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WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 29, 2007

Cathedral Window Quilt Tutorial

The Cathedral Window Quilt pattern is gorgeous. The Origami-like folding of fabric, the jewel like tones of the "windows", the layers of fabric and stitching - all combine to create an amazing, complex looking quilt. The reality is that the process is not that hard, and with a little learning and patience, you can do it quite easily.



The Cathedral Window quilt is a quilt-as-you-go project, meaning that there is no backing or quilting to be done once you have finished the quilt top. The quilt simply grows and grows as you make it, and once you've done enough squares to be satisfied, it's done. Brilliant. I am a woman of notoriously low patience, and I've taken to this quilt project with gusto and enthusiasm..... a good point for those of you out there that can't possibly believe that you'll have enough patience to make a whole quilt yourself!

First, a word about materials. Traditionally, these quilts were made predominantly from muslin, with calico or cotton scraps used for the "windows", which meant that when the quilt was held up to the light, it created that "stained glass window" effect that the quilt

EMAIL ME: hyena_in_petticoats(AT) yahoo (DOT)com(DOT)au



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TUTORIALS, PATTERNS AND THINGS...

Cathedral Window Quilt

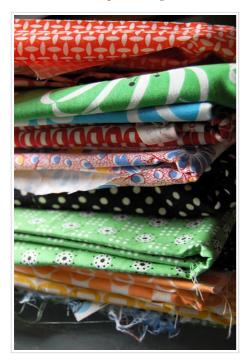
Hyena In Petticoats: Cathedral Window Quilt Tutorial

does so well.

Muslin, however, won't keep you warm at night, and this quilt works much easier if the base fabric you use is closely woven, keeping it's shape well during the ironing and folding process.

By all means, use muslin if you want, but make sure you buy a muslin that is closely woven if you can. My first attempt at this quilt was made with a light weight linen, and it was an unmitigated disaster. The fabric just wouldn't stay where I put it..... if in doubt, make a couple of squares and see how you go!

This quilt works really well as a charm quilt, so any scraps of cotton prints you have lying around in your stash will be well served by this pattern....otherwise, you can think about the design a little more if you want. This pattern calls for charm squares of about 3 1/2 inches square for the "windows". You have the option of putting a different fabric in each window, creating a pattern, or doing what I'm doing, which is alternating rows of charm squares in bright prints with rows of the plain white cotton I'm using as the backing fabric. As with all quilts, imagination and individuality reign supreme. Do what you will!



The pattern here is for a 9 inch square, which is folded and pressed into a block which will give you a 3 inch 'window'. Four of these blocks sewn together result in a 9 inch block again, with which you will build your quilt.

Using this pattern, I have used 5 metres of white, 100% cotton broadcloth (double blocked, also known as quilters homespun) for the backing fabric. Even though my quilt is still in progress, I think this will give me a finished quilt the size of your average throw rug or lap quilt, enough to wrap around yourself, but not enough to cover the bed. I've also used random bits of fabric from my stash, as well as about a metre of cotton batting.

Tutorial Fabric and Where to Find it... Pincushion Tutorial

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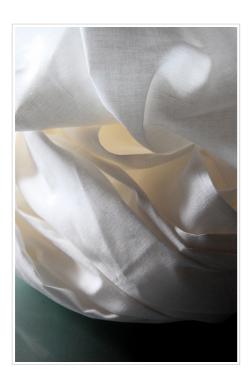
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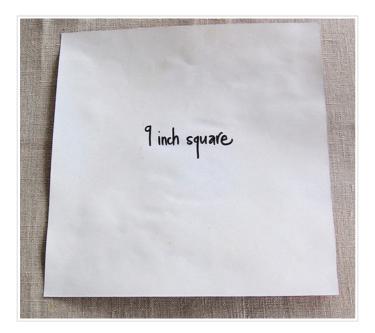


If you want to make a larger quilt, I would recommend increasing the size of the starter block, so your quilt yeilds larger 'windows', and making the quilt grow faster.

Anyhoo - how the hell do I make it?????

Start off by measuring out a template for your starting block. Mine is 9 inches square. A general rule of thumb is to divide the size of one edge of your starting block by a third, and that's how big one edge of the 'windows' will be.

Make your template out of medium weight card stock (like a manila folder), something that you can iron without any dramas. Do your best to ensure that the template is absolutely square.



From your backing fabric, cut out some squares, leaving an allowance of about 2cm

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FLICKR

What is this?



around the outside of the template. I recommend cutting out six squares to start, which will quilt up into a nice, rectangular shape, and if you decide you hate it by the time you're finished, you can make a cushion cover out of it.

Take one of the squares, and place the template on top of it.



You need to mitre the corners - do this by folding each corner over the template card and ironing it down.





The next step is the fold over the edges of the fabric, ironing them down to create mitred corners. This tucks all the raw edges inside the quilt, preventing any fraying, or raw edges in the finished piece. This is one of the steps I have devised for myself, just to achieve a neater finish. Don't freak out of your corners aren't perfectly mitred - they will be folded

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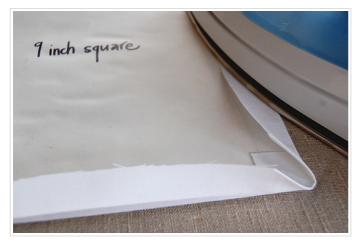
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in again, and won't affect to finished quilt too much.



Once the edges have been pressed, it should look like this:



Take out the paper template, and set it to one side. Now you take the whole fabric piece, and fold it in half lengthwise - tucking all the edges



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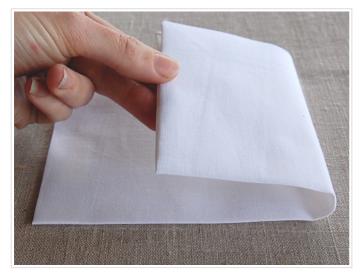
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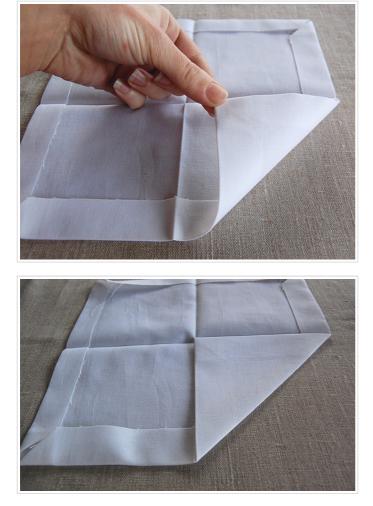
Then fold the piece in half again, pressing flat again.



Unfold the square, and you'll have a large square divided into quarters by creases from the pressing. This is your guide to the next step.



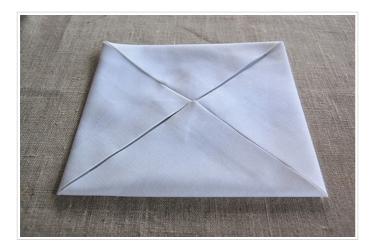
Take each corner, and fold in towards the middle, keeping those pressed edges tucked in neatly. Press flat.



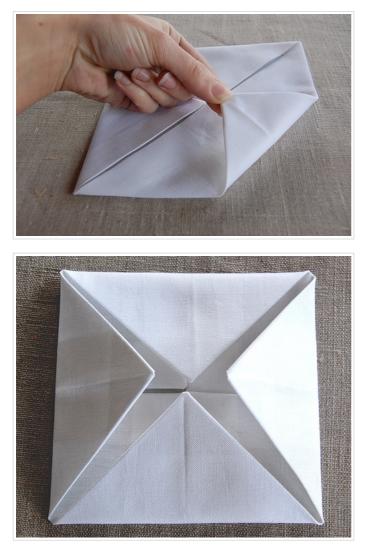
Try as best you can to keep the outside corners neat - this will help the overall look of your quilt later on.



The first fold should look like this when finished:



Then do the same thing again - taking the outside corners, and folding them into the centre to make a smaller square - again, taking care to make the outside corners as neat as possible.



Press flat, and put aside. Some people recommend loosely tacking the four pieces down, but I found this hindered my progress later on, I just stack them in a pile, facing down, like this: (sorry about the change in the light - I took the next few photos in my sewing room, where the light is not so good....)



Repeat the steps for each of your squares.

Once you have a pile ready for sewing together, take two squares, and line up two triangles at the edges, like this:



Now you want to sew the two triangles together along the crease at the sides, matching up the corners as well as you can. Some people hand stitch this part, but machine stitching is totally acceptable, not to mention quicker!



Once you have stitched the triangles together, you are ready to start putting the 'window' in.

Pin down the loose triangles around the window, and flatten down the stitched together triangles, like this:



The centre of that diamond in the middle is where the window will go. You'll need to measure that diamond shape to determine the size of the fabric for the window. On my quilt, the window is approx. 2 1/2 inches square. Make a template to the size of the window, and cut your window fabric a little larger than that, like this:



Here, I have made another modification - because I want my quilt to be as warm as possible, I have decided to include batting in this step. Basically I just cut a sqaure of batting to the size of the window, and insert it with the window fabric, like this:



Whether you decide to use the batting or not, is up to you - the next few steps remain the same.

