

A free project, compliments of...



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Quick & Easy Fat Quarter Placemats

by Vicki Welsh

These instructions make six placemats and you can probably make all six in less than two hours. Using a twin needle for hemming the placemats will help prevent fraying of raw edges on the back of the placemats. I've also included a bonus napkin hem tutorial at the end.

Materials

- 6 fat quarters cotton fabric measuring approximately 18" x 20" for the placemats
- 6 napkin fabrics cut between 16" to 18" square, depending on the size and amount of fabric you have. If you are using fat quarters, cut as large a square as you can.
- Batting – cut six 13" x 17" pieces – 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 puffiness. I have also used old (clean) sweatshirt fabric, and cotton batting. You can use anything that doesn't require quilting closer than 8" apart.
- Backing – cut six 13" x 17" pieces – This fabric doesn't show so use muslin or any other fabric that you would like to disappear from your stash.

The batting and backing are cut to the finished size of the placemats.



Step 1

Cut and sort the fat quarters. With a sharp, new rotary blade I was able to cut all six layers at one time. I squared up the bottom and right edge and then cut pieces D and E; then C, B and A. Everything marked with an "x" is waste or scrap for another project.

Cutting dimensions:

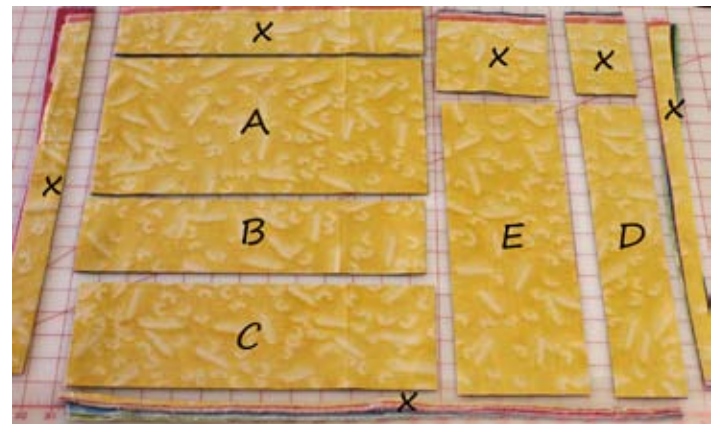
D = 14" x 2.5"

E = 14" x 4.5"

C = 12.5" x 4.5"

B = 12.5" x 3.5"

A = 12.5" x 7.5"



Step 2

Sort the stacks of fabrics so that no fabric is repeated in any individual placemat. I did it this way:

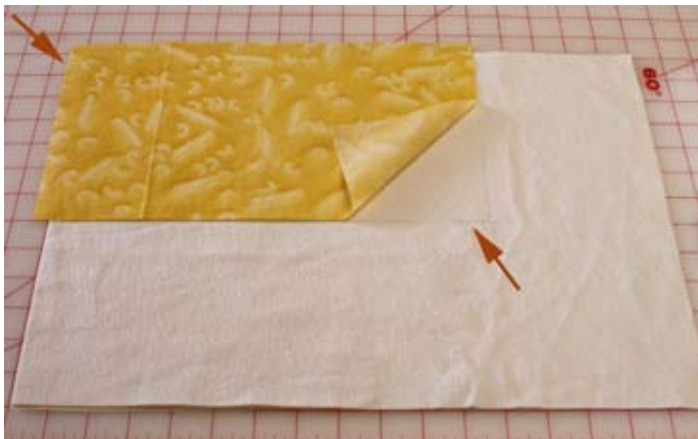
1. Leave stack A as it is.
2. Take the first fabric in stack B and place it on the bottom of the stack.
3. Take the top two fabrics in stack C and place them on the bottom of the stack.
4. Take the bottom two fabrics from stack D and place them on top of the stack.
5. Take the bottom fabric from stack E and place it on top of the stack.

Now each layer is one placemat.

Step 3

The only tricky part of this project is the placement of the first piece of fabric. The backing and batting are cut to the FINISHED size of the placemat. Place the backing fabric RIGHT SIDE DOWN on the table and place a batting piece on top of the backing.

The decorative fabrics are cut so that, once sewn, the edges will hang over the backing and batting by $\frac{1}{2}$ ". Piece A is the first piece you will place and it should be positioned so that it hangs over the top and left edges by $\frac{1}{2}$ ".



I do this by using my cutting mat grid to help align it (arrow in the upper left corner, photo above). Another method is to chalk a vertical line that is 12" from the left edge and a horizontal line that is 7" from the top edge and place piece A against those chalked lines (arrow on the right, photo above).

Step 4

We are using a simple sew-and-flip method to construct the placemat. The piecing and quilting happens all in one step.

Place piece B right sides together on piece A, aligned with the lower edge of A. Place a few pins through all layers to hold everything together and stitch a $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam along the joined edge. Flip piece B open.



Step 5

Add piece C in the same way. Once this piece is sewn and opened it should hang over the lower edge of the placemat by approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ ". Mine hangs over a little more than that because I used seam allowances that were smaller than $\frac{1}{4}$ ".

Perfection is unnecessary – they are placemats!



Step 6

Add piece D to the right edge of ABC. Don't worry about matching it to the top or bottom edge of the previously sewn pieces. It's more important that D hangs over the top and bottom edge of the batting by an equal amount. Sew it in place and flip it open.



