Improv Log Cabin Block with CBTV Live

Chapter 1 - Chapter 1
Improv Log Cabin Block
- Hey, everybody. It's Courtney and we're coming at you live and we're here with Ashley Nichols. - Hi. - Ashley's been with us all week filming some classes. What are you filming this week? - We're filming, what did we do today? - An oven mitt. - We did an oven mitt and we're doing a pillow tomorrow. - And she's using the block of the month that came out if you were following along with that that's where we released a single block by a different designer every single month and you're using-- - I used today Anna Maria Horner's whipper snapper block. - Which is a favorite. - Which is so fun and then tomorrow I'm using Carolyn Friedlander's polka block which is they're both paper pieced blocks and they're really fun. You should definitely check those out. - Yeah, we loved having you here, of course. - Well, thank you, it's always a pleasure to be here. - And you consider yourself a modern quilter. - I do. - What does that mean? - What does that mean? Well, I'm just a quilter, but a modern quilter I guess would be somebody who uses more of a modern aesthetic in their quilts. Some things that characterize a modern quilt would be assymetry, some use of negative space, a spin on a traditional block which is what actually we're gonna show today with this log cabin. - Which is also so exciting, I love it, and then what about color choices? - Well, a lot of modern quilters use solids, a lot of neutral tones, maybe, but again, these are very general definitions so everybody kind of has their own take on what it means to be a modern quilter I think. - Totally. You can check out Ashley's other classes on Creativebug. She's got this awesome pixilated quilt that has some basic quilting principles in it and I think is definitely contemporary approach to quilting. - Definitely, and it's a good practice for using pre-cut fabrics. - Totally. - Again, we're gonna show my baby bib class also that we use pre-cut fabrics. We use a jelly roll I think. - And also uses the log cabin technique that you're about to demonstrate. - Exactly, and great way to use up a lot of scraps that you might have lying around and sort of taking advantage of re-using materials as well. - Which is awesome. I love that. So, this is more like an improvisational approach. You can just kind of sit down with strips and you don't have to do a lot of pre-planning. - Exactly. You can kind of just whip out a few blocks and you can do it in your free time, make one here and there, and then eventually you can turn it into a quilt or do something else with it and it's a great way to practice piecing, getting your seam allowances right, playing around with the composition of a quilt block. - So, it gets you used to the idea of patchwork and piecing like you said, but then also this is forgiving enough that you can kind of experiment. - Exactly, very forgiving. - And historically, a log cabin block like we've got, I see we've got a center square here, we've got some colored strips in a warm tone, a mix of solids and prints, and then also cool tone. Is that something to do with the traditional way that you create a log cabin? - I think historically the log cabin block used darker tones and lighter tones, kind of played around with that, and if you look at the composition of a larger, more traditional log cabin you might see that and it's really fun to play around with the color placement in a log cabin block, and it's also, I teach kids sewing and quilting classes and this is one of their favorite when I teach, let's say, 10 and 11 year olds, this is a really fun way for them to start quilting because it's very forgiving and because they get to see right away how the two colors will play against each other or how the different tones will. - Awesome. I'm gonna just show this baby bib which is one of Ashley's classes. It's called the Log Cabin Baby Bib and this is exactly that, right? We start with a center square and then we're building in a concentric circle. - [Ashley] Exactly. It's

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almost like a geometric spiral because you start with the center and then you kind of build out from there, and even these two have two different shapes for the center. One's this oblong rectangle and this one's more of a vertical rectangle. - [Courtney] So, a square is just more of the concept. - Exactly, and I'm gonna show on this square, so it really kind of depends on the aesthetic that you're looking for. A lot of times modern quilters will use the word wonky to describe when they play around with the placement of the different shapes and using, even a triangle you could try, so it's really sort of a fun block where you can just do whatever you want really. - Yeah, I love that. If you look closely in these strips then you can see that not all of them are exactly the same width. Maybe they're a little bit thinner at one end and thicker at the other and that doesn't really matter 'cause you still get this really beautiful and really cleanly finished end product, especially in this baby bib, and I love the back, too. It's so cute. - [Ashley] I know, that shows off the jelly roll strips really nicely. - [Courtney] It's really, really sweet. - So, do you want to get started, show us how it's done? - Yes, let's do it. So, it's really easy because you just start with a square. I mean, I'm starting with a square but you could start with a rectangle. It could be really any shape and I divided my fabrics into warm and cool tones just because I want to show what that's gonna look like, but you can see from those baby bibs that we just showed that I didn't follow that rule when I made those so you can play around with it. So, I'm gonna take these two. I'm gonna take this little pink strip and with piecing I always use a quarter inch seam allowance and my sewing machine has a quarter inch foot on it and it's really easy because you just follow the edge of the sewing machine foot, and I'm gonna line up my two pieces right at the end and I'm not gonna worry about this tail yet, and so it's really easy, just sew a quarter inch seam and uh oh, oh dear, you guys. - [Courtney] Power? - [Ashley] Nope, sewing machine needle broke. So, it's really easy. Will you--? - [Courtney] I'll grab you a second. - [Ashley] This is how we, you know-- - [Courtney] An impromptu tutorial on how to change a sewing machine needle. - And it's so easy and it happens all the time and this is something that I tell people in my classes a lot that you actually have to change your sewing machine needle way more often than you would think. You should probably change your sewing machine needle after every five to six hours of sewing which is way more often than people think. - I always want to say while you're changing this because we're live, you guys can write in and ask Ashley questions on some of her classes with us or if you've never made a log cabin before, so feel free. Ali will let us know you guys have questions. - Yeah, ask away. I also have to re-thread, so you guys get to watch me do that, so fun. When I teach kids, I had a student tell me the other day, are you done with your demos? She was like stop talking at us, we want to get sewing. Anyways, here we go and this sewing machine has a needle threader which is so amazing. Okay, now we're ready to go again. Okay, redo. I'm just gonna sew this quarter inch seam and then the next thing I'm gonna do is I'm gonna just trim off this extra. I'm just gonna use a scissor. You can use your rotary cutter and rotary mat if you want to. - [Courtney] So, you trim right to the edge? - Right to the edge and then you're gonna press after every seam that you sew, and I'm always gonna press out, meaning out from the center block. - [Courtney] Is that because you catch the seam in the next round? - That's right. It creates unity in the pressing. Okay, so I'm gonna press that out and then I'm gonna take a second strip from my warm tones for my next one. - [Courtney] We have our first question. Lauren asks how do you keep a straight line while sewing? - [Ashley] So, good question. The question was how do you keep a straight line when you're sewing? So, I use my fingers to make sure that my fabric stays in place, depending on how big your block is getting. If it's getting really big I would use a pin or pins and then while sewing, you can kind of see what I'm doing here. I'm using the edge of my sewing machine foot and I'm following the edge of the fabric, and so if you do that, if your fabrics are lined

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up nicely and you do that, you're gonna sew a straight line. - [Courtney] Good question. - [Ashley] Another thing to keep in mind about this block, too, is that because it's improv and very forgiving, it's your seam allowance is slightly off on one row it's not a big deal because you're not measuring perfectly. So, I'm gonna trim this off and then I'm gonna press it, and again, we press out from the center. Okay, and see we can already see how it's growing and now I'm gonna take from my cool tones and I'm gonna do two in a row that are cooler tones. - [Courtney] So, that's how you would build this, warm on the top and left and then cool on the right and bottom. - [Ashley] Exactly, and you don't have to do that but I kind of like the way it plays with color. Got that one done, and so you can see how