

Quilted Octagonal Placemats

With Angled Straight Line Quilting and Accent Binding all Around

An exclusive S4H project for Janome Canada

Design by Anne Adams, Instructions by Liz Johnson, Sample by Michele Mishler

The standard placemat is usually rectangular or round... maybe a perfect square if you're really wild. But when have our friends at Sew4Home been "standard"?! These octagon placemats are a unique shape that is not only fun and different, but also perfect for highlighting the half square triangle patchwork as well as the clean corners of the perimeter binding.

Designed and presented exclusively for Janome Canada users, S4H's Quilted Octagonal Placemat instructions have been specially prepared for anyone brand new to patchwork or quilting – or to be able to be used as an introductory project if you're teaching someone to sew and quilt.

You'll find extra-detailed steps and lots of explanatory photos that show cutting, stitching, assembling, quilting, and binding. Already a patchwork pro? Buzz through the steps for a cute project you can whip out in between your more complex quilting masterpieces.

We think you'll love how S4H used fusible thread in the bobbin to help create eight perfect corners on the mat's binding. It allows for a super sharp fold at each corner and holds the narrow binding in place with just the heat from your iron. We guarantee it won't be the last time you use this handy notion!



Supplies and cuts are shown for two placemats; simply multiply to make a tableful for your next gathering. S4H used Charm Square and Jolly Bar pre-cuts for their beautiful samples, but you could also dive into your scrap stash and cut your own 5" squares. You'll also need a bit of yardage for the solid back panels and the custom binding.

The final quilting pattern is always up to you, but there are easy-to-follow directions for how to plan and stitch the right angle, straight line quilting S4H featured in each of their mat's four quadrants.

The Placemats finish at approximately 17 x 17" with 5¾" diagonal corners.



Sew4Home provides inspiring tutorials that are expertly designed and have easy to understand instructions with gorgeous photography. To get to know Sew4Home better, visit Sew4Home.com

Project photos courtesy of S4H. Any unexpressed use of these images in whole or in part is strictly prohibited.

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Sewing Tools Needed

- Sewing Machine; **Need a small suggested list of possible machines this project will work with Low to high end**
- Standard presser foot
- Quarter Inch Seam Foot
- Even Feed/Walking foot or engage you machine's built-in fabric feeding system; S4H used the AcuFeed™ Flex system on the MC15000 with the narrow AcuFeed™ VD foot for quilting

Fabric and Supplies Needed



Note: The supplies shown below are for TWO placemats - as shown in our sample photography. Of course, meals enjoyed in large groups are always more fun, so multiply to make as many mats as needed, bearing in mind that each mat uses eight 5" print squares and six 5" solid squares + one full solid layer for the back panel and one layer of low loft cotton batting..

- 16 Charm Pack print squares or cut your own 5" squares from scraps – we recommend a petite print in a wide range of colours to mimic our look; we used a Flea Market charm pack by Lori Holt for Riley Blake Fabrics
- 12 Charm Pack solid squares, 6 Jolly Bar rectangles or cut your own 5" squares from scraps; we used a Bella Solid Jolly Bar by Moda Fabrics in PFD Bleached White
- ½ yard of 44"+ wide quilting weight cotton for the back panels; as listed above, we used pre-cuts for one solid front squares. You could also choose to cut your own 5" solid squares from this yardage. If this is your choice, get a FULL YARD to make sure you have enough for both. Our yardage is an exact match to the pre-cuts: Bella Solid by Moda Fabrics in PFD Bleached White

- ¼ yard of 44"+ wide quilting weight cotton for the binding; we used Kona Cotton by Robert Kaufman Fabrics in Celestial - we recommend picking a colour from within your print that is dark enough to create a strong perimeter outline to the placemats
- ½ yard of 44"+ wide low loft cotton batting; we used Pellon Nature's Touch Cotton Batting with Scrim
- All-purpose thread to best match both the main solid as well as to best match the binding
- Fusible thread for binding; this is optional, but detailed steps are shown below for using this helpful specialty thread to get the perfect angles of the octagon perimeter
- See-through ruler
- Fabric pen or pencil; we recommend an easily removable marking pen
- Seam gauge
- Seam ripper
- Scissors or rotary cutter and mat
- Iron and ironing board
- Straight pins

Getting Started

Note: For the cut list below, we are again showing requirements for a set of TWO placemats.

