

FREE TUTORIAL: Multiple Curve Improv Blocks

www.littlepatchpockets.co.uk

I have made various versions of this block over the years, but this is basically how it is done. These blocks finish to 4 x 4 inches (4½ inches trimmed). The blocks are made in multiples of five, but I always make more than needed so I can audition blocks for the final piece. Use any discarded blocks on the back!



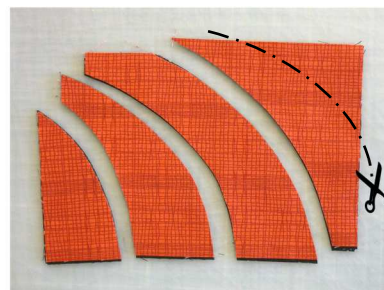
Single Block / 20 inch square panel



Collect all the fabrics you need: Decide on your colour set and cut pieces 5½ x 7 inches. I started with thirty (30) pieces to make a 20 inch square panel – 5 x 5 blocks



1. Divide your rectangles into groups of five giving some thought as to how they are layered. I wanted a colour fade across the panel, so not all sets contain the dominant yellow

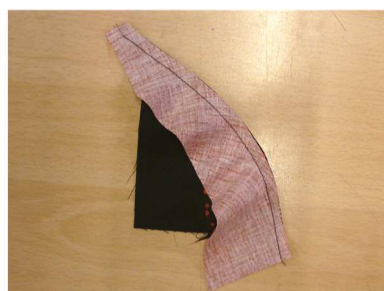


2. Place the first set in a pile, all FACE UP and, with a SHARP blade in your rotary cutter, make FOUR curved cuts through all layers - roughly 1½ inches apart - to make FIVE pieces

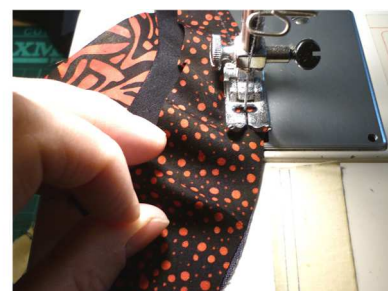
NOTES: Remember that improv cutting is like handwriting – your blocks will be different from mine. You might want to make a set of practice blocks to have a go at this technique (use one sided fabrics to start with – it will help) before you start cutting up your favourite fabric! If you are left-handed, you may find it easier to stack the five fabric rectangles WRONG SIDE UP and cut left-to-right.



3. Rearrange the cut rectangles into five blocks, each containing five curved strips – each block will be slightly different. Work on one block at a time

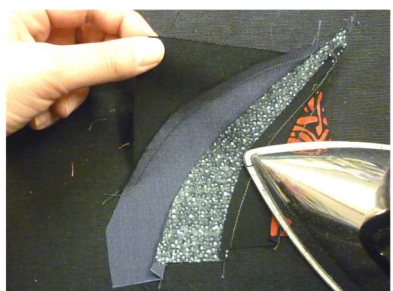


4. Place the curved pieces right sides together and stitch with a ¼ inch seam. I would suggest you start with the convex shape underneath and concave on top



5. Use a short stitch length, sew slowly and reposition the top piece every ½ inch or so, to line up with the underneath one – no need to pin. Finger press away from first corner piece

NOTES: Keep the arranged blocks on a cutting mat next to your sewing machine and try not to move them about too much to reduce the risk of mixing them up. Return the stitched pieces to their original block to make sure you are adding the next piece correctly. It is worth double checking since it will be difficult to unpick small stitches on a bias cut edge. When you add the first couple of strips you will need to allow a small overhang at the start – approximately ½ inch – I can't be more exact than this since it depends on the steepness of your curves, when you have made a few blocks you will start to know where to begin the seam. This is another good reason for making a set of practice blocks before you start on your actual project.



6. Press seams to one side: hold one corner of the block down with the iron and pull gently on the opposite corner, then press all the seams the same way



7. Repeat with all five blocks in the set. As you can see they do come out looking rather an odd shape – that is exactly how they should be