Finger press the edges of the window fabric over, and place the fabric right side up on top of the diamond shaped window section of your quilt block. Then, fold over each edge of the white backing fabric, so it 'frames' the window, pinning

Then, fold over each edge of the white backing fabric, so it 'frames' the window, pinning each side down as you go:





Now, stitch the 'frame' down, using whatever stitch method you prefer - if you are working with light weight fabrics and no batting, you can use your favourite invisible stitching method, like blind hem stitch. I have used a simple straight stitch on top of the fabric to get through the layers of fabric and batting, plus, I like having visible stitching - it's up to you.



Once you have stitched the 'frame' down, your quilt block should look like this:



Once you have completed a few of these blocks, you can then start stitching them together, creating more and more 'windows' along the way. Your quilt grows and grows,

Hyena In Petticoats: Cathedral Window Quilt Tutorial

with no backing or quilting needed - once you have sewn enough pieces together - the quilt is done!



You can finish off the edges by adding in triangular shaped 'windows', or simply stitching down the 'frames' with no fabric inside - it's up to you.

Well, that's it!

I hope this tutorial gets some of you excited to make this truly satisfying project - please let me know how you go, or if you have any questions!

XXX



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POSTED BY HYENA IN PETTICOATS AT 5:05 PM LABELS: QUILTING, TUTORIALS, WORK IN PROGRESS

47 COMMENTS:

Nikki (Mother of the Devil Child) said ...

Holy craperooni that's an awesome quilt!!! Thanks for the tutorial, it'll take a number and join my To-Do List

:)

AUGUST 29, 2007 6:43 PM

kootoyoo said...

Lara, this is absolutely fantastic. I'm looking forward to giving it a go! Thank you.

Kirsty

AUGUST 29, 2007 9:20 PM

Sisiggy said ...

I'm hoping this is as easy as you make it sound because I'm really going to try this. Maybe I'll start with a pillow...a very *small* pillow...

AUGUST 29, 2007 9:31 PM

Hyena In Petticoats: Cathedral Window Quilt Tutorial

Kloth & amp; Bolt said ...

Wow, this tutorial is fantastic! The photos and the easy to understand instructions are amazing! Thank you! -kb

AUGUST 29, 2007 9:47 PM

Dawn said...

Thank you so much for the wonderful tutorial! I have been wanting to make one of these quilts but just haven't found the right tutorial to make one! Now I have found yours and I will be getting my fabrics together! Thank you for sharing!

AUGUST 29, 2007 11:53 PM

Kimberlee + Lies said...

leah, you rock the casbar this tutorial must have taken you ages, -a total labour of love. thanks mucho!!!!!!! -KIMBERLEE

AUGUST 30, 2007 10:03 AM

cloth.paper.string said...

amazing quilt, great tutorial. and absolutely fantastic new name, leah. wishing you the best, sarah

AUGUST 30, 2007 1:39 PM

Michele said...

If I had the time I'd thank you about a thousand times over! I'm currently making a cathedral window quilt for my sister and I've had the hardest time finding good, quality photos to help me out in the "how to" department so I've been doing what any respectable stitcher would do...winging it! LOL

I've been "sewing" down the edges of my 8" fabric square with "stitch witchery" and it has made the blind hemming a NIGHTMARE to get my needle through (I'm hand sewing).

I've also been sewing the cross stitch across them middle...another pain in the fanny.

Now...I'm off to my sewing room to try a few of your tips and tricks and I'm already grinning at how easy it's going to make this quilt.

Thank YOU!! Michele SEPTEMBER 3, 2007 8:19 AM

jeanetta said...

great tutorial. i have alwasy wondered what went into these quilts. i am totally inspired. now if i can just find the time. lol. maybe a square or 2 a day ...something like that.

SEPTEMBER 4, 2007 9:58 PM

Stella said...

Hi! Found this post via My Half of The Brain... I've seen these quilts before and assumed

http://hyena-in-petticoats.blogspot.com/2007/08/cathedral-window-quilt-tutorial.html 04/10/2008

the construction was much more complicated than this -- I'll definitely be giving it a try one of these days. Thanks!

SEPTEMBER 5, 2007 2:42 AM

Bridget said ...

Awesome tutorial! I've only made 2 quilts and hated almost every minute of it because I have no patience for the quilting part. Your tutorial makes this beautiful quilt look so easy and there's no quilting- hooray! I'm definately going to try this. Thank You!

SEPTEMBER 5, 2007 3:16 AM

ldahospud said...

FanTAStic tutorial! Great pictures and I love the quality of your work. I'll be checking back often, hoping for more!