- Select or cut SIXTEEN 5" print squares.
- Select or cut TWELVE 5" solid squares.
- From the matching solid yardage, cut TWO 18" squares.
- From the accent solid yardage, cut THREE 2½" wide, width-of-fabric (WOF) strips.
- From the low loft batting, cut TWO 18" squares.



MC9450 QCP

2030QDC-TC

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SEWING INSTRUCTIONS

Note: For the construction itself, we are describing the building of ONE placemat. The techniques are the same mat to mat – only the colours change.

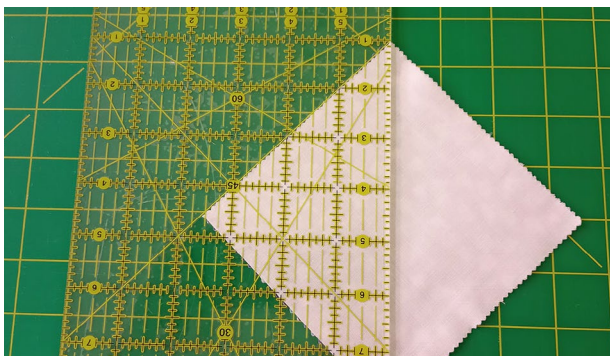
Patchwork - Half Square Triangles

Step 1: Collect EIGHT 5" print squares and SIX 5" solid squares. Select two of the print squares to become the four diagonal corners of the placemat. Our corner selects are shown in the upper right of the photo below. Match each of the remaining six print squares to a solid square, right sides together, carefully aligning the raw edges of the squares.



Step 2: For each of the six pairs of squares, place a ruler on the diagonal, and draw a line from corner to corner.

Note: Make sure your marking tool is one that will easily wipe away or will vanish with exposure to the air or the heat of an iron.



Step 3: Place a pin in each of the opposite corners to prevent the squares from shifting when they are sewn.



Step 4: Set up your machine with all purpose thread in the top and bobbin. Attach a Quarter Inch Seam foot. Adjust the stitch length to 1.8 mm.

Step 5: Stitch $\frac{1}{4}$ " to either side of the drawn line, using the blade of the foot as a guide along the drawn line. We like to stitch along the left side of the line to the opposite corner, lift the needle and the foot, pivot the square around, and continue stitching the second side without the need to trim the threads.



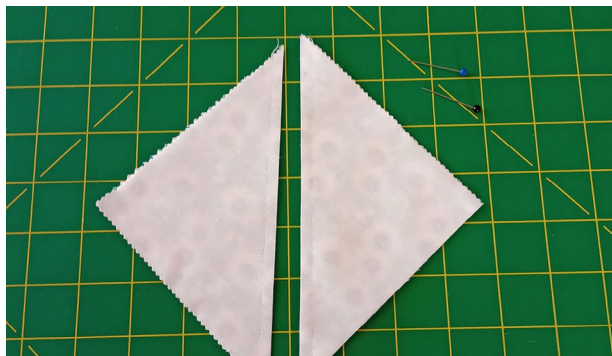
Step 6: Stitch to either side on the drawn line on each of the six pairs of squares.



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Step 7: When complete, cut along the drawn line. A ruler and rotary cutter will make the cleanest cut. You now have two triangles.



Step 8: At the ironing board, place these two triangles print side up. Press each triangle as stitched, then open up the square, and press the seam toward the print fabric. By pressing toward the darker fabric, you will avoid seeing the seam allowance through the lighter side of the pressed square.