8. Trim all the blocks square to exactly the same size. Mine came out to 4 ½ inches square – yours might be smaller

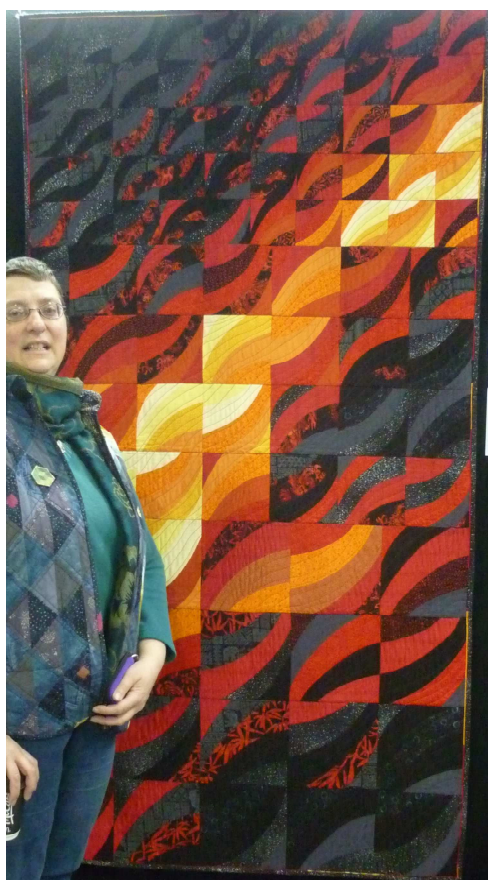
9. Repeat steps **2** to **8** with each of your sets of fabric rectangles

10. Arrange your blocks in your chosen design and sew together, first in rows, then sew the rows into a panel.

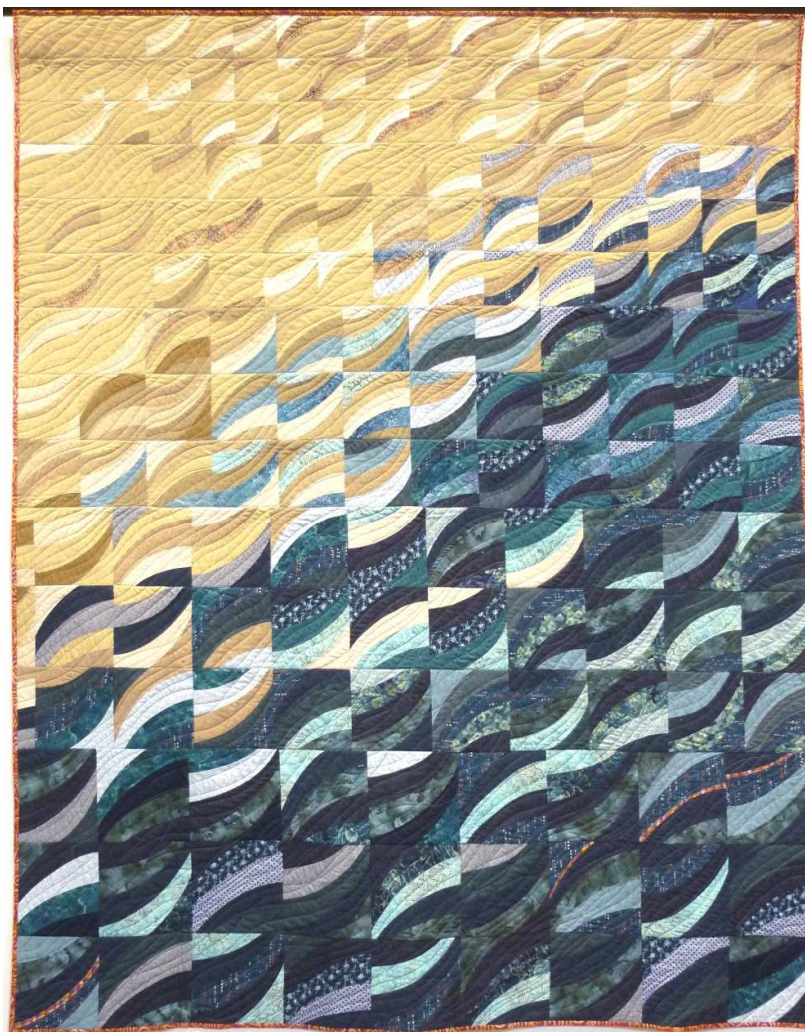
NOTES ON ARANGING BLOCKS: These blocks evoke a feeling of movement and different arrangements can produce very different effects. For example the three layouts below have the same nine blocks in the same positions, but by changing the orientation of the block in the design you come up with three very different images.



By using blocks of different sizes in the same piece you get the feeling of distance or perspective as shown in the examples below



Lava Flow – 60 x 35 inches



Ebb Tide – 90 x 72 inches

Experiment by starting with rectangle sets in different sizes to make bigger blocks: cut $6\frac{1}{2} \times 8$ inches to finish to 5×5 inches, $7\frac{1}{2} \times 9$ inches makes 6×6 inches, $8\frac{1}{2} \times 10$ inches makes 7 inches. As you become more practiced that these you may find the these are over generous sizes – cut them to suit

FREE TUTORIAL: Multiple Curve Improv Blocks

www.littlepatchpockets.co.uk