SEPTEMBER 5, 2007 3:19 PM

Fiona said...

Thank you. :) I'm so tempted to go start making one now.

SEPTEMBER 8, 2007 12:07 PM

Whitney of lilli tutu said...

This is absolutely incredible! I want to tackle this project soon. I'm being terribly lazy though and you'll see this by my question: So the windows are hand stitched, right? Just want to make sure before I embark. Thanks!

Whitney

SEPTEMBER 8, 2007 1:11 PM

Péitseoga said...

wow.

i like it!

not sure if i'll ever get round to making it, all this handstitching, but it looks amazing! do you work in rows? do you make white windows where the blocks are joined up? have you got any pictures of the finished quilt, for how the edges look? cheers!

SEPTEMBER 9, 2007 1:38 AM

zoesquid said ...

Thanks Leah,

I have rushed out this afternoon and bought some fabric to do this. Its in the wash right now so it will be ready to start tommorow. I will keep you posted(pictorially of course) Cheers

Libby

SEPTEMBER 13, 2007 3:26 PM

Sonnja said... Thank you so much for the wonderful tutorial!

Lind regards,

Sonnja

OCTOBER 4, 2007 3:07 PM

Vaughanville Michele said...

Oh no! Have you removed the photos from this post on purpose or is it a Flikr glitch?!! I really need them as I'm working on a CW quilt now and needed a little visual reminder. :- (Please???

OCTOBER 12, 2007 4:54 AM

Laurel said ...

I just got fabric yesterday to try this quilt out. Hopefully I get my butt in gear and get it made for my parents for christmas!

Thanks for the fab tutorial. You make it look so easy!

NOVEMBER 14, 2007 5:12 AM

Anna said...

love the quilt and the tutorial is awesome! i am working on it right now.. already posted two pictures on flickr! maybe you wanna check it out! great stuff on all your pages by the way!!!!

lg

anna

JANUARY 6, 2008 8:00 AM

Anonymous said ...

My oldest daughter is obsessed with this quilt pattern. She originally had a cathedral window pillow that my greatgrandmother made, needless to say, her favorite pillow couldn't hold up. Her uncle bought her another pillow at a yard sale, and it is currently just the top, no back, no stuffing, barely any of the windows have any material. I cringe at the loss of wonderful quilting from the past, but it is the security blankie for her. She always has it when she is home, either in her hand, or very very close at hand. After 13 years of her loving these, I can finally make her one! I knew it was a lot of time involved, but never could quite figure out how to make one. Thank you!!!!

JANUARY 25, 2008 6:34 AM

the long thread said ...

I love this quilt! I'd really like to try to make this with the muslin and use for a window shade. It's on my list of projects!

JANUARY 27, 2008 12:33 AM

Tara said... Awesome tutorial! Great job, it's beautiful!

JANUARY 31, 2008 9:45 PM

MARY said ...

Best tutorial I've yet to see on the net. Thanks ever so much. I went right at it, but never

http://hyena-in-petticoats.blogspot.com/2007/08/cathedral-window-quilt-tutorial.html 04/10/2008

take on a big project until I've tried it out, pillow it was. It turned out okay. The binding bothered me. I made do, but wasn't entirely happy with it. Any suggestions?

FEBRUARY 4, 2008 2:21 PM

MARY said...

There it is, done! Check it out on Flicker. Not too bad for the first. I've already started on the second pillow cover. I want to check out my improved understanding (modifications to fit my pea brain) while the idea is still hot.

FEBRUARY 8, 2008 12:48 PM

MARY said...

Guess I should send along my Flicker address.

http://www.flickr.com/photos/hmsklgrma/

FEBRUARY 8, 2008 1:17 PM

grannytrish said...

I have been looking for a tutorial like this for years. THANK YOU. My granny made a cathederal window and it was lost after she died. I am excited about this project.

FEBRUARY 9, 2008 7:48 AM

keeping_up_jones said...

So helpful...thank you. I am starting on it tomorrow, making it for my baby. I originally learned to sew the square instead of using the iron. I made on years ago and never finished it, put it in a bag to resume later and could never find it again. I finally built the nerve to start all over again. I am excited though!!

FEBRUARY 20, 2008 6:04 PM

Julie Bormann said...

You have done an amazing job explaining step by step how to create this quilt. I have started with a peach background, creating windows of pinks, creams, and brown prints. I will send you a photo when it's done- thank you for helping me create this!

MARCH 12, 2008 9:56 PM

DoolanSis said...

Awesome. I've been trying to get up nerve to start this pattern. I'm inspired and fabric shopping tomorrow.

