

Hand Piecing With a Running Stitch

aka American Hand Piecing

aka An Alternative to English Paper Piecing

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The Basics:

This style of hand piecing involves drawing the sewing line onto the back of the fabric, and using a running stitch to sew along the drawn sewing line.

Compared to EPP there is less prep time, less supplies needed, and I think it is a little easier for beginners to pick up and piece accurately. There are disadvantages, including having more exposed seams and having to press your seams.

Supplies:

Needle: I like a milliners needle – which is long, thin, bendier and more flexible. I use a size 11 but it is difficult to thread the eye is so small. Some people prefer a firmer needle like a sharp (often used for hand quilting).

Marking Implement: Basically, you want to use something that either washes out very easily, or is very permanent so it won't bleed! And if you are doing light colors, you don't want it to show through.

- Pencil -Some people like a mechanical pencil – either a regular one or a sewing specific pencil.
- Friction pen - DON'T IRON AWAY YOUR LINES BEFORE THEY ARE SEWN!
- Permanent marker – my fave is the Sakura Pigma Micron Marker – which has a fine line. I use in the lightest color I can see on the fabric.
- Other marking options include an inkjet printer via Inklingo or purchasing stamps and using a permanent fabric ink like Versacraft.

Thread: Some people prefer very fine thread like So Fine Bobbin thread or silk thread. I like 50 wt Auriful or Guterman basic polyester because it “grips” the fabric and puts less stress on my hands when sewing, and I feel more confident my knots will hold. However, sometimes my stitches are a little visible so if that would really bother you, using a finer thread, or switching thread to match your fabric can help.

Drawing your shapes:

There are three basic methods for drawing the shapes –

- Tracing from a template (similar to EPP)
 - Tracing your stitching line around an EPP Paper piece will do, or you can purchase templates.
 - You can make your own ¼ seam or get/make templates that include the quarter inch seam.
 - I like having the quarter inch seam precisely placed on my pieces because it makes the hand sewing process a little faster, however, it's not necessary.
 - I print my own templates onto heavy cardstock and carefully cut them out.
- Stamping – stamps generally include a stitching line and a cutting line – this allows you to have consistent quarter inch seams
- Printing – via Inklingo. If you are comfortable with computers, the website has excellent customer service and I highly recommend it. The learning curve is a bit of a pain, but once you figure it out (took me about an hour of frustration) if you are doing a larger project it can really save time.