

Slash Your Stash - Nine Patch Quilt - Part 1



If you are anything like me, when you go to the fabric store for *the one piece of fabric that you need to finish a project*, you might find it hard to leave without more than you came for. When I go to the fabric store, I get distracted by all of the colors, patterns and fabrics that are on display. And, if I have extra money in my pocket...yep, you guessed it, I leave with more than I expected and most, if not all of it, is not earmarked for a future project. Before long, I have a ton of fabric and need to clear some of it out.

So, for 2022, I decided to make a few simple quilts, easy enough for a beginner (*I've only been quilting for a few years*) and quick enough for someone who has been quilting a while. All to "Slash My Stash!" I invite you to join me in this adventure and perhaps *Slash Your Stash* too!

Let's get started!

For this first *Slash Your Stash* Quilt, we'll be using two fabrics to make nine patch blocks that sew up fast and easy. When you are ready, go to your stash and **pick two fabrics** that you'd like to use to make your quilt top. For a stunning display, consider having a high color contrast between the fabrics. The amount of fabric should be roughly the same for each unless you'll also be using one for the backing, then that one needs to be about twice the amount of the other. (*You will need backing fabric, batting or flannel for the middle and coordinating thread. Hopefully, you have it on hand, if not you might need to go to the store. That's what happened to me...but I took my husband with me and I managed to walk out with ONLY what I needed.*) Here are the two fabrics that I picked for my quilt top.



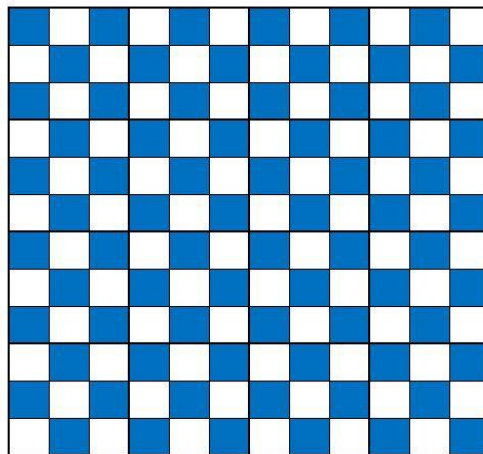
The technique we'll be using for creating our nine-patch blocks, will yield two blocks at a time. One will have dark squares in the corner (positive block → "P") and the other will have light squares in the corner (negative block → "N").



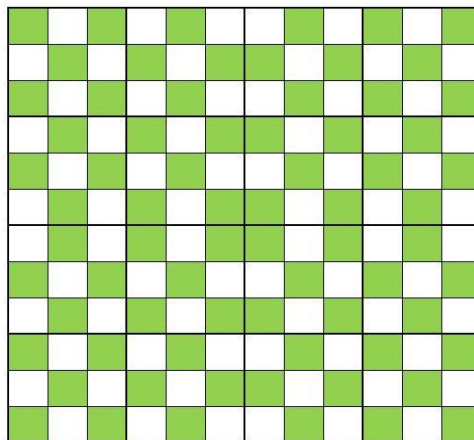
The minimum number of blocks for a quilt using this technique is 4 (*but that will limit your design possibilities*), the maximum is up to you, but should be a multiple of 2. For this project, we'll be doing a 16 block (4 rows x 4 rows) quilt.

Quilts made with positive and negative blocks offer up multiple layout options. I played with some graph paper and tried different layouts. Here are my three favorites.

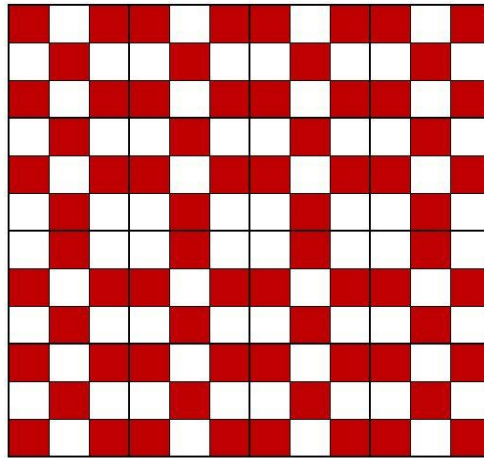
Layout 1



Layout 2



Layout 3



The layout I chose, for my first *Slash Your Stash* quilt, matches layout 2. **Pick a layout** that catches your eye. *Or, if you want, you can do layout 2 with me!*

Now that we have the fabrics and the layout picked out, it's time to figure out the size of the fabric squares we need to cut. We'll need a total of 8 squares of each fabric. This will involve a little math using the following formula:

$$\text{"Cut Square Size"} - 1 \frac{1}{2}" = \text{"Finished Block Size"}$$

Note: The cut square size *needs to be* easily divided by 3 as that will give us a "Cutting Number" (*don't worry, it will all make sense soon*) that we'll be using later.

Therefore, your cut squares can be 6", 9", 12", etc. You can get fancier with the math if you want (*but don't look to me for help with that kind of math...I'm going the easy math route*).

Measure your fabric and calculate the biggest size squares you can cut from each of your fabrics to end up with 8 equal sized squares of each fabric for a total of 16 equal sized squares. (*Remember, we are slashing our stash, so be brave!*) Mine turned out to be 12" squares, so my finished block size will be 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ ".

$$12" - 1 \frac{1}{2}" = 10 \frac{1}{2}"$$

Next, **figure out your cutting number and jot it down** for future reference, we'll be using that number in Part 2. Here's mine:

$$\text{Cutting Number} \rightarrow 12" \text{ divided by } 3" = 4"$$

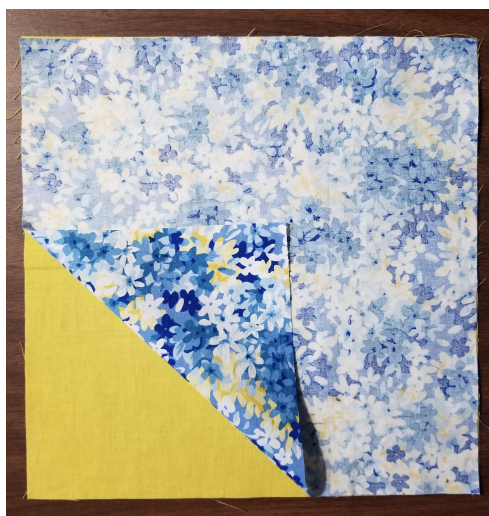
If you haven't already, **pre-wash and iron your fabric** before continuing. (*I like to do this so that there isn't a problem with shrinkage if the quilt is washed in the future.*)

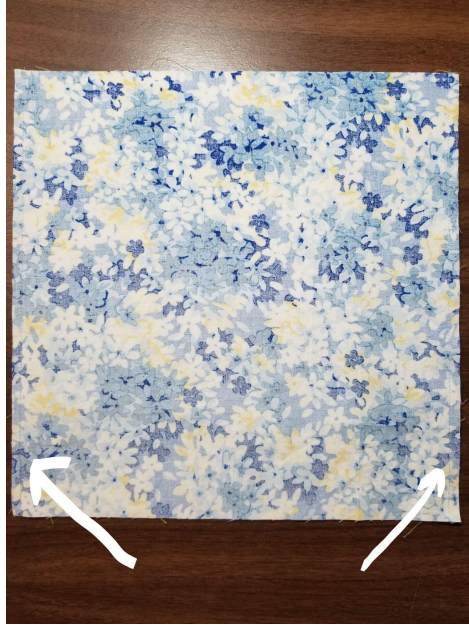
Now, grab your cutting mat, rotary cutter and ruler and cut 8 squares of each fabric based on your calculations. *To do mine, I cut 12" strips that I then cut into 12" squares.* Here are my squares.



The next step is sewing! (*Finally...right?*)

Take one square of each fabric and with right sides together, align all of your edges and stitch a $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowance on two opposite sides to create a unit. Use pins or clips to hold the squares together as you'll want to keep all of the edges even. Repeat this step until you have all 8 units sewn. **Give each unit a quick press** to keep it flat and neat.





I'm exhausted...Fabric choices, layouts, math and then a whole bunch of measuring, cutting and sewing was a lot for Part 1...at least for me.

Join me again in two weeks, for Part 2. I'll tell you how to use the "cutting number" and we'll finish making our nine-patch blocks. You'll be AMAZED at how quickly it will go.

In the meantime, we'd love to know what pattern and fabrics you chose for your project. Share your part of the journey on our Facebook Quilt Group. Have fun. See you again soon!

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