Continue making half square triangles until you have the TWELVE completed squares needed for one mat. At either end of each seam there will be some fabric extending. These are called "dog ears." Trim them away on each square. This is an optional step, but it helps when matching one square to another during assembly.



Step 9: Collect the two 5" print squares you set aside for the corners of the octagon. Cut each square in half along the diagonal.



Patchwork - Assembly

INSERT THE TWO DRAWINGS FROM THE ORIGINAL WORK ORDER SIDE BY SIDE

Step 1: Arrange the four corner triangles and the twelve half square triangles, referring to the diagrams above. Be mindful of the direction of all the triangles; it's easy to misplace things if you're rushing.



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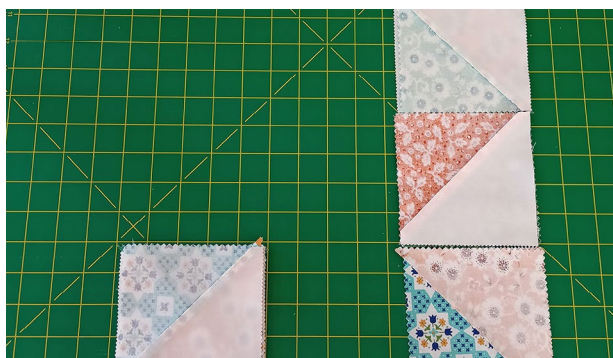
Step 2: Once the arrangement is laid out on the cutting mat, you can see how the design is simply made up of four rows side to side. Counting from left to right, flip Row 2 over Row 1....



... and flip Row 4 over Row 3.



Step 3: Then stack the pairs with the rows, starting with the pair at the top; in other words, when done stacking, the first pair is on the top of your stack. By stacking the pairs in this way, you can sew each row "assembly line style," and the connecting thread will keep the pairs in order. When complete, you will have two stacks: Rows 1 and 2, and Rows 3 and 4.



Step 4: At the machine, place the first pair under the foot (Row 1, Pair 1 and Row 2, Pair 1). Make sure the raw edges of the squares are flush. Stitch along the right hand edge, using the flange of the Quarter Inch Seam foot to guide the seam.



Step 5: When you reach the end of the first pair, stop with your needle in the down position, butt the second pair up against the first pair, and continue stitching without cutting the thread. Repeat to add the third and then the fourth pair before cutting the thread at the end of the row. Repeat for the second stack.



Step 6: Place the first stack of squares on the ironing board. The pairs are still connected by the thread. Press the seams as sewn.



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Step 7: Open the pairs, and press again, this time pressing each seam allowance section toward the print fabric.



Repeat for the second stack of squares.

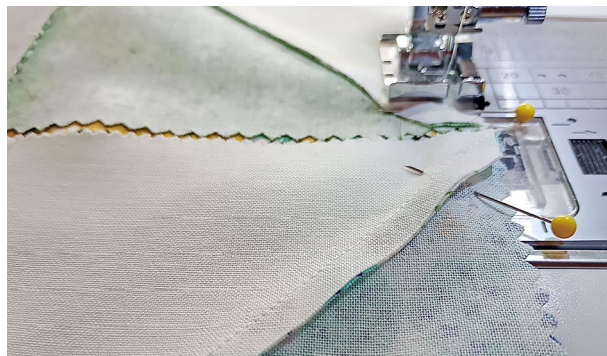
Step 8: With the pressing complete, place Row 1 and 2 on the cutting mat right side up. Place Row 3 and 4 over Row 1 and 2 right side down. The two sections are right sides together, all the pairs are still connected by the thread, and the raw edges are flush.



Step 9: Pin together along the long vertical centre line, and still using the Quarter Inch Seam foot and a 1/4" seam allowance, sew the two units together "assembly line style."



This means you are stitching along without stopping, crossing over the tiny gap held together with the original connecting thread.



Step 10: When finished, this seam between the two units (Row 1 and 2 and Row 3 and 4) should be pressed open. This is not the traditional technique used in quilting, but it is a useful trick to reduce the bulk when many seams come together in one intersection, as happens in this placemat.



Step 11: There are four vertical rows across the mat, but there are also four horizontal rows. Because you have those handy connecting threads between the rows, the arrangement has stayed in place!

Step 12: You will sew together each of the horizontal rows, carefully matching the seams. To maintain crisp points, use a pin to align the tips.



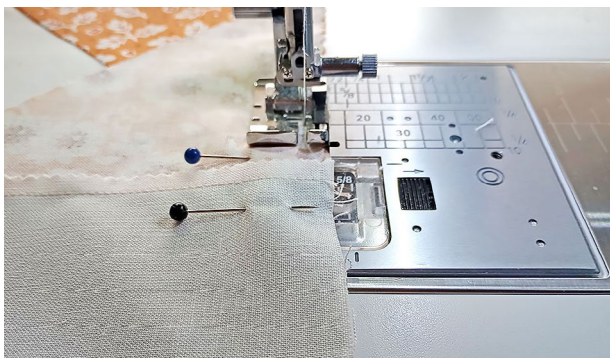
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Step 13: Then pin to either side of the seam to keep the tips aligned. Where the seams nest together (one seam allowance going one way on the top layer, the seam allowance on the bottom layer going the opposite way), wriggle the seams so they sit tightly together, then pin on either side of the seam to keep them in place.



Step 14: Sew each seam.



Step 15: Press the centre horizontal seam open as you did with the centre seam on the vertical rows. Press the remaining seams toward the outer edge of the placemat.



Quilting

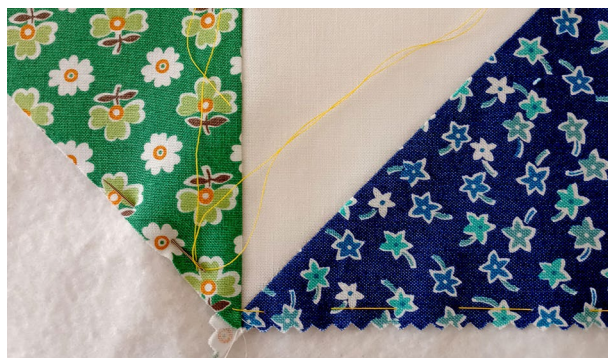
Step 1: Find the 18" back panel square. Place it wrong side up and flat on your work surface.

Step 2: Find the 18" batting square. Place the batting on top of the back panel.

Step 3: Find the pieced front panel and centre it right side up on top of the batting. Smooth the front panel into place, checking all edges to make sure the back panel and the batting extend beyond the front panel on all sides.



Baste the three layers together.



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Note: There are many schools of thought and techniques for holding layers together prior to quilting. You can use safety pins, basting spray, even fusible batting; but the favourite method of S4H Seamstress Team Member, Michele Mishler is to simply hand baste the layers together with needle and thread. She uses a large needle, brightly coloured thread, and long stitches. She usually bastes the perimeter first, then on a small project, such as these placemats, she also bastes along the horizontal and vertical centres. Yes, it's handwork and takes a bit of extra time, but in Michele's opinion, the advantages to hand basting outweigh the extra time. The layers stay together without any chance of shifting, there are no safety pins to place or remove, and you don't have to take the project outside in order to use the basting spray!

Step 4: Set up your machine for quilting with all purpose thread in the top and bobbin. Attach an Even Feed/Walking foot or engage your machine's built-in fabric feeding system. We used the Janome AcuFeed™ Flex built-in feeding system with the narrow AcuFeed™ VD foot. Lengthen the stitch to 2.80 mm, and set the needle in the centre position.



Step 5: Stitch in the ditch (stitch in the depression of the seam) along the mat's centre vertical seam and its centre horizontal seam.



Step 6: Then, stitch in the ditch along both the vertical and horizontal seams that border the four corner triangles.



Step 7: The remainder of the quilting requires marked lines. With the stitch-in-the-ditch quilting you just completed, the mat has been divided into quarters. Within each quarter, you will mark parallel lines in an "L" shape. Each of the assembled squares finish at 4", so the quadrants can be evenly divided with lines spaced 1" apart.

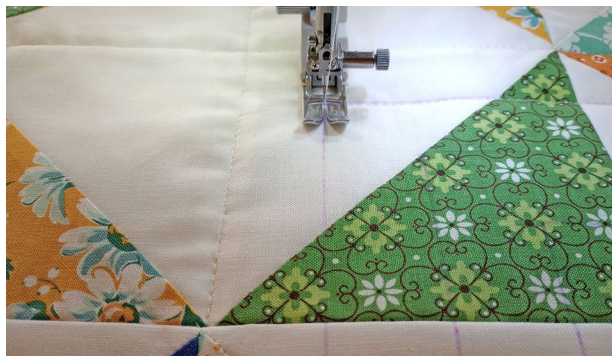


Step 8: Draw in the parallel "L" shaped guide lines. There will be FIVE "Ls" within each quadrant, however, you need only draw in FOUR because the fourth "L" has already been formed by the stitch-in-the-ditch quilting you did above. As mentioned above, make sure your marking tool is one that will easily wipe away or will vanish with exposure to the air or the heat of an iron.



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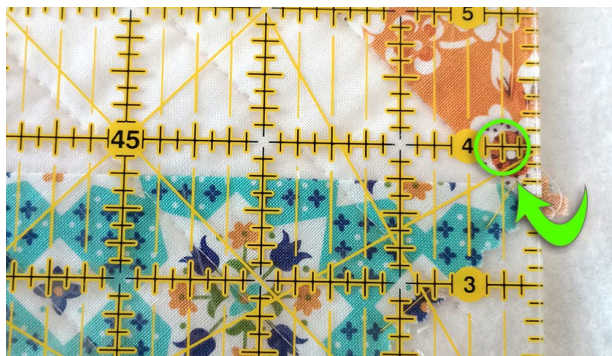
Step 9: Once the mat is marked, guide the the foot along each drawn line, sharply pivoting at the inside corners. It's a good idea to start and stop the straight line quilting within the batting/backing that extends beyond the front panel.



Step 10: Once the quilting is complete, it's time to trim the placemat to size.



Step 11: At each corner of the mat, the half square triangles come together to form a point. Place a see-through quilter's ruler at the edge of the first side to be trimmed. Notice the markings on the ruler. Align the 1/4" vertical mark on the ruler so that mark is just a needle's width beyond the end of each point.



Step 12: When the ruler is perfectly positioned, trim the side with a rotary cutter. On some sides, you might be trimming off just a sliver of fabric; on other sides, a sliver of batting will show. This is all fine, it's the 1/4" at the points that is most important.



Repeat for each side of the octagon.



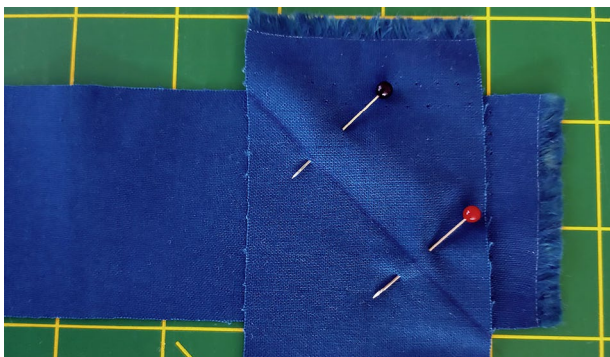
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Binding

