



Sewing Perfect Quarter-inch (6 mm) Seams

- Use the Presser Foot as a Seam Guide. On some sewing machines, the distance from the needle to the right edge of the standard presser foot is one-quarter inch. Test yours by aligning the right edge of the fabric with the right edge of the foot and sew a test seam. If your seam width measures one-quarter

- Adjust the Needle Position. If your machine has this feature, adjust the needle position one notch at a time and sew a seam each time, using your favorite method of alignment. When your seam allowance measures one-quarter inch exactly, make a note of the machine's settings (which are likely to be metric

- Use a Seam Guide. Many sewing machines come with an adjustable screw-in seam guide. Or you can make a guide. Draw a line on a piece of graph paper one-quarter inch from the edge. With the seam allowance on the right, place the paper under the presser foot, bring the needle down through the line and release the foot. Do not remove the needle. Build up several layers of masking tape on a flat surface; align the edges as you add each layer. Adhere this tape guide next to the needle, aligning the edge of the tape with the edge of the paper.

- Test drive the seam guide to be sure the tape is straight by sewing through the line on the paper, with the edge of the paper against the guide. If your seam is on the pencil line, you made a perfect quarter-inch seam guide. If not, reposition the guide and try again until it's right. Test it on fabric, just to be sure! As you stitch, look at the fabric rather than the needle and run the raw edge against the ridge created by the tape.

- Purchase a Quarter-inch Presser Foot. Ask your sewing machine dealer or quilt shop owner about a special presser foot for your sewing machine. Have your machine's make and model number ready.

What About Metric?

Even though I've been told that some quilters who measure in metric prefer a 5 or 7.5 mm seam allowance to

6 mm, which is closest to one-quarter inch, those are not options with From Marti Michell templates. You must sew a 6 mm seam to have the specific-size shapes fit together accurately.

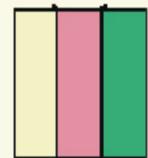
Excerpted from the Encyclopedia of Patchwork Blocks, Volume 3 published by Michell Marketing, Inc. ©1998 Martha G. Michell

Tips

Sew a Quarter-inch Seam

The quarter-inch seam allowance is included in all of our cut-to-length measurements. When you cut to length, you **must** sew an accurate quarter-inch seam allowance or the pieces won't fit together. The good news is that when you cut to length, you will know every step along the way if you are sewing accurately. Another view is that you will know if you're not sewing accurately on the first piece and can make any necessary adjustment, as opposed to finding out after the last strip is sewn.

That means $\frac{1}{4}$ " seams are a must! Test yours by cutting three 2" by 5" strips and sewing them together lengthwise. The sewn unit should measure 5" square. More importantly, the finished size of the center strip should be a perfect $1\frac{1}{2}$ " wide. If you don't get these measurements, make an adjustment and repeat the exercise.



Cut Carefully

- Cutting multiple layers of fabric is easiest with a sharp blade in your rotary cutter. A fresh blade will cut through up to 12 layers of fabric with very little pressure.
- Use a rotary cutter with a blade guard and keep the guard on when the cutter is not in use. This will protect you and keep the blade from becoming nicked.
- The blade side, not the guard side, goes against the edge of the template or ruler.
- Cut away from you whenever possible, and keep your fingers out of the way.

Excerpted from Marti's Log Cabin ABCs book.