it's just sew a strip on, trim it, press it out. - [Courtney] It seems very repetitive, meditative. - [Ashley] Quilting is extremely meditative, you guys. - [Courtney] I feel like we all need a therapy relief. - [Ashley] Exactly. - [Ali] We have another question. - [Ashley] Great. - [Ali] John asks what kind of mat do you iron on? - [Courtney] John's asking what the mat is that Ashley's using. - [Ashley] We're using, Courtney, what would you call this? - [Courtney] This is just an ironing pad so it's not a hard surface. It's great for travel, it works really well for flexibility when we're filming workshops and it has a heat sensitive material on one side and just canvas on the top, and you can get it at your local craft store. In fact, you can get it at Jo-Ann. If you guys are new to Creativebug, you can use the code Joann1 to get 30 free days of Creativebug and if you comment and share you get this awesome gift card. You get entered to win this awesome gift card which is a $50 gift card. - Awesome. Thank you for that question. I also just use a regular ironing board. Okay, so I'm gonna sew this next cool tone on and as it grows, obviously it's gonna be thicker so keep that in mind, gonna keep growing out, and now we've kind of made our first completed circle. I didn't really mean to say circle 'cause it's a square. The first round, my first set of four walls since the log cabin was sort of designed around this aspect of the home way back when. Okay, so we've got to cool tones over here and the warm tones here, and so I'm gonna go ahead and go back to my warms, and I've used a thinner strip for this one just to see what that looks like, and starting to look pretty cool. - [Courtney] I love how it's looking. Are these-- - [Ashley] Yes. - [Courtney] Some of these are from the same line and they coordinate well. - [Ashley] Yeah, exactly. - [Courtney] It's a good way to play with color, too, just to see what interacts-- - It really is. So, I'm gonna add a pink strip now and you guys are gonna get to see how these two coral colors are connected, which is kind of cool, but this pink strip is gonna be separate. It's gonna be kinda funny. Not funny, but-- - [Courtney] But I like that you're not overly thinking what you're putting on next other than cool or warm. - And in my baby bib class, we use the log cabin as sort of the central piece of the bib and then added to it, and basically, you can do a lot with a block, not just turn it into a quilt, which obviously it's awesome as a quilt, too, but here we are. Again, we're ironing out and you can kinda start to see why keeping that pattern is good because it kind of flattens all the seams nicely. - [Courtney] It's looking really cool - [Ali] We have another question. - [Ashley] Great. - [Ali] Lauren wants to know what material do you recommend to sewing with? So, what's the best material to start sewing with? - [Courtney] Lauren's asking what's the best material to sew with? - Well, for quilting, quilting cotton. So, it's 100% cotton usually because they're pretty, there's not a lot of give in the fabric and the same goes for garment sewing, although I'm not an expert on garment sewing, but any fabric that has a lot of give to it is gonna be a little bit more difficult for a beginner, so I would recommend starting with these 100% cotton for quilting. - [Courtney] Plus, if you're new to quilting they come, and if you buy a collection then all the color matching and the color waves are already chosen for you which is really nice to start with. - Exactly. In all fabric stores, you'll notice things are grouped together and it's a really nice way to purchase for a project. Okay, so I'm gonna

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sew another strip on. I've grabbed again from my cools and just sort of a lighter, light blue, although I don't know if you guys can see this. It's so light, but it's got a little polka dot on it. It's very cute. Okay. - [Courtney] How do you know when you're done? - Well, you can be done whenever you want to be done and the cool part about the log cabin is is that you can start to make a bunch of different ones and then you can, at the end, like let's say you make four that look like this, and you can cut 'em down to be the same size to make a four patch quilt. - So, you can just grow your blocks organically in the same method and then square them up at the end. - Yeah, or you could make a giant-- - Like a whole quilt. - A whole quilt that just is this spiral that's growing out. - I love that. - Traditional quilts, again, back to what we were talking about about modern quilting, traditional quilts feature more of a repetitive block so that's another modern take which would be kind of to mess around with that or to do it on a large scale. - That's awesome. I love it. If you guys are new to Creativebug, you can check out our classes and Ashley's classes. You can check out the Log Cabin Baby Bib Quilt and her other pixilated quilt. She's got some awesome classes and some new classes coming up as well. If you guys have some questions, sounds like we maybe have some more questions. - [Ali] Okay, Angela wants to know, she says I'm just getting interested in quilting. Can you suggest a good first pattern to start with? - Angela's asking, she's new to quilting. Hi Angela, thanks for writing in. - Hi. - And she's new to quilting and she's asking if there's a good pattern. - Well, I mean, I could recommend my pixilated class on creative bug, simply because you buy a jelly roll and you cut the jelly roll into squares. - And what is a jelly roll for people who are brand new to quilting? - A jelly roll is a pack of pre-cut strips. So, it comes in this giant roll which is why it's called a jelly roll. - It's really pretty to look at. - It's really fun, which means you don't have to do a lot of cutting, which I always say for beginners, it's such a gift. - It gets you into the project earlier. - It's such a gift because cutting, as a lot of quilters might be able to tell you is quite a tedious step and you haven't even started quilting yet, so I would recommend that. There are tons of simple quilt blocks that you could practice with like the log cabin. - Or even the block of the month series that Ashley's been doing her classes with just because you get a taste for a little bit of patchwork and then you can go on from there. - Yeah, and any class will walk you through the steps of the actual quilt making process as well. Like, some of my mom's classes actually-- - Sue Nichols, Ashley's mom, would you call her a traditional quilter? - She's more of a traditional quilter, yeah. - And she also has a great number of classes on Creativebug. That's how we found Ashley, but we love her. - Hi, Mom. - I think we have a few other question. - She's watching, of course. - Hi Sue, we miss you. - [Ali] Okay, so our next question comes from Lindsey, and she wants to know, she asks, how do you recommend sewing the batting and the back fabric onto the front of the quilt. - So, Lindsey's asking about a quilt sandwich. - A quilt sandwich. Well, let's recommend my mom's class on Creativebug called The Quilt Sandwich, but that step comes after you've made your entire pieced top, so that is after you've made an entire quilt top and that stuff can be semi-labor intensive so I would recommend taking that class. - It's a good idea to check out the class because if you do it wrong it can be a very frustrating experience and we spent this time piecing together your top so you might as well just go through the extra steps of making sure that all lines up well so that when you go to quilt it it's not a nightmare. - It's basically the key to a successful quilt is making sure your quilt sandwich is done properly. - Absolutely, great question. - [Ali] Our next question is about the machine. What kind of machine are you using? - We are using a BERNINA. This is the BERNINA 350 patchwork edition. - And that's one of our Creativebug machines, but that's your favorite, right? You use a BERNINA at home? - Yeah, I use a BERNINA at home. - So, you use this one. - Yes, and they're just very trustworthy machines. - [Ali] Okay, so we have a few more questions. Linda is asking if you

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can show the back of the block so that she can see the seams - You can put it here. - Sure. There it is. And you can see, 'cause I used that light thread color so you can see those pretty nicely. - [Courtney] And you pressed in the same direction every time, pressing out so that's consistent throughout the block. - [Ashley] Right, and that just helps keep the joints, the corners flat. - [Courtney] Yes, which when you see it from the front, 'cause everything is laying down really nicely and looks really professional, and then helps with the quilt sandwich. - [Ashley] Right, it all starts with-- - Good habits early. - Yeah. - [Ali] Charlene asks what type of needle and thread are you using? - What kind of needle and thread is Ashley using? - Okay, so I'm using a 50 weight thread. It's 100% cotton thread, 50 weight, and then I'm using the 80/12 needle, which is the standard size needle. - Just, I think Ashley's tip about changing your needle every five or six hours of sewing was a really good tip. If you guys missed that, definitely per project. - Yeah, and get used to just changing your needle. Don't worry if you break needles. You know, needles-- - That's