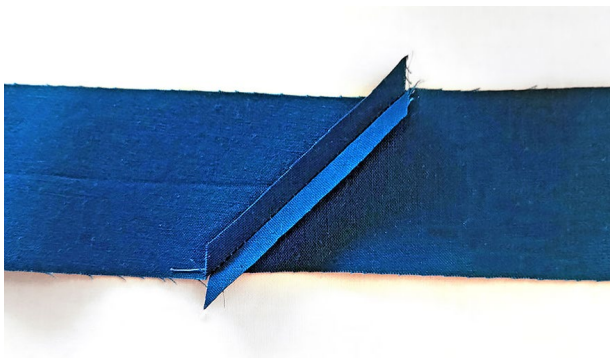
Find the WOF 2¼" strips of accent quilting cotton.
Re-thread the machine with thread to best match this fabric in the top and bobbin.

Each placemat requires approximately 60-63" of binding, so you will need to join strips to equal this length. We originally cut three WOF strips for our two sample placemats so we joined all three and then simply cut that finished strip in half, using one half for each mat.

Step 1: For the best finish, join the straight cut strips with a bias seam, which means placing the strips at right angles to one another, then drawing a line on the diagonal across that right angle.



Step 2: Stitch along the drawn line, trim back the seams allowance to ¼", and press open the tiny seam.



Step 3: Fold the seamed strip in half, wrong sides together, and press well.



Step 4: Most quilts are square or rectangular, and require a mitered corner of 90°. These pretty placemats are octagons, so they require a special technique to miter all eight of the corners for a smooth fit of the binding. To define each corner, fold the placemat wrong sides together, matching the raw edges and keeping the corner's point centred. Place a pin along this fold. We used a 2" glass head pin for this technique, with the point facing the outer edge.



Notice how the pin goes through the tip of the triangle. Repeat for each corner of the octagon.



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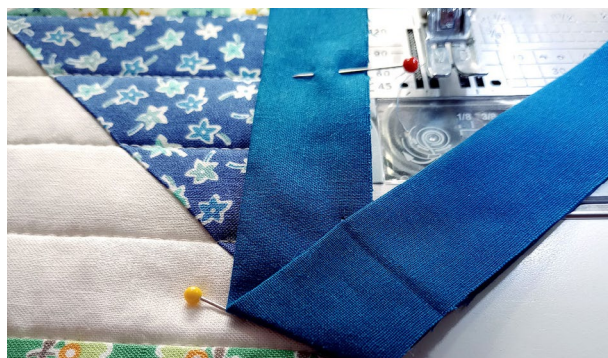
Step 5: Select a starting point on one of the longer sides of the octagon. This will give you extra room for joining the ends of the binding. We wanted the binding to overlap at the centre of one long side, so we used the seam between that side's triangles as a guide, adding an extra 1½" beyond that centre point. Pin the binding in place along just this first side of the octagon, aligning the raw edges of the binding with the edge of the mat.



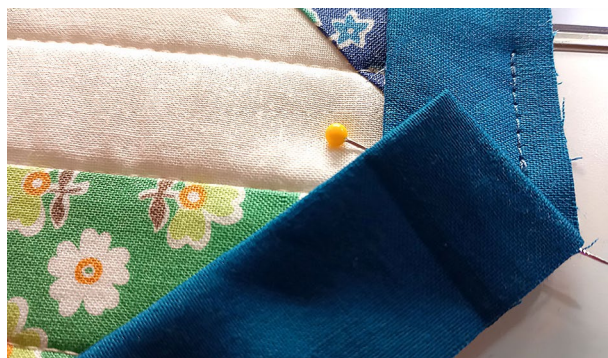
Step 6: Attach an Even Feed/Walking foot or engage your machine's built-in fabric feeding system. We continued to use the Janome AcuFeed™ Flex built-in feeding system with the narrow AcuFeed™ VD foot. Position the mat under the foot. The AcuFeed™ VD foot is exactly ½" wide, so when it is aligned to the edge of the mat, it makes a perfect ¼" seam. You can, of course, also use your needle plate markings as a guide. Start the stitching 1" to 1½" from the first corner as shown in the photo below. Do NOT start at the beginning of the binding strip. You need the head of the binding to be free so you can use it later to finish the ends.