MARCH 24, 2008 9:38 AM

Roslyn Atwood said... Great tutorial, clear & concise. I'm bookmarking this one.

MARCH 28, 2008 3:34 AM

Linnea said...

I am making this quilt! I love it! Thanks for such a great Tutorial, I am really excited to try it out.

MARCH 29, 2008 3:16 PM

dozengrands said...

I have wanted to do one of these quilts for so many years. My ex- mother-in-law made one and it was amazing how fast it grew. At that time I was raising her grandchildren and had no desire to quilt. Now I am the grandmother and wish to make one for the oldest grandchild for her graduation, in 4 years! I had found instructions in a book for a checkbook cover. I attempted it and botched it. So I went online to look for better instructions. I stumbled on yours and it seemed easy. But yours looks nothing like the one I made. And mine is very ragged and bad looking.HELP!!!I do not understand completely how to add the piece in the middle and where to get the fabric to roll down like you did it. What do I do now? I am determined to do it right and neatly before I continue. Thanks for any tips.I have pics but don't know how to get them to you. Thanks, Betty Jo.

APRIL 20, 2008 1:44 PM

Hyena In Petticoats said...

Hi Betty Jo!

I'd be more than happy to help with your quilt, feel free to email me and I'll try to help!

My email address is hyena_in_petticoats(at)yahoo(dot)com(dot)au..... if you email me some pictures, I can try to tell you what to do!

Cheers,

Leah xx

APRIL 23, 2008 12:34 AM

Mickie Rader said...

Hi- I am an American- in the state of Kentucky. The directions and pics of the cathedral window pattern are the best I have seen anywhere!! I saved it to my favorites to use later. I had a look around your site- I think I like you lol. Aussies seem so down to earth about everything. If you get the urge to talk to an old lady quilter in the U.S. just give me a holler. catgranny54@yahoo.com, my name is Mickie. G'day (did I do that right?) lol

MAY 26, 2008 12:57 PM

Maria Teresa said... Thanks for your tutorial!!! Maria Teresa

JUNE 7, 2008 5:20 PM

Catherine said...

What an absolutely fabulous tutorial. I've wanted to do one of these Cathedral Windows quilts for ages and this actually makes it sound easier than I thought it was!

JULY 1, 2008 7:30 AM

Quilter In Paradise said...

just simply wonderful! thanks for sharing... I put this on my links of tutorials - actually it inspired me to add the subject header to my blog sidebar... I've always said "someday" to one of these quilts - with this method, "someday" might be sooner! Beth

JULY 2, 2008 11:27 AM

Samantha said...

This is GREAT! I started mine and it is coming along very nicely. I am doing the whole thing by machine, including the "windows". I probably should have done them by hand since it is sort of twisty to get the between ones done on the machine but it is turning out okay for a first try. I'll probably do this one small then make a larger one where I hand sew the "windows". Thanks for a GREAT tutorial!

JULY 8, 2008 4:17 PM

TLC said...

A big thank you for taking the time to put together this tutorial! Wonderful job! JULY 20, 2008 1:55 PM

JULI 20, 2008 1:55 PM

Anna M. said...

Wow! I have been a quilter for about 7 years, but I've never even heard of Cathedral Window...where have I been?! Thanks for the tutorial - you make it look so easy - I can't wait to get started!!!

JULY 23, 2008 10:56 AM

Susan said...

Wow! What a great tutorial! I've been wanting to learn how to do this!

Susan http://www.raisin-toast.com

JULY 29, 2008 10:27 PM

hmsklgrma said...

Okay, I am ready to start a BIG one. My oldest grandson is getting married next year, and I want to make them a comforter. Anyone had any experience with yardage requirements for a queen size comforter?

My pillow covers came out great. I love the pattern since I can work on it in small bits and take it wherever I go.

JULY 30, 2008 5:48 AM

Sonja said... Completely brilliant!! I'm trying this one for sure, thanks a heap for posting this!

AUGUST 6, 2008 5:13 PM

ellenkey said ...

I just found your Cathedral Window tutorial. It is wonderful ! Thank you for helping the quilting world!

Ellen

SEPTEMBER 7, 2008 4:51 PM

El Almacén de Telas said...

Wonderful tutorial!! I've added a link to it in my blog, hope you don't mind! I just want other people to see your incredible projects!! Congratulations!!

Patricia (from Argentina)

SEPTEMBER 19, 2008 10:41 PM

Window Films said... That is so brilliant! I think this is gorgeous!

How generous of you to post a tutorial for us! Ill have to give this a go!

Cheers,

Gemma

SEPTEMBER 26, 2008 3:17 AM

Post a Comment

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