

Half Square Triangles Tutorial

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Introduction

This method will create 2 half-square triangle (HST) units from 2 squares of fabric. The benefit of this method is you're working with the grain of the fabric and therefore, there is less chance of stretching when sewing the units together.

Determine the finished size of the HST unit. Add $\frac{7}{8}$ " to that measurement to determine the size squares you need to cut. You may prefer to add a whole inch which will leave you more excess so that you can square up your unit.

The chart to the right shows some common finished HST unit sizes and the fabric square sizes required to make them.

Making the HST Unit

Cut square A and square B from 2 different fabrics.

Draw a diagonal line from corner to corner on the wrong side of square B (figure 1).

Lay one square B (with line) on top of one square A, right sides together (figure 2). Sew a scant $\frac{1}{4}$ " on each side of the drawn line on square B (figure 3). Cut apart along the line (figure 4). Open the B/A units and press the seam allowance toward the darker fabric (figure 5). You have created 2 HST units.

Fabric Square Cutting Chart	
Finished HST Size	Fabric Square Size
1"	1- $\frac{7}{8}$ "
1- $\frac{1}{2}$ "	2- $\frac{3}{8}$ "
2"	2- $\frac{7}{8}$ "
2- $\frac{1}{2}$ "	3- $\frac{3}{8}$ "
3"	3- $\frac{7}{8}$ "
3- $\frac{1}{2}$ "	4- $\frac{3}{8}$ "
4"	4- $\frac{7}{8}$ "
4- $\frac{1}{2}$ "	5- $\frac{3}{8}$ "
5"	5- $\frac{7}{8}$ "
5- $\frac{1}{2}$ "	6- $\frac{3}{8}$ "
6"	6- $\frac{7}{8}$ "
X"	X" + $\frac{7}{8}$ "

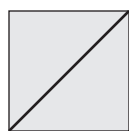


Figure 1

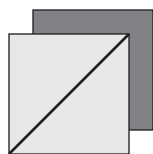


Figure 2

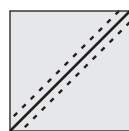


Figure 3

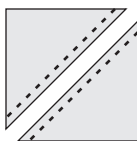


Figure 4

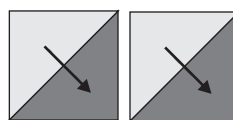


Figure 5

Scant $\frac{1}{4}$ " Seam

A scant $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam is about 1 to 2 threads less than a full $\frac{1}{4}$ ". It helps account for the tiny fold of fabric you lose when you sew a seam and then fold it over and press it. If you are finding out that your blocks are turning out just a hair smaller than they are supposed to be, try sewing a scant $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam instead of a true $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam.