

## Why why why #11 – Magic Strip Cutting Dies (Dies 6090 & 6720)

Magic Strip Cutting Dies are part of our unique series and exclusive to Blue Wren Notions.

These dies were created so as to have a versatile tool that could cut different widths of fabric with the same die, but they need some getting used to. By following some simple procedural directives you can make the most out of them. They are good to have, and intended for, low quilt production, say for that odd moment when you need a one-off strip of a width that you generally don't use, without the need for having dozens of strip dies of different sizes piled up in your sewing room.

The most common strip in quilting is the 2½" Cut, so if you make a lot of quilts with 2½" strips it is wise to have a die that only cuts 2½" strips because it will allow you to cut more strips at a time, more easily and quicker than using a Magic Strip die.

One could say that these Magic Strip dies are not straight forward to use but, once you get the hang of using these unique Magic Strips dies by following some suggestions that I will outline here, you will enjoy the benefits of having this die on hand on a rainy Saturday night when having to deliver your gift quilt at your son's wedding the next day, just to put in a bit of drama before I explain some tips for the successful use of these unique dies.

The principle of these dies rests on the fact that only those blades covered by a mat will cut the fabric beneath.



First hint, **DO NOT starch the fabric** when using these Magic Strip dies, and as usual I will tell you why why why, and that is because here at Blue Wren we want you to be fully knowledgeable on all aspects in the use and care of your dies. So, if the fabric is starched, it becomes rigid and therefore the lower layers of fabric could get nicked by the neighboring blade next to the blade designated to do the cut. When the fabric is not starched, the fabric will be softer and will follow the squeezing of the ejecting foam and only get cut by the designated blade. The non-starching only applies for these particular Magic Strip dies, for all other dies, although not compulsory, starching is a good habit to have.

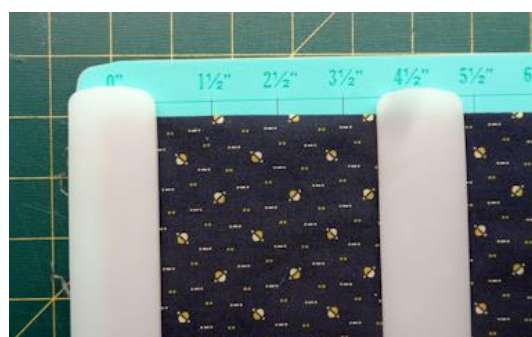
Another good habit to have is to iron the fabric before placing it on the die previous to cutting, that way you will get more precise cuts.



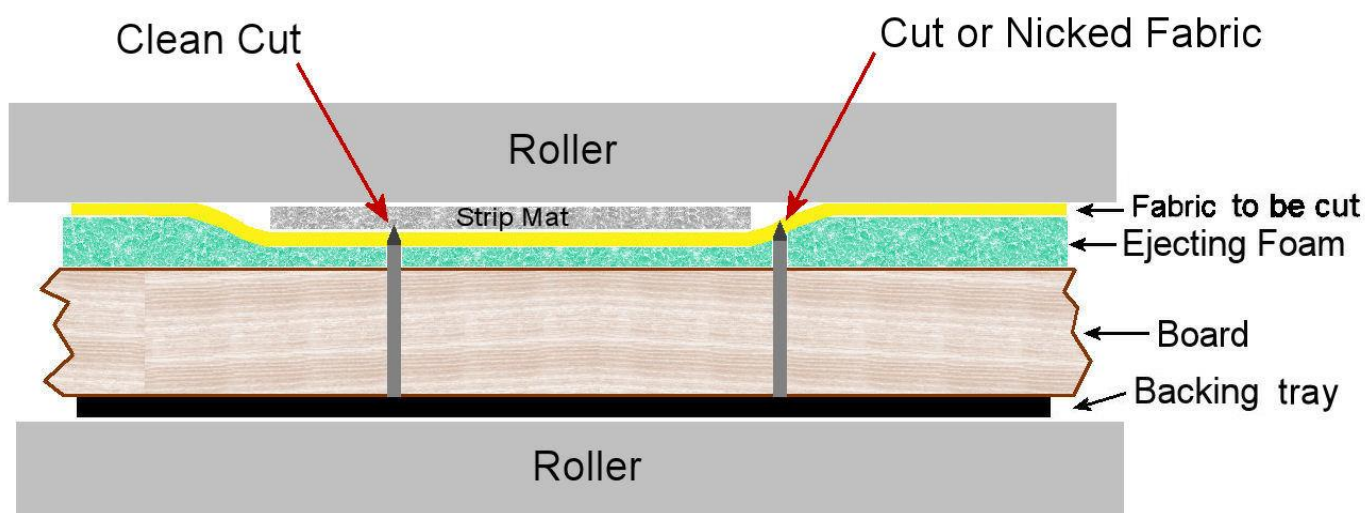
So let's say you need a 4½" Cut strip. You place up to 6 layers of non-starched fabric on the die, fan folded at right angles to the blades within the engraved lines indicating the top and bottom ends of said blades. There are no crossed blades under the engraved line so you will end up with a full strip of fabric as long as the folded fabric or up to a maximum length of 66" with die 6090 and up to 81" long in the case of die 6720. Then you place a 1¼" strip mat over the fabric on top of the blade at 0" position and another 1¼" strip mat on top of the 4½" designated blade.

Make sure you fold the fabric nicely and position the fold on/or parallel to the engraved end of the blades line.

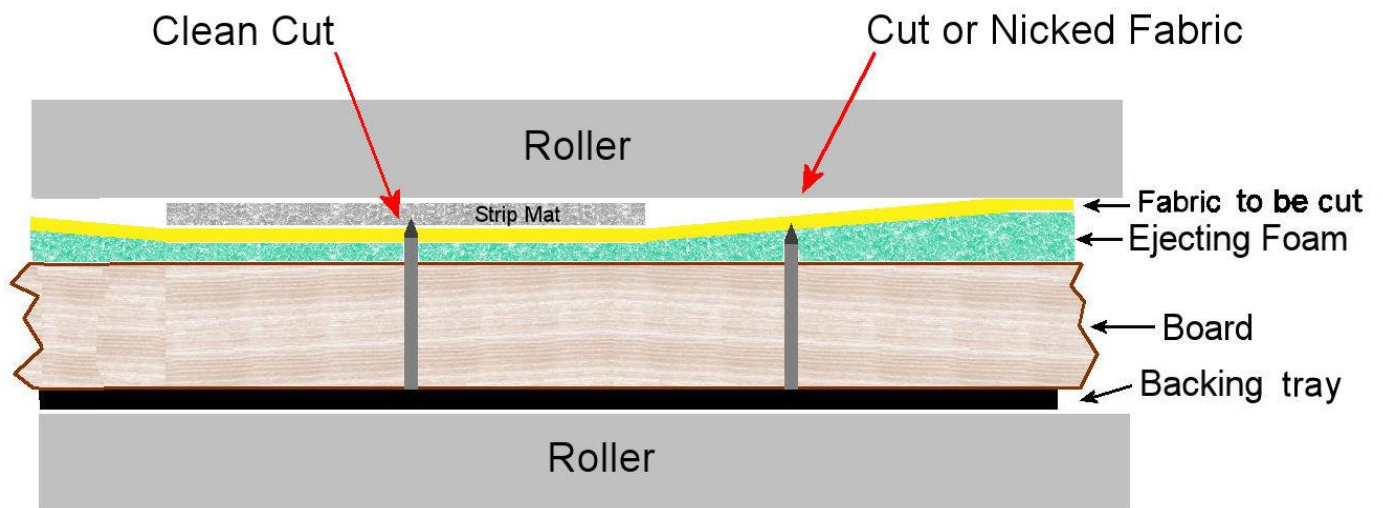
Hint two: Make sure that you do not place the strip mat too near the next neighboring blade, leave at least ½" spacing. Why why why, because if the border of the strip mat is too near the next neighboring blade, the fabric can squash the ejecting foam letting that blade nick the lower layer of fabric, *and we do not want that!*



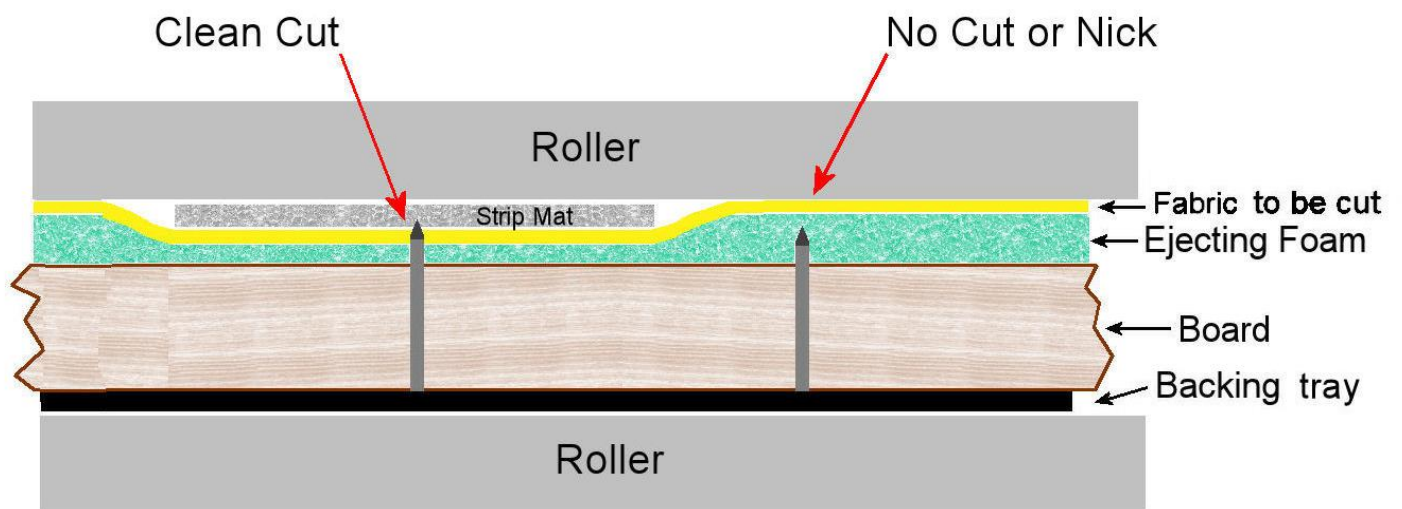
## Wrong Mat positioning



# Cutting Starched Fabric

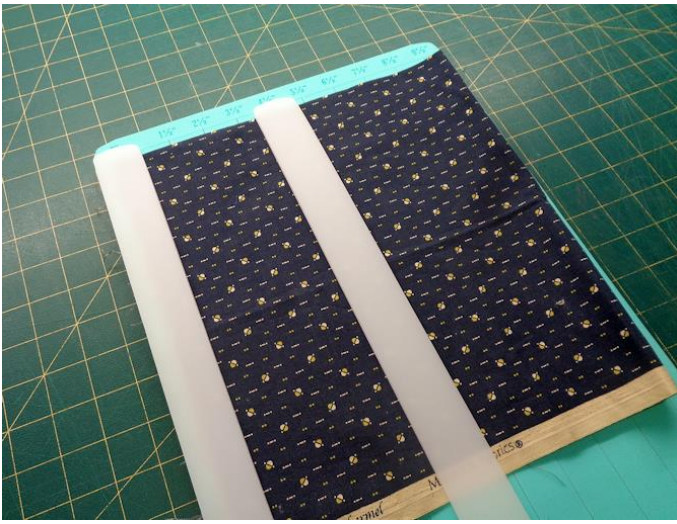


## Correct Mat Positioning with non-starched fabric



Hint three: Make sure the strip mats stay aligned to the blades, hold if possible with your fingers while passing the die through the rollers. This is a bit more difficult with an electric power roller cutter with automatic feed, but still achievable. Let go of the mats once the die has gone half way through.





You may notice on the photo above, that the selvedge of the fabric is not parallel to the blades, and why why why is that? With strip dies you can really put the grain of the fabric as you wish with not much of a difference in your end result. As we know, with all other dies we have to lay the fabric with the grain parallel to the direction of the die going into the roller cutter machine because if not, the fabric stretches as it goes through the rollers and then a square becomes a rectangle because it ends up at least  $\frac{1}{8}$ " longer on the non-grain direction. The grain direction is the same as the selvedge direction. With strip dies we want the width of the strip to be precise so we place the fabric like in the photo above.

By the way, these dies are one of our most popular and best sellers, so there are many happy customers to whom you may ask before making a purchase decision, and please read our previous Why why why's and in particular Why why why #7.