

JOINING LEAH'S BLOCKS

1. I stitched around all blocks, stitch length 2.0, walking foot width from outer edge of embroidery design, using thread to match fabric. Then stitched two more lines about 1/16 inch from first line of stitching. Do this for all blocks. For best results, match thread for back fabric with bobbin thread.



2. Trimmed all blocks to 5 inches square **just before joining** (to prevent sides from unraveling. NOTE: save trimmings to practice and test the next steps for joining.
3. The joining may be done with a walking foot or open toe applique foot (reduce presser foot pressure if that is an option with your machine. This is one of those things to test with trimmings.) You want the blocks to flow smoothly as they are joined. Foot selection may be determined by thickness of batting.
4. Lay out blocks.

Three Step Joining for Quilt as you go Blocks

By Jenedel Wilcox January 2018

5. Select thread color (s). Since the front colors were purple and teal and the back was red with black, I decided to use purple on front, black on black.
NOTE: ideally, the back and front colors allow the user the same thread in top and bobbin threads, usually a variegated thread works. (my thread selection was limited here in Florida). If two different thread colors are used, use two lights, two mediums, or two darks so the appearance of stitches shows the least pull through of the opposite color thread.
6. Use the three step zig zag to join the blocks.



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7. Begin stitching with three step zig zag onto a scrap of fabric. Without breaking thread, butt first two blocks together and slide them under presser foot. Begin stitching onto the two blocks with three step zig zag, keeping the line between blocks pressed together and centered under foot.



8. When you reach the end of these two blocks, place the next two side by side and chain stitch onto them, keeping pressed together and centered. Repeat this step until all the blocks in the first two columns are joined. Stitch onto a scrap at end and break thread. Repeat process to add third column of blocks to the unit already stitched together. Repeat until all columns are added. The whole layout should now be joined together by the chained vertical stitches.

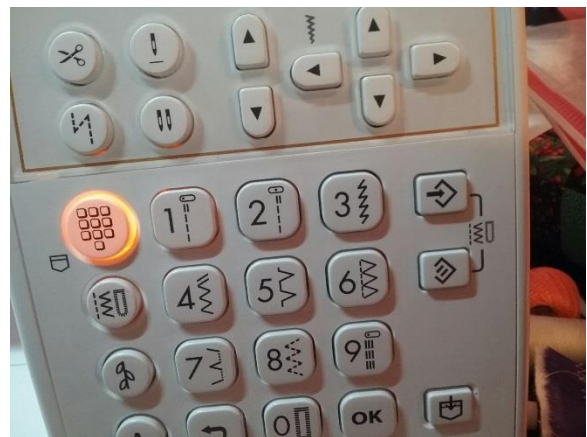
NOTE: keep these scraps at the beginning and end of columns to facilitate the couching step.

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9. Rotate the quilt 90 degrees so the stitched seams are now aligned ready to sew. Stitch onto scrap, then join the rows together with three step zig zag, aligning rows at corners as you come to them. Stitch onto scrap at end. Repeat for all rows. The whole quilt should be joined together now with one pass of stitching on all seams.
10. Flip quilt over so the back side is now up. If you need to change threads so the top thread now matches this side and the bobbin thread matches the other side, do so now.
11. Select material for couching over seams (if desired). I chose black yarn for this side of LEAH'S quilt. Test out your couching on some of those trimmings. Stitch over it with the same three step zig zag.



12. Cut a piece of yarn about 6 inches longer than the entire seam length (from edge to edge). Lay yarn over the fabric scrap attached to the first seam to be stitched. Stitch a few stitches over yarn near edge of quilt. This holds it down so you can pull it straight over the seam. You want it centered over seams, snug, but not too tight (if it's too tight, seam will pucker.) Stitch over yarn all the way to the other side then onto the scrap. Break thread and move to the next seam. Repeat steps until all seams are stitched with couching.
13. Flip the quilt over to the "right side", change thread if needed, repeat all steps as for back side. You will now have stitched each seam three times with the three-step zig zag and they are very secure.
14. Decide if you want a regular binding, binding with yarn couched over it, or yarn edging. Since I didn't have fabric I liked for the binding, I chose to edge it with yarn, which is a nice choice for a wall hanging or art type quilt, but I would use a binding on a quilt to be used as a blanket quilt.
15. Trim all yarn tails with ruler and rotary cutter. This gives a nice clean edge to bind or finish and allows you to trim off any not so perfectly aligned blocks.
16. Follow your usual method for binding a quilt if that is what you will be using to finish edges. You can stitch to front, turn to back and hand stitch. Or you can stitch to back, turn to front and stitch down by machine (usually my preference). If you want to couch yarn over binding on front side, lay it over the finished binding and use regular zig zag to stitch it down. Try to end yarn with the beginning and end meeting, rather than overlapping. Test on a scrap.
17. If you just want to edge it with yarn, trim edges as in step 15, then stitch all around quilt with a regular zig zag, fairly wide, but not too close (not a satin stitch). Use the thread color to match front, with bobbin to match back. Test to see how well this stitches out before putting thread to your quilt.
18. Then, select the hemming stitch on your machine (#5 on my machine.)



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19. Hold yarn along the edge of the quilt and stitch the straight part of the hemming stitch onto quilt with zigzag part going over to grab the yarn. Depending on type of yarn, this can be a narrow edge (with a thin yarn) or more covering edge (with a fluffier yarn.) Try to meet the two ends without overlap, or just overlap slightly. Might have to zig zag over this joining to hold errant ends securely.
20. Done! This is the front:

