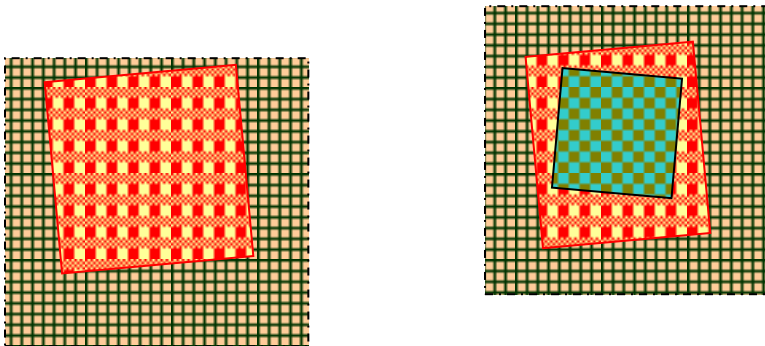


Raggedy Plaid

Probably the best way to get started on turning your pile of homespun scraps & fats into 9 ½” and 6” squares is to press them all nice and flat and lay them out in two piles – one of pieces big enough for the larger squares, one of pieces big enough for the 6” squares. Decide if you have enough variety of colors, values and scales. If you think you need more of something, look around; you may have a shirt in your closet that would add the spark you want. Less variety will give you a mellower quilt. Cut several squares of each size at the same time.

You will be making a total of 48 blocks for the square-set quilt pictured. So you will need to cut 48 - 9 ½” squares and 48 - 6” squares. You may find it easiest to use square rulers if you have them. **Don’t get hung-up on grain line. Nothing about this block is supposed to be straight-looking.**

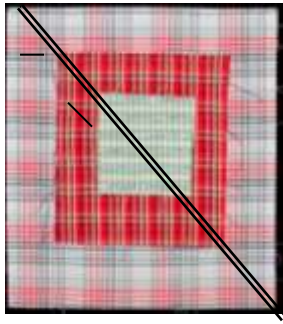
Now for the sewing: Place one 6” square on top of a 9 ½” square sort-of in the center, sort-of straight. Pin it down enough so that it won’t shift as you sew ¼” around the edge of the smaller square to top-stitch it down. Use a neutral thread and a small zig-zag stitch at a short stitch length. I set my length at 1.5. The edges will end up fraying in the wash.



Cut out the back being careful to leave at least half an inch of the larger fabric under the smaller so that there is a full seam allowance. If you are careful, that cut out piece can be used as a 3” square in some other block.

Take one of the little scraps from the pile and cut a 3” square – again accuracy in size and grain line is **not** required. You want a color/value contrast with the first two layers. Pin the square sort-of centered, sort-of straight in the middle of the 6” square. Pin and sew your ¼” little zig-zag around just like before. Again, cut out behind so this doesn’t get too thick. Sew 48 of these layer cakes with their raggedy edges front and back.

Then pair them right sides together trying for a nice contrast between each two, especially at the outer layer. (I tried to put a dark with a light so that I could get a logcabin-y thing going when I got to the design wall part.) Draw a diagonal line across the back of one of each pair with a pigma pen. Pin so the two layers don’t shift as you sew a seam ¼” from each side of the drawn line. Cut on the drawn line to create two (almost) identical blocks. Press. Square up blocks to all the same size (they’ll be somewhere between 8” and 9”)



Arrange your blocks on a design wall to get the effect you want. Sew together in 6 rows of 8. Cut border fabric into 5" by width of fabric or use up some more of your scraps. Piece them together to necessary lengths. Sew on the borders.

I quilted this by first ditching the blocks with my walking foot. Then I followed the diagonal seams and top-stitched over the zig-zag stitching using my free-motion foot (not very neatly). Once the quilt is washed everything looks instantly "broken-in" - like it has been loved for years. One reason for not cutting the 6" and 3" pieces strictly on the grain line is that the fraying happens in shorter thread pieces. Snip off the worst of the strings.

One gal put her blocks together like a rag quilt. It was really cute. You could use a flannel backing with no batting or flannel for the batting to get an even softer drape than in a usual quilt. Mine has an 80/20 batting with a homespun backing.

Happy Quilting – Chris McDonald

