

FREE TUTORIAL: Setting Triangles by AitchBee

There are various reasons for setting square blocks on-point; some blocks are designed to work that way, some have a more ambiguous orientation, and can be made more interesting by being set on point. It is also a great way of making your pieced blocks go further by adding intervening plain blocks. Whatever the reason you will find that you need to add triangles of fabric (generally unpieced) to make the edges of your quilt square – these are called **setting triangles**.

The apparently logical way to do this would be to cut squares of fabric the same size as your pieced blocks and then cut them in half. **DO NOT** be tempted to do this for two reasons; first these triangles will be too small and second you will end up with wibbly bias edges all along the sides of your quilt which will be a nightmare to handle, quilt, bind... arrgh, just don't go there!

One of the most important things to remember about setting triangles is to get the outer edges to be on the straight grain rather than bias cut, that is why this method shows a large square of fabric cut into four triangles for the sides, and smaller squares cut in half for the corners. Even if the number of triangles you need to finish your project is not divisible by four, I would advise that you make them all by this method. Use the spare pair of triangles for something else rather than make the last two another way.

The second thing to remember when making your triangles is to make them slightly oversize, so the blocks float in the background (the triangles will overlap). On the next page is a table which shows you the suggested sizes for cutting these two squares based on some typical block sizes. The sizes I have given allow a slight overlap which can always be trimmed back after quilting.

Cutting large squares of fabric may be a little daunting if you do not have a big square ruler, but have a look at my tutorial on cutting big squares:
<https://www.littlepatchpockets.co.uk/patterns/tutorials/handyhints.html>

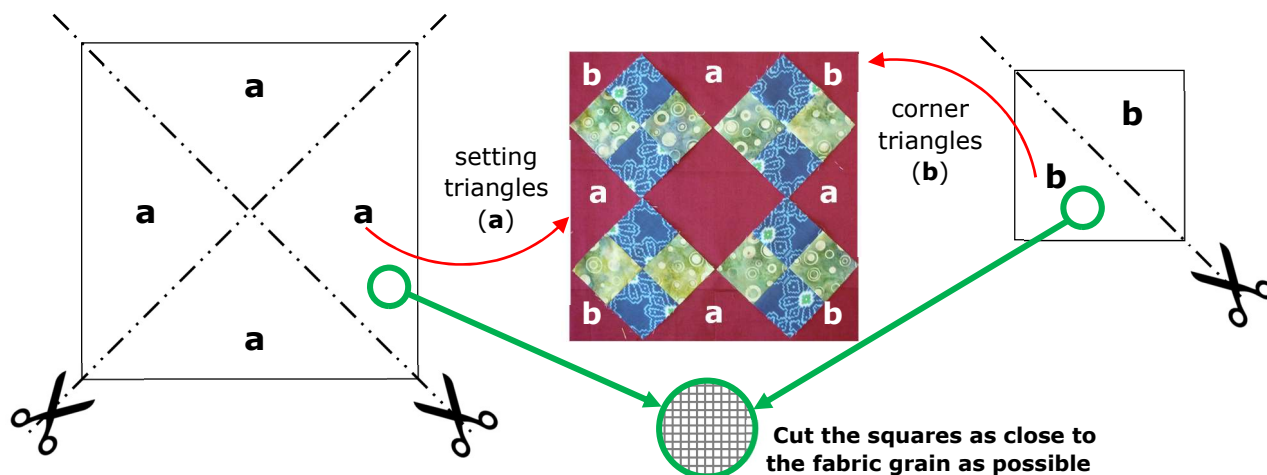
Start by counting the number of triangles at the sides of your quilt design. Divide this number by four, that is how many large squares of fabric you need to cut. Do not include the corners (I am assuming there will be four of these!) triangles for these are cut separately. Remember to press your fabric carefully before cutting.

For example, the four-patch blocks shown above will finish to 4 x 4 inches (4½ x 4½ inches trimmed) so looking on the table overleaf I will cut:

One big square for the **setting triangles**
9 x 9 inches, then cut the big square into four diagonally to make four triangles

+

Two small squares for the **corner triangles**
5 x 5 inches, then cut the small squares in half diagonally to make two triangles from each



Designed to be on-point



Simple blocks straight set



Same blocks set on-point

An on-point quilt layout is then sewn together in diagonal rows with the appropriate triangles added to each ends of these rows. I find it much easier to lay the blocks out somewhere flat to make sure I get the blocks and the triangles the right way round in the rows.

