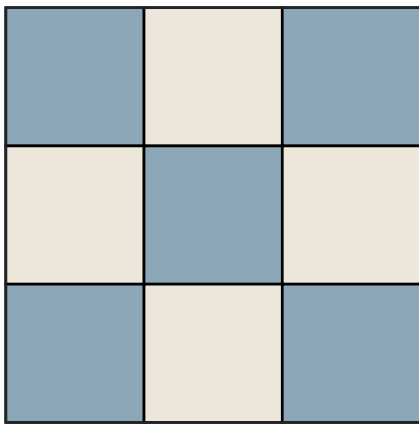


The Fat-Quarter Nine-Patch

Your first quilt, from first cut to final stitch.

Finished size: 36" x 45" lap or baby quilt



At a glance

SKILL LEVEL

Absolute beginner

CORE SKILL

Straight seams, 1/4" allowance

TIME

A focused weekend

BLOCKS

12 nine-patch blocks

MACHINE

Any that sews a straight line

This is a free pattern for personal use. Make it for yourself, gift it, or use it to learn. Please do not resell the pattern file itself.

What you need before you cut

Fabric

- Fabric A (feature): 3 fat quarters, OR 3/4 yard total. This is your bolder print or color.
- Fabric B (background): 3 fat quarters, OR 3/4 yard total. A calm solid or low-volume print.
- Backing: 1.5 yards of 44" wide cotton.
- Binding: 1/3 yard (gives you enough 2.5" strips).
- Batting: one piece at least 42" x 51" (cotton or cotton blend is easiest for a first quilt).

Tools

- Rotary cutter, self-healing mat, and a clear acrylic ruler (a 6" x 24" is the workhorse).
- Quilting cotton thread and a fresh 80/12 needle.
- Pins or clips, a seam ripper (you will use it, and that is normal), and an iron.
- A walking foot if you have one. Not required for piecing, but it helps at the quilting stage.

Budget note

You do not need premium fabric to learn. A first quilt collects wobbly seams and a few ripped-out stitches, and that is the point. Save the special fabric for quilt number two. Precut charm packs or fat quarters keep cutting simple and colors coordinated.

Prewash tip: quilters disagree here, and both camps are right. If your fabric feels cheap or the color is deep (reds, indigos), prewash to check for bleeding and shrinkage. If you are using good-quality precuts, you can skip it. Pick one approach and stay consistent across the whole quilt so everything shrinks the same way later.

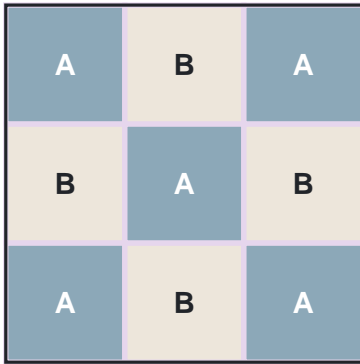
Step 1: Cut your squares

Every block in this quilt is built from one size of square: a 3.5" cut square. That single measurement is the whole pattern. Cut carefully now and the sewing goes smoothly later.

- From Fabric A, cut 54 squares at 3.5" x 3.5".
- From Fabric B, cut 54 squares at 3.5" x 3.5".
- That is 108 squares total, enough for 12 blocks with a few spares.

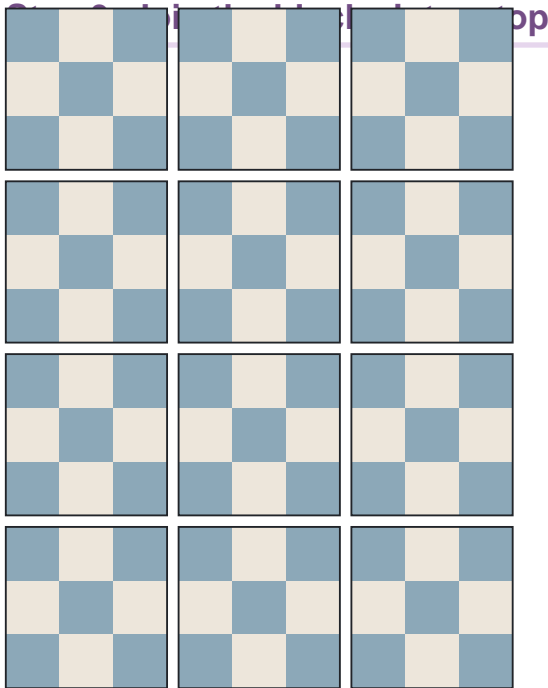
Accuracy tip: line the ruler up on a grid line, hold it still, and cut away from your body in one confident pass. Trim rather than saw. If a square lands a hair off, set it aside for a spare instead of forcing it in.

Step 2: Build one nine-patch block



1. Lay out 5 Fabric A and 4 Fabric B squares in the checkerboard above.
2. Sew each row of 3 together with a 1/4" seam. You now have 3 rows.
3. Press the seams of row 1 and row 3 toward the A squares, and row 2 toward the B squares. This is called pressing to nest.
4. Sew the 3 rows together. The pressed seams lock into each other so your center point stays crisp.
5. Repeat until you have 12 finished blocks.

Photo guide for this step: an eye-level shot of three pieced rows meeting at the center, seams pressed in opposite directions and nesting together, a fingertip holding the intersection flat on a cutting mat under soft daylight.



1. Arrange your 12 blocks in a grid, 3 across and 4 down.
2. Sew the blocks in each row together, then press.
3. Sew the 4 rows together to finish the quilt top.
4. Give the whole top a final press. It should measure roughly 36" x 45".

Step 4: Make the quilt sandwich

- Tape your backing wrong-side-up to a flat surface, pulled smooth but not stretched.
- Center the batting on top, then center the quilt top right-side-up.
- Baste all three layers together with safety pins every 4 inches, or use basting spray.

Step 5: Quilt the layers

For a first quilt, skip fancy free-motion designs. Straight lines look clean and hold everything together. Stitch in the ditch along the seams, or sew straight lines across the quilt using a walking foot and a longer stitch length (around 3 to 3.5 mm). Start in the middle and work outward so the layers do not bunch.

Step 6: Bind the edges

- Cut 2.5" wide strips from your binding fabric and join them end to end into one long strip.
- Fold the strip in half lengthwise, wrong sides together, and press.
- Trim the quilt edges square. Sew the raw edges of the binding to the quilt front with a 1/4" seam, mitering the corners.
- Fold the binding to the back and stitch it down by hand or by machine.

When it goes wrong (it will, and that is fine)

My points get cut off at the seams.

Your seam allowance is drifting. Check that it is a true scant 1/4". A tiny error repeats across every block and shows up as chopped points. Fix the allowance, not the points.

My blocks are different sizes.

Small differences are normal. If a block is off by less than 1/4", pin generously, match the corners first, and ease the extra length evenly. Do not trim unless the pattern tells you to.

The seams will not lie flat.

Press, do not iron. Set the iron down, hold, and lift. Dragging it sideways stretches the fabric and creates waves.

I keep making mistakes and feel like giving up.

Every quilter has unpicked more than they want to admit. Finished beats perfect. A wonky first quilt still keeps someone warm, and it teaches more than a pattern you never start.

You finished a quilt.

Photograph it, flaws and all. That record of progress is what carries you into the next project. When you are ready, keep the same nine-patch and swap in a jelly roll or a scrappy stash for a completely different look.