Sew a Reversible Table Runner with Michele Muska

Chapter 1 - Sew a Reversible Table Runner

Overview

(bright music) - Hi, I'm Michele Muska. I'm a quilter and a fiber artist. I've been making since I was four years old. And I really enjoy making items for my home. Today we'll be making a double-sided table runner and I'll be using the Dresden wedge. The reason I love this is because it's so versatile. You can use it in a strip, a circle, or a fan. I've used some really interesting fabrics from around the world, hand-dyed and hand-woven. I'll be showing you how to make a curved bias, which looks complicated but it's really easy to do and looks great on so many different projects. We will also be talking about the importance of using an insulated, heat-resistant filler for the inside of your table runner. We will be doing some basic machine quilting and sewing, and then to add some textural interest, we'll be doing some big stitching on the wedges. The techniques that you learn throughout this project will be really great to incorporate in all of your future sewing.

Materials

- For this project you will need a collection of fabrics for the front of your table runner and a collection of fabrics for the back. You will also need an insulating batting for the inside filler of your table runner, an 18-degree Dresden wedge acrylic tool, quilt-binding clips, threads for your hand stitching, and your basic sewing supplies, which will include your common pins, rotary cutter, assorted scissors, seam ripper, and thimble pads, as well as a large ruler, an iron, an ironing surface, a sewing machine, and my secret weapon, a six-inch saucer or plate.

Cut and assemble the wedges

- Now that you've gathered all of your supplies, I'm going to show you how to cut and assemble the Dresden strip. First you will need to cut your fabrics in a 6 1/2 inch strip. I'm using this Dresden tool. It's 18 degrees wedge. And I'm gonna cut the end off. And then gonna turn this around. Place my Dresden wedge right here. And cut. And then I'm just going to flip it back and forth all the way down. You will need 26 wedges altogether to form the strip in the middle of your table runner. Once you have all of your 26 wedges cut, we're going to assemble them. I actually chose to use a solid in between each print, like this. And I don't usually use pins, especially since I'm using different types of cotton fabrics. And the Indian print is a little bit lighter, so I like to be able to manipulate it with my hands. And I'm gonna back tack each piece a little bit. And when I'm using different weight fabrics, I often go a little bit slower so I will set my machine on the medium speed so I won't go too fast. Sometimes when you're working with different weight fabrics they might have a tendency to work differently under your thread and needle. And then cut. So basically, these are your first two wedges that are sewn together. And now I'm gonna take the next solid. So it's the wide end to this narrow end. And I'm gonna put that right on there like that. And sew again. Back tack and cut. And you're going to continue putting your wedges together until you get all 26. The next step will be ironing the seams to one side. There's a little bit of a controversy over ironing and pressing. So pressing would be just placing your iron down, like this and that kind of heat sets your stitches in place. A few people feel like when you're ironing back and forth it might stretch your stitches. It won't really matter too much with a Dresden wedge, but if you're working with points, that might make a little bit of a difference for you. Now that you have your 26 Dresden wedges sewn together

© Michele Muska and Creativebug Inc., 2026

and pressed, you wanna trim the edges. And take your rotary cutter and your large ruler. And you're pretty much squaring it off. So you might get a little bit of variation in the width, so you'll have to check it to the backside of the table runner to make sure that'll match up. Okay, so we have one side done. And now we're gonna flip it around and do the other side. So basically you can take your ruler and set it up on that side. Okay, and finish squaring it off. Now you're ready to pin the side strips on. One will be 3 1/4 inches wide. And the other side will be 7 1/4 inches wide. And they're about 40 inches long. Now I'm going to take my fabric, and I'm going to pin it to each side so you can sew them together. And I'm giving you measurements, but just remember that everyone sews a little bit differently. Their seam allowances come out a little bit differently. So it's your project, that's fine. Just make sure that the top portion of your table runner fits the bottom. And now I'm going to pin the second side. This is a hand-dyed piece so it has a little bit of wax on it. You can actually take a pressing cloth with an iron to remove it. But it's a little bit stiff, and I think I just feel like I wanna leave the original fabric as it is. And before you start this project, you might wanna measure your table where you're gonna be using this. Or if you're giving it as a gift, you know, check out the table that that person might be using. You might want to make your table runner a little bit longer or a little shorter. So now I'm ready to go to the sewing machine. Now I'm going to sew the side strips together with a 3/8 inch seam allowance. I'm gonna back tack. And as you can see, this is the side that I had ironed the seams in this direction so it's much easier to sew. And then I'm gonna sew the opposite side. Just make sure to keep adjusting as you go along. Okay, now that I've finished both sides, we're going to take it to the ironing surface. We're gonna iron both seams to the outside. And then eventually topstitch. Now I'm going to take it to the sewing machine and topstitch along the edge. I'm going to move my needle a little bit closer so I can use my foot as a guide. And you're gonna run down the other side and topstitch that as well. It's a little bit of a bulky seam, so this is gonna hold it in place for you. And now you're going to square off both ends. So now you're finished trimming up your ends. You can get a peek at the top.

Assembling & quilting the front

- Before your next step, you're gonna wanna trim both sides. This is a border print, so I'm using the border as well as my ruler to guide me. You want it to be about 12 inches. It's a handwoven piece of fabric, so you really need to be careful. It might be a little bit wonky. So just get in there and try your best. So as you can see, this is working out pretty well with my border. And then you're gonna wanna turn it around and do the other side. And just to mention, because of the type of fabric it is it will never, even if it's the right width, it might not look perfect because it's a hand-made piece of cloth. And that's the beauty of it. Next, I'm going to be layering on the insulated fabric. It's the batting, the middle. And I'm going to be hand-quilting just the solid pieces, the red and the gold on to the batting. So here's your insulated batting. It has a silver and a fleecy side. So I'm gonna lay the table runner face up. And I'm going to start pinning. You'll wanna start pinning along the middle edges. And then you're gonna spread it out like this to really get a nice fit. And I have to say, more pins the better. So the table runner top won't move around when you're sewing. Well, you can either start on one side and go in one direction or start in the middle and move out. If you start in the middle and go back and forth, you'll end up with maybe some bulks, bulk areas in your fabric. And you won't get a nice smooth finish when you're hand quilting. And if you feel more comfortable, you can even baste this with just a single thread and a very large stitch. And it will definitely stay in place. So whatever you feel more comfortable with. Now that we're finished pinning the top of the table runner to the insulated batting, we're gonna talk about, and I'm gonna

© Michele Muska and Creativebug Inc., 2026

show you, how to quilt the solid pieces. You can do it by freehand, or sometimes if you feel a little bit more comfortable, you can use a marking pencil or a pen of some sort that disappears, and you can just draw some lines about 3/8 inch apart. You don't have to be too fussy because this is hand done. Okay. I have my needle and thread ready. I usually use a contrasting color. And I come in from the back. And I kind of waffle it back and forth like this. Two to three stitches and then gently pull. I find that I don't really need a hoop for this portion because the insulated fiberfill in the middle is really stiff. And I think that will be sufficient without a hoop. Once you start quilting, you're gonna notice if you're using your thumb or you finger more. And just so you don't get a little pinhole in your skin, you can use the thimble pads. And then usually I just go up to the next one. Now that I've done one line, I realize that this finger here is getting a little red. And so I'm gonna try one of those thimble pads right there. You might end up using one or more than one. And you'll notice as you go along what finger you're gonna use to push. Really saves your skin. See, right like this. And you can use them a couple of times. They're peel and stick. So when I'm getting near the end of the piece or the end of my thread, I don't worry about doing a knot. I'm just going to do a few slip stitches right through the batting. Just make sure it doesn't come up through the front. And then I'll clip it off. Now that you have your hand quilting done on the red and gold solids or colors of your choices, you don't necessarily have to hand stitch. And to stabilize the pieces together you can also stitch in the ditch along the sides, which is what I'm going to do now. So we're going to back tack, and then stitch in the ditch. As I mentioned, to just stabilize the two layers together. Now with our ruler and rotary cutter, we're gonna trim the insulating batting off of the edges on all sides. It's also the time to square up your ends if they're not. Now that your top is finished, we're ready to move on to the back side.

Assemble the back

- Now we're going to work on the back side of your table runner. I chose to use this print. I have five different color ways in the same print, and then six wedges for my background fabric. I've already sewn it together like you did in the first half of the class, and you're gonna make two of these. And we're gonna trim out each side, about an eighth of an inch. And then you're gonna slice it down the middle. This will give you two bands, and then you will need three to complete the backside. I took the six and a half inch piece, I cut it, and I attached one of the bands, the Dresden bands to it. Next comes a 14 inch piece of your background fabric. And your going to be alternating your background fabric, with your Dresden bands, so I'm gonna place that on here, and we'll trim it up afterwards. So you wanna pin that. You can also make the back of your table runner solid. And I'm gunna add another six and a half inch band, can line it up on the sides here, and pin. And this is your third band. You'll have one left over, maybe you can put it in another project. Then you'll have your last band, which is seven and a quarter inches wide. And then you'll take it to the sewing machine, and sew them together. Back tack. (sewing machine clicking) And you've already sewn your seams in one direction, so this'll be helpful when you're sewing 'em together. (sewing machine clicking) Back tack and cup. And then you continue with the other bands. (sewing machine clicking) Now that the top is done, I'm going to iron the seams. And I want the seam allowance to be towards the outside. And then next we're gonna trim off our Dresden bands. Now we need to go to the machine, and top stitch along each of the bands. For the top stitching, I'm going to lengthen my stich to 3.5. I'm going to move my needle over, so I can use my presser foot as a guide. (sewing machine clicking) (sewing machine clicking) We just finished the back side of the table runner. I used the Dresden bands because I, happens to be my favorite tool, and I just love playing around with that shape, but feel

© Michele Muska and Creativebug Inc., 2026

free to use a solid backing. You can use cotton or even canvas. It's your choice and it's your project.

Make bias binding
- If you're going to be using pre-purchased bias quilt binding, make sure the package has three yards. If you're going to be making your own with coordinating fabric then get about a yard of fabric just to be sure you have enough and it'll be the same dye lot. All mats have a 45 degree angle line which you'll need to use your ruler with. So you can start off on the corner, not the fold. And you're gonna run it along your ruler and your 45 degree line. Once you have that started that will be your guide moving forward. And we're going to be cutting our bias three and 1/2 inches wide. (tool cutting) Next you want to square off the ends and then you'll join 'em together. So you can see you have a really nice stretch. So you're gonna put the corners together, right sides together, pin. And I find it helpful to actually draw a diagonal. You can eye it if you like, but I think it makes it a little bit easier. And just to kinda show you what it's gonna look like. So once you sew your seam together this is what it will look like, your bias tape. Then you pin this side. And then you'll sew along your drawn line. (sewing machine humming) I'm using a contrasting thread so you can see the diagonal line. Then we'll cut along there leaving a nice seam allowance. You'll have to press that open and then you'll open it up and have a great seam. And we'll do one more. (sewing machine humming) Now we're ready to trim and iron our quilt binding. You want to leave a really nice seam allowance, maybe 5/8. And you want to open that up. And I would suggest finger pressing it first. And when you open up the seams this is gonna give you less bulk when you fold it in half. Quilt binding is only folded in half this way. So when you actually attach it to your quilt or any other item that you're going to be making a lot of use out of or washing a lot, it gives double thickness to help with the wear. You can actually trim that up with your scissors afterwards too. And now we're ready to sew it on to our table runner.

Attach binding
- Now it's time to assemble our table runner. So we have the front, that is actually quilted and sewn to the insulated batting. And then the back, and you're gonna place that over, sandwich it together, and make sure it's really smooth. With a piece this small, I have a tendency to just use straight pins, but please use your preferred method of basting. You can hand baste, or you can use safety pins. So I'm gonna start from one end here, and keep smoothing out, so I don't have any gaps. Or you can start from the middle, and move to the edges. And just keep continuing smoothing it out. Once you have it pin basted fully, then you can flip it over, and make sure it's smooth on the other side, and trim up any uneven edges. You can also use your rotary cutter if you like. Okay, now that we have our table runner squared up, we're ready to go onto making the curved corners. I use my secret weapon, which is my six inch vintage Corning Ware plate, and I simply just put it down, and with a pencil, and then I'm going to cut that corner. And you're gonna do all four corners. When you're ready to sew the bias binding on, you wanna make sure to leave a little tail. And you're gonna start pinning along one edge. Now since the bias has a stretch, as you can see, I'm gonna stop pinning when I get to the corner. And when I'm at the machine, you'll be able to see that I'm going to, you know, feed the fabric in with my fingers. And because of the stretch, you wanna have a little bit more freedom with the fabric. So now we're going to sew our quilt binding, and we're gonna give it a 1/2 inch seam allowance. And we'll back tack. (sewing) As you can see it's already starting to pucker a little bit, because the binding is cut on the bias, as we talked about, and it has a little bit of a stretch to it. So you might wanna slow your machine down a little bit. You hold the binding behind

© Michele Muska and Creativebug Inc., 2026

the presser foot, as well as in the front. (sewing) So here we are coming to our first curve. So you might want to take a stylus, or a pen, or some sharp scissors, that will help you hold the corner down. And you're gonna slowly go around the curve. And what you're gonna watch out for, is these little puckers. You wanna make sure it's really flat where you're sewing, because when you open it up, that's the side that's going to show. And so you can see how you have to really be careful around the corner, and you're feeding that fabric. You're giving it a little pull and a tug, and it has a little bit of give because of the bias. That's gonna really make a great corner for you. I actually use curved corners on all of my quilts now, because I just think they're easier. So, and then here you got the straightaway. (sewing) And you're going to be approaching your second corner. You wanna continue around all four corners. (sewing) You'll wanna stop about four or five inches before you began. This is where you're going to join the quilt binding together. So this is where the joint will be. Or the seam. Okay. Cut that. And then you wanna overlap this piece, to give you your seam allowance. Then you're gonna open your seams up. It's a little bit tricky. And I would suggest pinning, pinning that together. (sewing) Okay, this is kind of the moment of truth. So what you're going to do is kind of lay it out like this. You're gonna end up finger pressing the seam open. Fold the tape in half. Then you wanna pin it to make sure that it fits nicely. (sewing) And then you'll flip it over, and there's your seam. The quilt binding has been attached and sewn onto the front of the table runner. Now we're going to prepare the corners, so we can take the binding around the corners, and get ready to hand sew. So we're going to be clipping the corners to ease the corners, and reduce the bulk of the fabric. And don't worry about what it looks like on the inside. You'll never see it once we turn the binding over, and start hand sewing it down. And now is the time that you're gonna take your quilt binding, and this is where it comes into play that it's bias, and it's stretchy, so now give you a really nice curve, like this. Look how beautiful that is. So, you're gonna take your clips, your quilting clips, and you're gonna start clipping as you go around the corner. So this is where you wanna pay attention to the width of your binding. You want it to be the same all the way around. And then when you turn it over, you wanna make sure that looks the same too. This should cover up your stitching underneath here. If by any chance once you're finished, and you see a little bit of stitching showing, you can take your seam ripper and just pick it out. It won't matter. And then you wanna continue around the entire table runner. You can use pins, but the clips are just so much easier, and they don't get in your way. I just love having contrast of the gold against the blue, with the binding. It really adds, I think, something special to the table runner. So we've finished clipping our quilt binding onto the backside, and now we're ready to hand stitch. I'm using a quilting needle, or you can the sharps, with a single thread, and knotted. And I'm going to get right underneath the binding. You can cut that off or tuck it under, and I'm going to pick up just the edge of the binding. So it's like a blind stitch. Make sure you don't go through to the front, and then, just continue to make sure you're gonna get that really close edge. Don't pull too tight, because you don't want it to pucker. Hand stitching the quilt binding onto my projects are probably one of my most favorite things to do. It's meditative, and I can watch TV. I really like using the quilt clips. You can just move them right along, as you're working. And they come in all different sizes. If you find your thread is getting tangled, you can actually run it over a little piece of beeswax too. I'm getting close to the end of my thread, so there's a variety of ways to finish it off. I usually just do a little slip stitch. And it's pretty safe to do that, because it's going to be inside your quilt binding. But you can use whatever method you feel comfortable with. I'm using my index finger a lot, so I'm putting on an invisible finger pad. And now continue to hand stitch around the entire binding. And we're almost at the end. Take your final clip off. I'm just gonna go back and forth a few times, catching all the layers,

© Michele Muska and Creativebug Inc., 2026

to secure the end of my thread. And snip, and you're done. Your table runner is now finished, and we learned a lot of techniques. Some hand stitching, how to work with the Dresden tool. Also how to make continuous bias tape for your quilt binding, and actually do a curved edge. And we also learned how important it is to use insulating batting. It's really perfect for a table runner to set your hot dishes on. Now you're ready to take all of the things that you learned during this class, and make a custom table runner for yourself, or for a friend, and share a meal together.

© Michele Muska and Creativebug Inc., 2026