Step 7: Stitch until the needle is just at the intersection created by the pin. Back stitch a few stitches, cut thread, and remove the mat from under the foot. Fold the binding strip back so the fold is aligned with the pin. Finger press.



Step 8: With this first small fold in place, fold the binding strip back toward the next side of the mat, creating a small pleat on the folded edge of the binding at the corner point. The raw edge of the binding should now be flush with the raw edge of the upcoming side of the mat.



Step 9: Start stitching at the beginning of the next side. This means you are sewing across the tip of the pleat while continuing to maintain a ¼" seam allowance along the edge of the mat.



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Step 10: Continue sewing until the you reach the next intersection created by the pin. Once again, backstitch and cut threads, fold the binding strip in the same manner as above, and continue to the next side of the octagon.



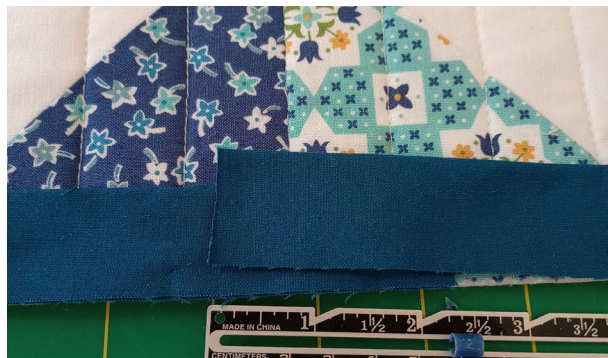
Step 1: Continue sewing the binding to the quilt, folding at each corner, until the last corner is reached. Stitch around that corner, stop 1½" from the corner, and lock the seam.



Remove the mat from under the foot.

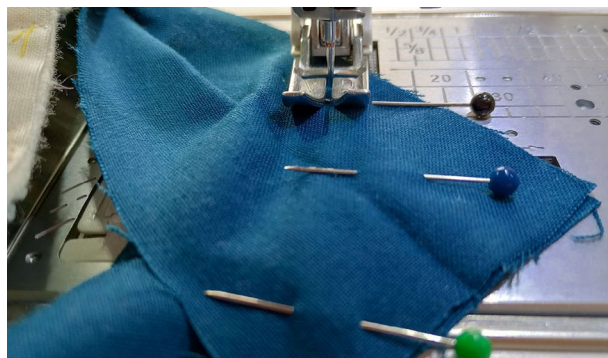


The binding strip was cut to a width of 2¼", which traditionally means the overlap of the ends should also be 2¼".

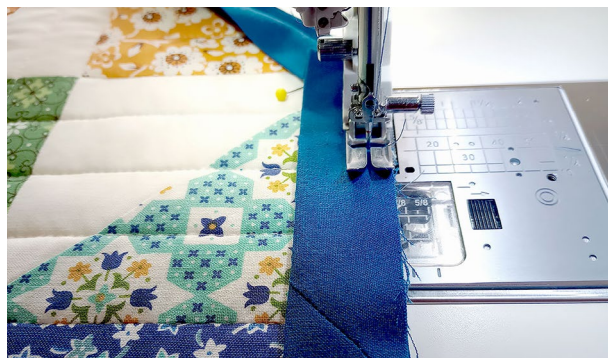


Step 11: Unfold the head and tail of the binding and bring them right sides together at a 90° angle, exactly as you did for the bias seam joining of the original binding strips. Pin, making sure not to twist the ends.

Stitch across on the diagonal, creating a bias seam.



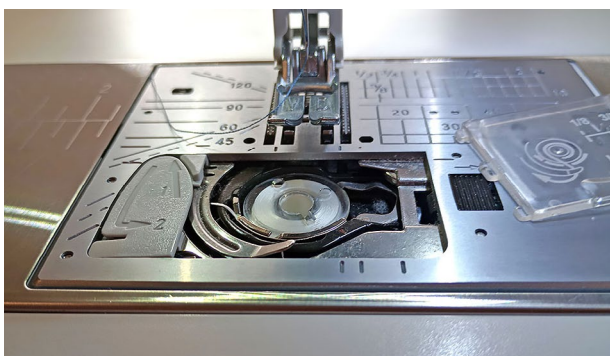
Step 12: Trim away the excess close to the seam, re-fold the binding, and place it back against the mat so the raw edges are flush. Sew this last section of binding to the mat.



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Traditionally, the folded edge of the binding would now be wrapped around to the back side of the mat, covering the line of stitching. Once pinned in place, you could hand stitch or topstitch from the right side of the mat to secure the binding in place. BUT... let's try something different and easier with all the corners of our octagon mats: fusible thread!

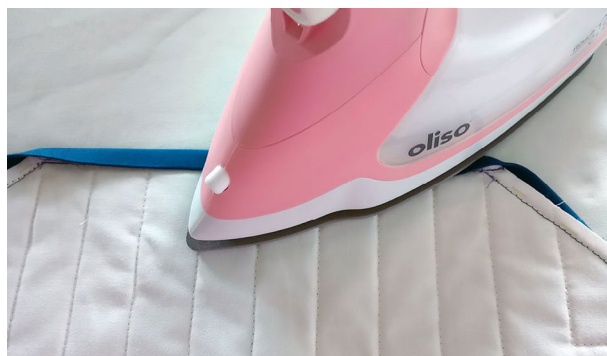


Step 13: Fusible thread is used in the bobbin instead of the needle, so your first step is to wind a bobbin with the fusible thread. Place it in the machine. Leave all purpose thread in the top in the colour to match the binding (the blue in our sample). A stitch length of 2.80 mm works well for this technique. If you haven't already done so, you can remove the pins from the corners.

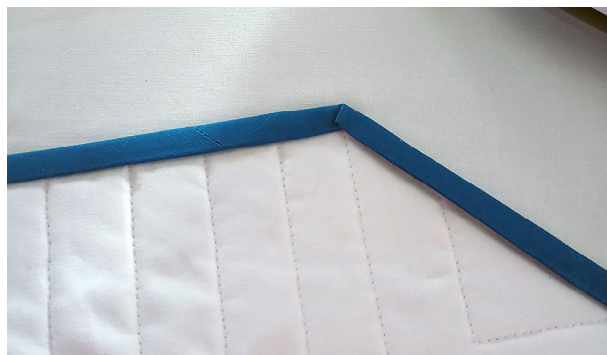
Step 14: Sew a second line of stitching on the binding around the entire perimeter of the mat, following right on top of the previous line of stitching and pivoting at each corner.



Step 15: Bring the mat on your ironing board. Working slowly and with plenty of steam, pull and snugly wrap the binding around to the back so it covers the original line of stitching.



Step 16: Work on one side at a time in a clockwise direction, mitering each corner as you go as shown in the photo below. Like magic (well - actually - thanks to the heat activating the fusing), the binding stays in place!



Step 17: Re-thread with your main construction thread you used for all your patchwork (we used a cream colour) in the top and the thread to best match the binding (the blue in our sample) in the bobbin. We switched to a Clear View Quilting Foot with the flange in the Ditch Quilting position to guide our stitching. You can choose this same foot or use your favourite foot to maintain a precise stitch-in-the-sitch. We kept our stitch length at 2.80 mm.

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Step 18: From the right side of the placemat, stitch in the ditch along the binding.



Remember to pivot at each corner.



vThis stitching will catch the folded edge of the binding, creating a beautifully smooth finish from the back...



... and from the front.



Step 19: Remove any stray basting stitches. Press well, and enjoy.

