

Terms

Foundation Piecing: Sewing your fabric down onto something else to stabilize it.

Paper Piecing: A specific type of foundation piecing using paper printed with a pattern, where the fabric is placed on the back side and you stitch on the printed front.

Put another way: corsets, stays, girdles, shapewear, underwire and push-up bras are all foundation garments but some aren't as comfortable as others. At least plain cotton is comfortable!

General Foundation Piecing:

- Sewing on a foundation allows you to sew scraps and strips that aren't the same size and might not be cut straight of grain.
- Strip quilts can be foundation pieced on to muslin, phone book pages, newspaper, scraps from old sheets, etc. using a very forgiving sew-and-flip method. [strip-block example]
- Selvage-edge projects are foundation pieced because there's no seam allowance. [pot holder example]

Paper Piecing:

- Paper piecing allows you to sew very detailed designs with precision. [stocking]
- While the printed pattern improves the stitching precision, it adds complexity too.
- The fabric is placed on the blank side of the paper & you stitch on the printed side.
- Most challenges have tools/techniques that help.
 - It feels like you're sewing "blind"
 - Careful placement & flat pins help; the beard trimmer on an electric razor is great when things go wrong
 - Size and orientation of the fabric pieces can be challenging
 - Use templates if the pattern provides them
 - A post-card and the Add-a-Quarter ruler help by providing a precise edge to line up (also use that folded back paper and a window or light-box)
 - Sewing on paper can dull your needle
 - You can use a freezer paper method for larger pieces [Bella Bella quilt]
 - You have to pull out the paper eventually
 - Use a shorter stitch length (1.5 instead of 2)
 - Stay stitch around the block before you start
 - Don't tug too hard (don't want to pop stitches)
 - This is the ONLY time a shot of steam or a spritz of water is safe
 - Tweezers help grab small pieces, but don't go nuts trying to get every little bit

Hybrid:

My scrappy-gems quilt is mostly foundation piecing, except for the black lines that must match up – it's a good way to try just a bit of paper piecing. We're doing a sew-along in January.