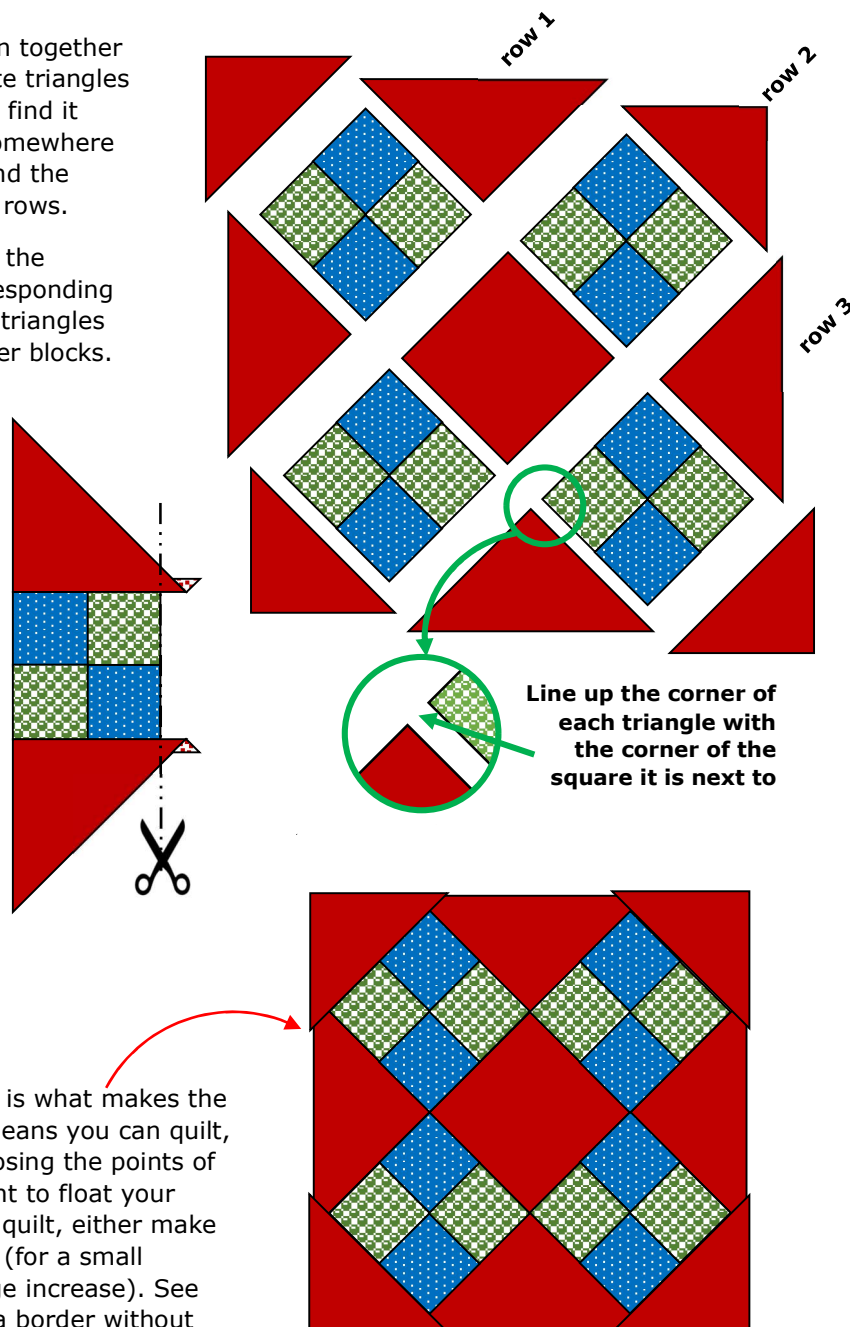
The setting triangles are lined up at the corners, with the corner of the corresponding squares as shown right. The corner triangles are centred on the edge of the corner blocks.

Work on one row at a time and stitch the blocks together in the correct order with the setting triangles at each end. Once the setting triangles are in place, press the seams towards the triangle and trim off the points of each triangle in line with the edge of the blocks.

Return the finished row to its place in the layout and start on the next.

Once all the rows are completed sew them together lining up the corners of each block carefully. When the rows have been sewn together and the points trimmed off in line with the blocks, add the corner triangles to finish the quilt top.

The overlap of these outer triangles is what makes the design float in the background. It means you can quilt, trim and bind your design without losing the points of the blocks in the binding. If you want to float your design further from the edge of the quilt, either make your setting/corner triangles bigger (for a small increase) or add a border (for a large increase). See my [FREE TUTORIAL](https://www.littlepatchpockets.co.uk/patterns/tutorials/handyhints.html) on how to add a border without getting wobbly edges!



<https://www.littlepatchpockets.co.uk/patterns/tutorials/handyhints.html>

Here are some sizes to help you cut setting/corner triangles – remember to press your fabric before cutting. These will float your blocks with approximately ¼ inch all round.

YOUR BLOCKS square Finished size (trimmed size)	Setting Triangles Large squares (cut into four)	Corner Triangles Small squares (cut in half)
3 inches (3½ inches)	6½ x 6½ inches	4 x 4 inches
4 inches (4½ inches)	7¾ x 7¾ inches	4½ x 4½ inches
5 inches (5½ inches)	9¼ x 9¼ inches	5½ x 5½ inches
6 inches (6½ inches)	10¾ x 10¾ inches	6 x 6 inches
7 inches (7½ inches)	12 x 12 inches	6¾ x 6¾ inches
8 inches (8½ inches)	13½ x 13½ inches	7½ x 7½ inches
9 inches (9½ inches)	15 x 15 inches	8½ x 8½ inches