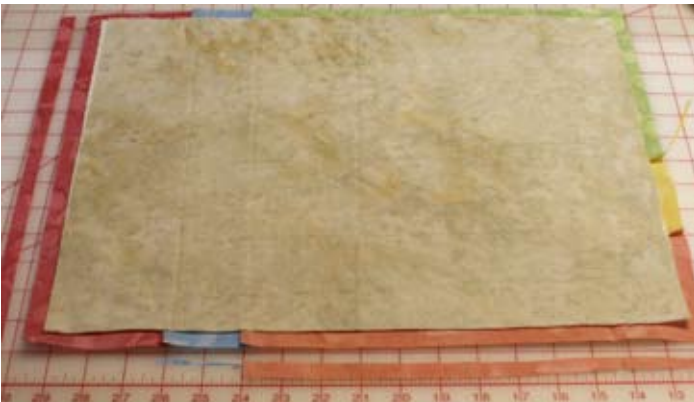
Step 7

Add piece E. Now the top of the placemat is complete.



Step 8

Flip the placemat over to the back and trim the edges of the top fabric so they extend 1/2" beyond the edge of the backing.



Step 9

Press the top fabric to the back.



TIP: When you press the raw edges to the back, it will be easier to stitch if you press every corner as illustrated in the photo. Turn each corner so that it is oriented on the lower right as you are pressing. Press the right edge over to the left and press the bottom UP (blue arrow). This is because

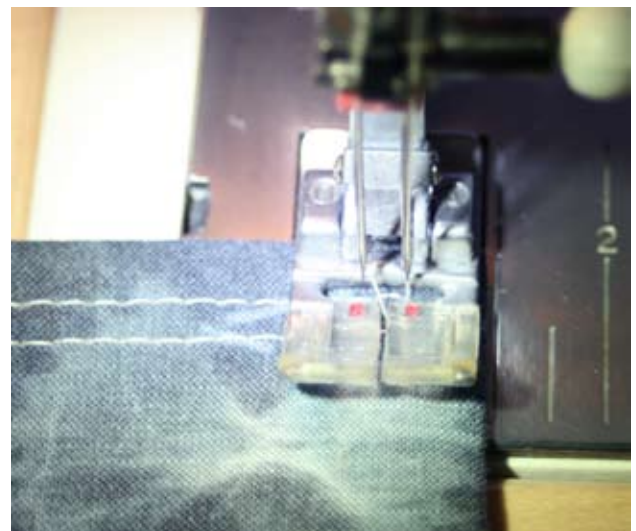
you will always be stitching each corner in the direction of the red arrow. By pressing this way you will not have to worry about pressed corners getting caught and twisted under the presser foot.



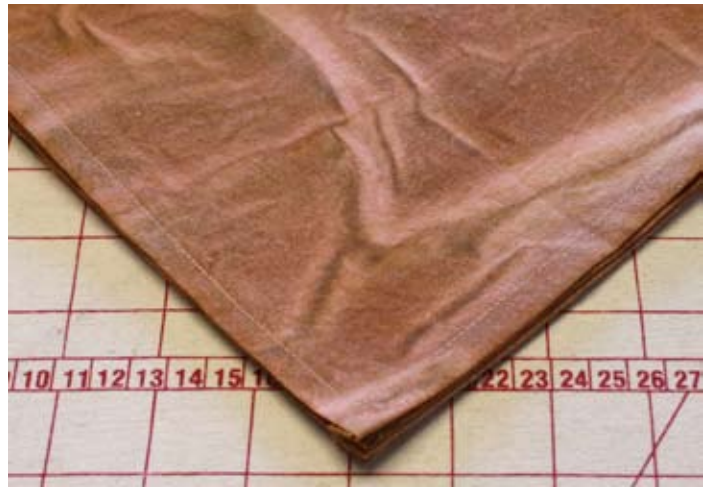
Step 10

I finished these with twin-needle stitching. It creates a zigzag finish on the back side that is a great finish for the raw edges. Twin-needle stitching is very straight forward as long as you remember a few tips:

- You need two spools of thread to feed through the machine, one for each needle. If you don't have two matching spools then run some thread onto a bobbin and use the matching bobbin as the second needle thread.
- Make sure you are only doing a straight stitch! Any sort of decorative stitch will most likely break your needles.
- Test your tension on some fabric scraps before you sew. Feeding two threads through your tension guide often requires adjustment.
- When turning the corner, make sure the needles are UP. Turn the corner and align the needles so that the first stitch is taken in the right needle stitches of the previous stitches (as in the photo below). The left needle will carry a thread diagonally across the corner.



Here's what it looks like from the back. If you do not have a twin needle or you prefer another finish, you can stitch two parallel straight-stitched lines, use a decorative stitch or a cover stitch on a serger if you have that capability.



Your placemat is done!

Make the Napkins

Press up a double hem on all four sides of the napkin fabric. I press up about $\frac{3}{4}$ " for the first fold and then press half of that under so that there are no raw edges. To remove some of the bulk in the corner, I snip off part of the corner after I press it. If you trim after pressing you can make sure you do not cut too much of the corner.



Topstitch with a single needle around all four edges.