replaceable and a sharp needle makes a more successful project and helps with your experience. You don't want to be frustrated, especially as a first time quilter. - Yeah, but great question. - [Ali] Pamela asks do you wash the fabric before sewing? - Pamela's asking do you wash before you sew? That's an excellent question. - It is an excellent question. Everybody has their own opinions about washing. A lot of quilters I know wash every fabric before they start quilting, including the backing and the batting. Some people don't at all. - And the reason for that is because things can shrink differently, so you've gone to the work of putting all this stuff together and one thing maybe shrinked a lot and one shrunk just a little. - So, if you're gonna wash you should wash everything because then if you wash the whole quilt, everything will already be its shrunken size and that's just a pretty standard rule. A lot of people who make quilts that are not going to be used, so let's say a wall quilt or something-- - Something more art based. - More art based, won't wash their fabrics because they won't need to in the future, but it's also a very personal choice. - I think we have a lot of Creativebug instructors who are split down the middle where they're like you should wash your fabric but I never do. - Yeah, exactly. - It's like the quilting secret. - And everybody, if you follow any quilters of social media there's a lot of conversations around that. - It's like sewing over your pins. - Exactly. - We have a divided thing. Some people are like always remove your pins before you sew, and we have Heather Ross who's like sew right over those babies, don't even worry about it. Maybe you need to wear some goggles. - Right. - Exactly. Do we have any more questions? You guys have been great with asking questions. - I know, these are great questions. - [Ali] We have Angela asks what keeps the material from unraveling and falling apart? - I'm wondering if she means the fabric or edges. - Angela's asking what keeps the material from falling apart and I don't know if you want to take a stab at that. Go ahead. - So, you make sure you leave a decent seam allowance. So, I use a quarter inch seam allowance and I run into this a lot when I'm teaching kids to sew. They like to sew right on the very edge of the fabric and then that actually, the fabric will start to become unraveled, so you want to make sure you leave seam allowance. - Right, and so for this particular project you're leaving about a quarter inch, is standard for quilting. - [Ashley] And I use a standard quarter inch seam allowance for all piecing in quilting. - [Courtney] And Ashley is using a quarter inch foot which is helping guide that. It just makes it kind of a no brainer and you get kind of in the habit of doing it. - You don't have to worry about, you just follow the edge of your foot and then you're good to go. - Good questions, you guys. These are really great questions. You should definitely check out Ashley's classes and her mom's classes, Sue Nichols' classes, on the Creativebug site. Remember you can use the code Joann1 to check out Creativebug for 30 days. If you comment, like, and share this Facebook post then you are entered to win a $50 gift card at Joann, which is, that's where all of our

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fabric came from. They have sewing machines. A great resources for-- - Buy all of your needles. - Yes. - All your rotary cutters, all of the tools you'll need to be a successful quilter. - All of the good stuff. - Yeah. - Yeah, awesome. - Great. - And don't forget to follow us on Facebook. You guys are gonna get a notification every time we go live. We've been so lucky to have you here this week. We're super excited to have you back. - Yeah, and if anybody's interested in folLowing me on social media, I'm alphabetashley. - She has great blog. - Mostly on Instagram these days. - Because of the Alphabet Summer? - Yeah. I had blog that was called Alphabet Summer and now I'm Alphabet Ashley. - Yeah, what's up next for you? You just did a great craft show called patchwork. - I'm teaching locally and on the internet and I have a small little bag business. - And can we find you under Alphabet Ashley on Etsy? - Yeah, Alphabet Summer on Etsy. - Great. - Alphabet Summer. You can go to alphabetsummer.com which is my website, which has all of my info on where I'm teaching and anything that's upcoming, either locally or further afield. - Awesome, so exciting. - Thank you, guys. - Lots of good stuff in the future. Thanks everyone for joining and thanks for those awesome questions. We'll see you next week. - [Ashley] Bye.

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