
Churn Dash Block with Heather Jones

Chapter 1 - Churn Dash Block

Overview

(whimsical music) - Hi, I'm Heather Jones. I'm a modern quilter and designer. I'm gonna show you how to make a Churn Dash block today. The Churn Dash block is a traditional block. It's one of my favorites. By using a modern fabric, this block will be given a contemporary spin. I'll show you how to make half-square triangles and how to piece small squares of fabric to construct this block.
(upbeat music)

Materials

- You'll need two fabrics for this block and I'm using a print and a solid. You need two four inch squares of the print and two four inch squares of the solid. Those are used to make the half square triangles in the block. You'll also need four two inch squares of the print and five two inch squares of the solid, and that's to make the rest of the block. You'll also need a ruler. You'll need pins, rotary cutter, and a mat, fabric scissors, a pencil, thread snips, and I like to have a three and a half inch ruler on hand when we construct the half square triangles. You'll also need a sewing machine and it's threaded with a neutral thread, and we need an iron and ironing surface. We'll also have the PDF available online for you to follow along with as well.

Make Block

Make half-square triangles

- We're going to start by making our half square triangles. And to do this we are going to draw lines on the wrong side of the lighter fabric. So we have to draw a series of 3 lines, and the first line is in the center of the square, diagonally. Line the ruler up so that you have the center of the square on the edge of the ruler, and draw a line diagonally. You may have to go over it a couple times with your pencil but just want to make sure that it's dark enough to see. Then you draw a line a quarter inch on either side of that line. So find the quarter inch line on your ruler. Line that up right over the line that you just drew and line a quarter inch to the right. You can see that there. then rotate the square to draw the line on the other side, and do the same thing on the other side. So find that center line that you just drew, line it up, and then draw a one quarter inch to the other side of it, for a total of three lines. Pin this white square fabric to the red printed fabric. Right sides together and making sure that the lines are face up. And place a couple pins to hold them together. I like to place the pins parallel to the drawn lines. And we're going to repeat that with the other two four inch squares. We're gonna sew along the outer two lines, exactly on top of those lines, and the center line, will become our cutting line. You want to stitch right on that outer line, so take a minute to line it up with your machine. And place that line right underneath the needle of your sewing machine. And start sewing, and I like to sew a back stitch, at the beginning of the seam, and again at the end of the seam, to strengthen the stitch and to lock the threads. So go slow, and just sew right along that line. (steady sewing machine pounds) And then a couple back stitches at the end. Remove it from the machine and snip your threads. And then rotate the square and sew along the other outer line. Back stitch again at the beginning, and just continue to go along that pencil line. Backstitch.

Repeat with the other two squares. Now they're ready to be cut apart. And each of our pieced blocks, will make two half square triangle units. So using the rotary cutter and your ruler, place the ruler right over that center line, and cut apart. (cutting swoosh) When you open them up, you've got your half square triangles. Give these a good press with the iron, and they'll be ready to go.

Assembling the block

- For our pattern, we need our half-square triangles to be 3 1/2 inches, so we need to trim them down just a bit. And I've already done that with three other half-square triangles, and I'll show you how to do that. First, you need to remove these little bits on the edge which are called dog ears. So we'll just slice those off with your rotary cutter. This is a four inch ruler, but I've taped off a 1/2 inch on either side with blue painter's tape on the back, so that I can use it as a 3 1/2 inch ruler. And you just need to slide the edge of the fabric right up to that tape mark, align the diagonal line with the seam on your 1/2 inch square triangle. Hold it in place and then with your rotary cutter just trim off the excess. And then our half-square triangles are 3 1/2 inches square. Now that these are all squared up, we'll set them aside and start working on our smaller pieces. Take your two inch squares of your print fabric and your two inch square of your background fabric, and we're gonna sew them together, right sides together with four sets. You can see I've got a piece of washi tape here on the sewing machine, and I've done that to mark where a 1/4 inch seam would be. So this tape is 1/4 inch away from my needle to give me a 1/4 inch seam allowance which is what we need at this step. So just bring these squares to the sewing machine and sew the 1/4 inch seam allowance, backstitching at the beginning and end of the seam. Snip off the excess threads, and repeat with the other three sets. Once you've sewn your fourth set of squares together, open them up. Make sure to finger press towards the dark side of the fabric which means your seam is pointed in the direction of the darker fabric. And once they're opened up and finger pressed, press them with an iron. Let's take a look at how this block comes together. We need a half-square triangle at the top, two of them, and we're gonna sew it together with one of the pieces we just constructed. I like to use small scale prints for this pattern because the blocks are relatively small, so a small print works best. This is the top of the block. And then our other two half-square triangles and pieced section makes the bottom of the block. And then the other two sections and our last square make up the middle of the block. So we'll sew each of these three rows together. Pin the pieced section to one of the half-square triangles, right sides together. And then sew 1/4 inch seam along the edge. Line it up with that piece of tape on my machine to get a perfect 1/4 inch seam allowance. And backstitch at the beginning and end to strengthen the seam. Remove the pins, finger press that open, and sew the next half-square triangle on. Place the pins to hold it together, and then sew a 1/4 inch seam again. Snip threads, remove the pins, and we've got the top half of the block done. Repeat this to make the bottom half of the block. For the top and bottom half of the blocks, you want to press the seams that we just sewed towards the center, so towards this piece segment. And it looks like this on the back. Now we're gonna sew the middle row of the block. We're gonna sew the center square, place it on the printed fabric right sides together, pin in place, and sew along this edge with a 1/4 inch seam. I'm lining it up again with the piece of washi tape that I have in place, so I get a 1/4 inch seam. And backstitch at the beginning and end of the seam to lock the threads. Snip the excess threads, unpin, and then open it up. And then take your last pieced section, and place it right sides together, pin in place, and sew right along that edge. The middle row, press these seams towards the darker fabrics. Flip it over, just to give it one more press. I'm gonna sew the top row to the middle row, right sides together, and as you can see we're nestling the seams between the first

and second row so that those printed fabrics come right together and pin those in place. And when I nestle the seams, I like to put a pin on either side of the seam just to hold it in place. Just like everything else we've done, sew a 1/4 inch seam allowance, backstitching at the beginning and end of the seam. When you get to that intersection where the seams meet, you might have to lift your presser foot and ease those seams from the bottom section under so they don't get twisted, and just continue sewing along the seam line. Unpin and press, and repeat with the bottom half of the block. Take a look at the finished block. This is one of my favorites because I really love the strong graphic quality that it has in design with the triangles and the squares. By changing your fabric choices, this makes a dynamic block that you can use in any quilting project.