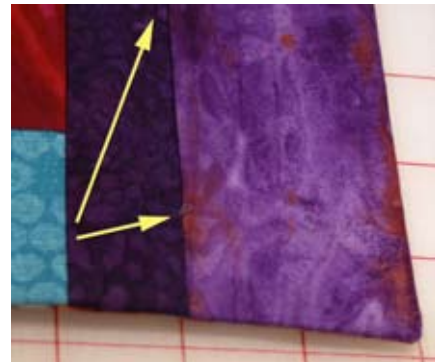
Step 6

Clip the corners. Clip close to the turn point and make a long taper to each side.



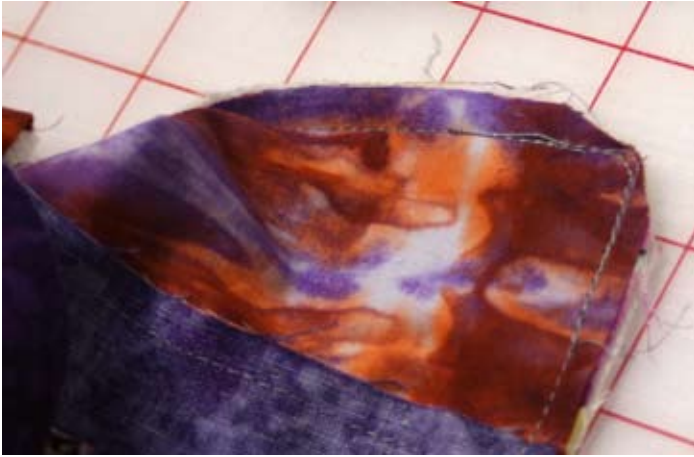
Step 7

Turn the placemat right side out and GENTLY push out the corners.



Step 8

Fix any corners that you poked out! If you are like me, at least one of your corners will get poked out. Turn that corner back out and stitch a few stitches in from the old seam. Turn it back to the right side and press again.



You're done! It took longer to read the instructions than it took to make the placemat, didn't it? Now make 3 more for a set and then use the instructions to design your own placemat!

Step 9

The turn opening will be along one of the border edges, about 1" from each end. Push the seams out flat and give the placemat a good press. Be sure to neatly press the seam allowance for the opening in place. Pin the opening closed.



Step 10

Stitch the opening closed. I used a blanket stitch on that seam and the dark purple sashing seam. You can use a decorative stitch or straight stitch. Stitch all around the edge of the placemat with a straight stitch about 1/8" from the edge. For quilting, you can do as much or as little as you want. I did a little stitch in the ditch around the star motif. If using the flannel, you only need enough stitching to hold it together. Don't spend too much time on it – it's a placemat after all and will eventually have spaghetti sauce on it!